

**Daily Report****Monday, 5 July 2021**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 5 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:30 P.M., 05 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Email

Ellie Reeves: [24300]

To ask the Attorney General, whether any Departmental business has been conducted on private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Ellie Reeves: [24301]

To ask the Attorney General, whether a risk assessment has been carried out on the secure holding of CCTV footage within his Department.

Michael Ellis:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Directors

Angela Rayner: [24214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where those declarations are published.

Amanda Solloway:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts. Information on any relevant interests is published in the Department's annual report and accounts, which are available on GOV.UK.

Angela Rayner: [24216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what financial payments his Department makes to its non-executive directors; how many times his departmental Board will meet in 2021-22; and what work the non-executive directors undertake.

Amanda Solloway:

This information is published in the Department's annual report and accounts, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-annual-reports-and->

[accounts](#). The Department's report and accounts for 2021-22 will be published in due course, in the usual way.

Departmental boards provide strategic leadership for each central government department, as well as advising on/challenging how the department is performing. Each board is chaired by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and includes junior ministers, the permanent secretary and non-executive board members. Non-executives are appointed to government departments from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Their role is to provide advice and bring an external perspective. A summary of the work of non-executive directors across Government can be found in the Government Lead Non-Executive's annual report, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-lead-non-executives-annual-report-2019-to-2020>.

Angela Rayner:

[24985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department's current non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight officials had of Ministerial appointments of non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of their experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on Departmental Boards of November 2014.

Amanda Solloway:

Departments follow the principles set out in Cabinet Office/HM Treasury '[Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice](#)'.

The Lead Non-Executive Director, Ann Cairns, was appointed in January 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ann-cairns-appointed-lead-non-executive-board-member-at-beis>.

Non-Executive Board Members Vikas Shah and Stephen Hill were appointed in May 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vikas-shah-and-stephen-hill-appointed-to-beis-board>.

■ Dismissal: Staff

Anne Marie Morris:

[24203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of employers dismissing customer-facing staff who refuse to have a covid-19 vaccination.

Paul Scully:

The UK operates a system of informed consent for vaccinations and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination has been very high across the UK.

Employers, including those in customer-facing sectors, who propose to introduce a requirement for staff to be vaccinated will need to consider the existing legal framework, including the law on employment, dismissal, equalities and data protection. Employers will need to ensure that they have acted in accordance with

their legal obligations when making decisions on requiring evidence of a COVID-19 vaccination, taking account of their particular context and circumstances.

■ Energy: Meters

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[24870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's response on the Consultation on Smart Meter Policy Framework Post-2020, published in June 2021, what the scope will be of the mid-point review that was set out in that response; and at what point during the second year of the new framework that mid-point review will take place.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government wants to ensure that households and small businesses in Great Britain can benefit from smart metering. Therefore, we have confirmed a new four-year smart metering policy Framework with fixed annual installation targets for energy suppliers will commence on 1 January 2022 to drive the consistent, long-term investment needed to achieve market-wide rollout.

A mid-point review of the Framework will take place during 2023. The review will consider the tolerance methodology, including the forecasting model, as well as the latest available evidence on the progress of the rollout in line with developments in market conditions, consumer attitudes and energy supplier performance. Tolerance levels for Year 3 (2024) and Year 4 (2025) will be consulted upon following that review point and in advance of the start of Year 3.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[24871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to paragraph 173 of the Government's response to the Consultation on Smart Meter Policy Framework Post-2020, published in June 2021, which policy measures designed to increase consumer uptake of smart meters are being progressed (a) immediately and (b) at an appropriate time.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Smart meters are replacing traditional gas and electricity meters in Great Britain as part of an essential infrastructure upgrade to make the energy system more efficient and flexible, enabling the cost-effective delivery of net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The rollout is making good progress, with 24.2 million smart and advanced meters in homes and small businesses across Great Britain.

The Government wants to ensure that households and small businesses in Great Britain can benefit from smart metering and recognises that reaching this goal will involve continued collaboration between government, industry and Smart Energy GB and their partner organisations over the next phase of the rollout.

Further detail on activity that is seeking to drive consumer uptake of smart meters, including steps that have already been taken, is included in Annex B of the Government's recent response to the consultation on the smart meter policy

framework post 2020: minimum annual targets and reporting thresholds for energy suppliers.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[24872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many and what proportion of residents in England his Department has estimated will take up voluntary installation of smart meters; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing new policies to help incentivise the take-up of smart meters by all households.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Smart meters are replacing traditional gas and electricity meters in Great Britain as part of an essential infrastructure upgrade to make the energy system more efficient and flexible, enabling the cost-effective delivery of net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

The Government is committed to ensuring that households and small businesses can benefit from smart meters as soon as possible. Evidence shows that consumer attitudes to smart meters are not fixed and change over time and as such we do not hold an estimate of total consumer acceptance in England. Consumer demand remains strong with around 18,000 smart meters being installed on average each working day.

The Government recognises more may need to be done to engage consumers to reach the very highest levels of smart meter coverage by the end of the rollout. The Government will continue to consider further consumer-orientated policy measures to ensure households can realise the benefits of smart meters and drive completion of the rollout.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[24873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's response to the Consultation on the Smart Meter Policy Framework Post-2020, published in June 2021, what proportion of premises taking up the installation of a smart meter his Department would define as a market-wide rollout.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government wants to ensure that households and small businesses in Great Britain can benefit from smart metering. Therefore, we have confirmed that a new four-year smart metering policy Framework will set energy suppliers annual, individual minimum installation targets on a trajectory to 100%, subject to annual tolerance levels which were confirmed for Years 1 and 2 of the Framework in June 2021. The Government will consult on the targets for Years 3 and 4 of the new Framework during 2023.

The new Framework will commence on 1 January 2022.

■ Fireworks: Sales

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[24366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of the restriction of the sale of fireworks (a) generally and (b) in specific areas where there have been localised issues.

Paul Scully:

There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks that controls who can purchase them, their availability and use, curfews, and their safety as a product. While the safety and sale of fireworks is reserved to Westminster, controls on misuse and discharge are devolved to Scotland.

Enforcement powers exist for local authorities to take action when fireworks are unsafe, sold illegally, or misused. Local authorities and the police also have powers to tackle anti-social behaviour caused by the misuse of fireworks, where it arises.

We have no current plans to place further restrictions on the sale of fireworks to the public. Evidence provided by the National Fire Chiefs Council and the National Police Chiefs Council to the Petition Committee's Fireworks Inquiry raised concerns that additional controls could see an increase in supplies from illegitimate or unsafe suppliers.

The Government continues to work with the Devolved Administrations, business, charities, and local authorities to promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks.

■ Hospitality Industry and Tourism: Recruitment

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[24199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 20 May 2021 to Question 2300 on Hospitality Industry: Recruitment, what steps his Department has taken as a result of those discussions to help hospitality and tourism businesses with recruitment.

Paul Scully:

I would refer my Hon. Friend to my previous answer that the Department has met and continues to meet regularly with representatives from across the Hospitality sector to discuss how it can recover and build back from the pandemic. Information from these discussions has been shared with the Department for Work and Pensions, who are actively supporting jobseekers to find roles in sectors of need. Last month, the Government also published a comprehensive Tourism Recovery Plan setting out how it will help the Tourism sector build back better from COVID-19.

■ Life Sciences

Alex Norris:

[\[25121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to issue a third Life Sciences Sector Deal.

Amanda Solloway:

In Summer 2021, the Government will publish a new Life Science Vision which will set out our ambitious plans for the next decade to ensure the UK's scientific excellence, partnered with the dynamism of industry, is positioned to assist the NHS in solving the most pressing health challenges of our generation now and in the future. The Vision is being jointly developed by Government and the sector to ensure we maintain the UK's position as a global life science leader – building on the successes of rapid scientific and technological development during the pandemic - especially in vaccines and research - and benefitting from the regulatory freedoms and opportunities created by Brexit.

■ **Music****Kevin Brennan:****[24912]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings he has had with representatives of the recorded music industry in 2021.

Amanda Solloway:

Departments publish quarterly details of Ministers' meetings with external organisations on GOV.UK. Details for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

Data for January to March 2021 will be published in due course.

■ **Night-time Economy: Door Supervisors****Christian Wakeford:****[22220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with colleagues in the Home Office and the Treasury on the shortage of door supervisor staff available to work in the night time economy sector.

Paul Scully:

We regularly engage with hospitality businesses and are aware of their concerns to understand the issue of a shortage of door security staff. We are working with Home Office, who are responsible for the policy on the regulation of the private sector security industry, including door supervisors, to keep the situation under review and assess the scale of the problem.

■ **Restart Grant Scheme****Seema Malhotra:****[22164]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been spent under the Restart Grant scheme in each (a) sector and (b) region.

Paul Scully:

The £5 billion Restart Grants scheme announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 March 2021 are one-off grants to businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care, and accommodation sectors to support businesses to reopen as covid-19 restrictions are lifted in the coming months.

The Restart scheme is still open for applications, and we are continuing to gather data on payments. All data published on Government allocations and Local Authority payments of grant schemes is available at:

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

Restart Grant Scheme: Small Businesses**Seema Malhotra:****[22165]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding has been allocated under the Restart Grant scheme to support (a) women-led SMEs and (b) minority ethnic group led SMEs.

Paul Scully:

The £5 billion Restart Grants scheme announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer on 3 March 2021 are one-off grants to businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors to support businesses to reopen as covid-19 restrictions are lifted in the coming months.

The Department does not collate details of the gender or ethnicity of any business owners who have received support through any COVID-19 business grant scheme.

All data on Government allocations and Local Authority payments of grant schemes is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

UK Intellectual Property Office: Music**Kevin Brennan:****[24913]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what meetings the chief executive officer of the Intellectual Property Office has had with representatives of the recorded music industry in 2021.

Amanda Solloway:

The Chief Executive Officer of the Intellectual Property Office has met with representatives of the recorded music industry two times in 2021 so far.

CABINET OFFICE■ **Antisocial Behaviour**

Peter Kyle: [\[25191\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of people have (a) witnessed and (b) personally experienced antisocial behaviour in their local area for each local authority in the last 12 months.

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 PQ25191 [UKSA's final response to PQ25191.pdf]

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[24892\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if it is the Government's policy to use public fear as a tool to ensure compliance with covid-19 restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

It is not Government policy. Throughout the pandemic the vast majority of people and businesses have been compliant with the restrictions we have needed to introduce to help reduce transmission of the virus. Tremendous sacrifices have been made, and it is thanks to our collective national resolve that we have been able to protect the NHS and save lives, which has been our priority from the start.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Angela Rayner: [\[24989\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the oral response of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Urgent Question from the Rt. hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, of 29 June 2021, Official Report, column 129, on Emergency Covid Contracts that stated that 47 offers of personal protective equipment supplies were processed through the Government's priority mailbox, if he will publish a list of the suppliers to whom those 47 offers were made.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer given to [PQHL236](#) on 19 May 2021.

■ **Electoral Commission: Powers**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[24291\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed removal of prosecutorial

powers from the Electoral Commission on the (a) accountability of the executive, (b) integrity of elections and (c) transparency of political party funding.

Chloe Smith:

The Electoral Commission does not currently, and has never in over 20 years, brought criminal prosecutions. The Government intends to maintain the status quo by providing clarity in law that the Commission should not bring criminal prosecutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The proper place for criminal investigations and prosecutions relating to electoral law is with the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (and the Public Prosecution Service in Northern Ireland) who are experts in this domain. Having the Commission step into this space would risk wasting public money. The Electoral Commission will continue to have a wide range of investigatory and civil sanctioning powers available to it and, as is currently the case, is able to refer more serious matters to the police.

The Government is committed to protecting our democracy and ensuring that it remains secure, modern, transparent and fair. The Elections Bill will further strengthen the integrity of UK elections by updating electoral law, including the rules on the transparency of digital campaigning and political finance, the introduction of voter identification and measures improving the integrity of postal and proxy voting.

■ **EU Trade: Saint Martin and Sint Marteen**

Craig Mackinlay:

[\[22188\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions the Government has had with the EU on the free movement of (a) chilled meat products and (b) other goods originating in the USA between Sint Maarten, non-EU under the Netherlands, and Saint Martin, in the EU under France, in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK has not had discussions with the EU on the free movement of chilled meats or other goods originating in the USA, between Sint Maarten and Saint Martin, in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

■ **Francis Maude Associates: Procurement**

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[620\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether any Crown Representatives or strategic suppliers are also employed by Francis Maude Associates.

Julia Lopez:

No current Crown Representatives work for Francis Maude Associates.

■ Freedom of Information**Navendu Mishra:** [\[17870\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the judgment of 19 May 2021 of the First-tier Tribunal (General Regulatory Chamber) Information Rights, appeal reference EA/2020/0240, what steps his Department is taking to amend guidance on the handling of Freedom of Information requests following that judgment.

Navendu Mishra: [\[17871\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total cost to the public purse was of contesting the informational tribunal appeal brought Open Democracy on the operation of the Clearing House in relation to freedom of information requests.

Navendu Mishra: [\[17872\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) Government departments, (b) executive agencies and (b) arm's-length bodies handle Freedom of Information requests on an applicant-blind basis.

Chloe Smith:

The information regarding the Clearing house advice has been provided to the requester in line with the Tribunal's judgement. Details regarding the clearing house advisory functions are published on GOV.uk.

As this case has only just concluded we are not yet in a position to confirm the cost.

Cabinet Office handles all FOI requests on an applicant blind basis and works with other departments to make sure the rights and obligations embodied in the FOIA are understood fully.

■ Government Departments: Email**Angela Rayner:** [\[24991\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the Prime Minister's Official Spokesperson's statement of 28 June 2021 on the conduct of ministerial government business through departmental email addresses.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my [response](#) on 28 June 2021.

■ Ministers: Email**Caroline Lucas:** [\[24153\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the Ministers who have conducted Government business using private email accounts since the 2019 General Election.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to my [response](#) on 28 June 2021.

■ **Prime Minister: Security**

Jack Dromey:

[\[24150\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what private companies are contracted to provide security services at his Department's buildings; and whether there are closed circuit television cameras in any ministerial private office within his Department's estate.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to my [response](#) on 28 June 2021.

■ **Public First: Contracts**

Angela Rayner:

[\[24990\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister made the decision to award a contract to Public First to conduct focus group testing in March 2020.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answer given to PQ [76729](#) on 6 October 2020.

■ **Smoking: Surveys**

Mr David Jones:

[\[24135\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the reasons are for the delay to the publication of the Office of National Statistics survey on Adult smoking habits in the UK: 2020 until 7 September 2021.

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 PQ24135 [UKSA's final response to PQ24135.pdf]

DEFENCE

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Procurement**

John Healey:

[\[24085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Defence Procurement of 8 June 2021, Official Report 821, whether the Ajax programme has met its forecast initial operating capability.

Jeremy Quin:

As I made clear on 9 June 2021 (Question 10608), the Department will not declare Initial Operating Capability until it is confident there is an acceptable pathway to resolution for noise and vibration issues.

We are fully engaged with the senior management of General Dynamics and working to resolve outstanding issues.

Attachments:

1. Ajax Vehicles [UIN 10608.docx]

■ Armed Forces Bill 2019-21 to 2021-22**Jonathan Edwards:**[\[902179\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the Armed Forces Bill.

Leo Docherty:

The Welsh Government was consulted during the development of the Armed Forces Bill.

The Government continues to work with all the Devolved Administrations, as demonstrated recently by certain Government's amendments to the Bill that followed requests from the Welsh and Scottish Governments.

We continue to engage on developing the statutory guidance that will support the legislation to strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant.

■ Armed Forces: Families**Andrew Selous:**[\[902178\]](#)

What steps he is taking to (a) raise awareness of and (b) regularly report on implementation of the recommendations of the June 2020 review commissioned by his Department, Living in our shoes, Understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families.

Leo Docherty:

The Government response to the Living in Our Shoes report included a commitment to publish an ambitious new strategy for Armed Forces families.

The new strategy will provide a framework for measuring progress against the Living in Our Shoes recommendations, many of which are already being actioned.

Progress will be reported publicly through the Armed Forces Covenant annual report. The strategy will be published this autumn.

■ Armed Forces: Females**Joanna Cherry:**[\[902191\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support women in the armed forces.

Mr Ben Wallace:

It is important we improve the experience of women in the Armed Forces which is why we are investing in policies such as flexible service, wrap-around childcare and better working practices. It is also important that we provide support in cases of unacceptable behaviour. That is why the Wigston Report and reforms to the Service Justice and Service Complaints Systems will change Defence's culture and make it easier to tackle unacceptable behaviours.

■ Armed Forces: Mental Health Services**Ruth Jones:**[\[23322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what most recent steps he has taken to improve provision of mental health services for members of the armed forces in (a) Newport West, (b) Wales and (c) the UK.

Leo Docherty:

Wherever they live in the UK, all members of the Armed Forces are able to receive specialist mental health support if they need it.

The Defence Medical Services (DMS) provide mental health services to members of the Armed Forces in Newport West at MOD St Athan. The DMS has improved mental health services in Wales with the establishment of a mental health team in Wrexham, which we expect to be fully recruited by September 2021.

We are continually examining ways of developing mental health services for the Armed Forces. DMS introduced a new care pathway for Armed Forces personnel with common mental health disorders to enhance the care provided by MOD GPs, in line with national best practice.

MOD accelerated the roll out of remote ways of working by introducing digital triage, eConsult, and remote video consultation using the AttendAnywhere platform to maintain access to mental health services during COVID-19. Patients, including those in Wales, can therefore access specialist mental health services across the UK using secure remote video consultation.

Armed Forces personnel can also access information about mental health issues on the newly launched MyHealthcareHub.

In April 2020, HeadFIT was launched in partnership with the Royal Foundation to provide the Armed Forces community with training and education on good mental fitness. It provides the Armed Forces community with a suite of mental fitness tools to assist the user in developing a proactive approach to mental fitness to enhance mood, drive and confidence, and mitigate the stress of everyday life.

■ Armed Forces: Private Education

Emily Thornberry: [\[23125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund school places in the UK in 2020-21; and how many children were covered by that funding.

Emily Thornberry: [\[23127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the maximum level of Continuity of Education Allowance payments provided by his Department were for (a) primary and (b) secondary pupils in the UK in 2020-21.

Emily Thornberry: [\[23128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much funding his Department allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund places at (a) Winchester College, (b) Eton College, (c) Rugby School, (d) Stowe School, (e) Ampleforth College, (f) Millfield School, (g) Charterhouse School, (h) Gordonstoun School, (i) The King's School, Canterbury, and (j) Harrow School in 2020-21.

Leo Docherty:

Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) assists Service personnel to achieve continuity of education for their children that would otherwise be denied in the state-maintained day school sector due to the mobility of their family. CEA is available to all Service personnel, irrespective of rank, subject to them satisfying the qualifying criteria. Service personnel may select from a wide variety of schools across the UK from within the independent and state-maintained sectors that meet set criteria. Each claimant is required to contribute at least 10 per cent of the fees at independent schools.

During Financial Year (FY) 2020-21 the cost of CEA to Defence was £81.5 million. During that FY, around 4,800 children of Service personnel benefited from CEA. The maximum payment for CEA per academic term was £7,828 (senior) and £5,969 (junior). During FY 2020-21 the cost of CEA to Defence for the specified schools was as follows:

SCHOOL	£
Ampleforth College	93,770
Charterhouse School, Godalming	22,701
Eton College - Windsor	158,932
Gordonstoun School - Elgin	128,208
Harrow School - Harrow on the Hill	132,731
King's School (Canterbury)	0

SCHOOL	£
Millfield School (Prep & Sen)	745,204
Rugby School - Rugby	172,216
Stowe School - Buckingham	54,796
Winchester College - Winchester	108,712

■ Defence: Industry

Mark Menzies:

[\[24159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the UK defence sector's contribution to the Government's objective to transition to net zero.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence published its Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach, on 30 March.

The Strategic Approach sets out the ambition, the principles and initial action plan to ensure that Defence has adapted to operate in a climate changed world and will make a strong contribution to reducing its net carbon emissions.

One of the key principles is the need to work collaboratively across the Defence sector with other Departments, industry, academia and our allies and partners to ensure that Defence reduces its emissions and, as a Department, contributes to the UK reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft

Stephen Morgan:

[\[24306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of the F-35s on HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier are UK-owned.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the Answer I gave to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Kevan Jones) on 29 April 2021 to Question 187167.

Attachments:

1. HMS Queen Elizabeth: Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft [UIN 187167.docx]

■ Ministry of Defence: Directors

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[24376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what financial payments his Department makes to its non-executive directors; how many times his departmental Board will meet in 2021-22; and what work the non-executive directors undertake.

Leo Docherty:

This information is published in the Department's annual report and accounts, available on gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministry-of-defence-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020>

The Department's report and accounts for 2021-22 will be published in due course, in the usual way.

Departmental boards provide strategic leadership for each central Government department, as well as advising on/challenging how the department is performing. Each board is chaired by the Secretary of State and includes junior Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and non-executive board members. Non-executives are appointed to Government departments from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

Their role is to provide advice and bring an external perspective.

A summary of the work of non-executive directors across Government can be found in the Government Lead Non-Executive's annual report, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-lead-non-executives-annual-report-2019-to-2020>

Florence Eshalomi:[\[24377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where those interests are published.

Leo Docherty:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts.

Information on any relevant interests will be published in the Department annual report and accounts, which are available on gov.uk.

■ NATO**Felicity Buchan:**[\[902182\]](#)

What steps he is taking to modernise and strengthen the NATO alliance.

Mary Robinson:[\[902189\]](#)

What steps he is taking to modernise and strengthen the NATO alliance.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The UK is working with Allies to ensure NATO continues to protect the Euro-Atlantic area from current and future threats. At the Summit on 14 June, leaders agreed new proposals on deterrence and defence, emerging and disruptive technology, resilience, strengthening relationships with NATO Partners and climate security.

NATO remains the cornerstone of our defence and the UK is the leading European Ally in the Alliance.

■ **Navy: Asbestos**

John Healey: [\[24083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of Royal Navy personnel claims in each year since 2016 for compensation for being exposed to asbestos (a) resulted in compensation being paid, (b) were accepted but did not result in compensation being paid to the claimant and (c) were rejected.

Leo Docherty:

Information is not held in the format requested.

Data is not held electronically on how conditions arise, including exposure to Asbestos. It is possible that claimants may attribute certain conditions to Asbestos exposure when submitting a claim. However, the claims process uses medical evidence to assess the condition independent of the cause and it is the condition which is recorded.

John Healey: [\[24084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department paid in compensation to former Royal Navy personnel for exposure to asbestos in each year since 2016.

Leo Docherty:

Information is not held in the format requested.

Data is not held electronically on how conditions arise, including exposure to Asbestos. It is possible that claimants may attribute certain conditions to Asbestos exposure when submitting a claim. However, the claims process uses medical evidence to assess the condition independent of cause and it is the condition which is recorded.

■ **Oman: Demonstrations**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2021 to Question 18602 on Oman: Demonstrations, whether UK military personnel discussed the use of tear gas with Omani authorities between 23 May and 28 May 2021.

James Heappey:

UK personnel provide advice and share experience with the Omani authorities on a wide range of security related issues. All advice is always in line with the rule of law and respect for human rights.

■ Oman: Visits Abroad

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15400 on Oman: Visits Abroad, whether the Chief of Defence Staff met Oman's Royal Office minister in Muscat on 5 January 2020.

James Heappey:

The Chief of the Defence Staff did not meet Oman's Royal Office Minister on 5 January 2020.

■ Red Arrows: Military Aircraft

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for replacement aircraft for the Red Arrows.

Jeremy Quin:

The planned out of service date for the Red Arrows remains 2030, and a decision on a replacement aircraft for the Red Arrows is not expected to be taken for at least two more years.

■ Saudi Arabia: Military Aid

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 23 November 2020 to Question 116502 on Saudi Arabia: Royal Artillery, what the total cost to the public purse is for the deployment of British air defence units to Saudi Arabia since February 2020, as at 29 June 2021.

James Heappey:

To date, the total cost of the deployment in Question is £2,279,953.

■ Veterans: Employment

Ruth Jones: [\[23323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to improve transition out of the armed forces into employment.

Leo Docherty:

Service personnel leaving the Regular Armed Forces have access to Resettlement and employment support through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) for up to two years prior to their discharge date and for two years afterwards. The level of support is calculated against time served and may include resettlement leave, financial assistance, and access to CTP Services such as CV preparation, job finding services, and careers advice.

The resettlement provision is designed to help personnel leaving the Armed Forces to prepare to enter the civilian job market and to make a successful transition to

employment or achieve the wider vocational outcome they seek. Civilian employers and other Third Sector organisations are encouraged strongly to engage with CTP and help facilitate the placing of personnel into employment.

Of the Service personnel who left the Armed Forces in Financial Year 2019-20, and who used the CTP Services, 84% were employed within six months of leaving, which is higher than the UK employment rate of 76%. Additionally, in 2020 the Office for Veterans Affairs launched an interview scheme for veterans looking to join the Civil Service. The Government has also launched a National Insurance Contribution holiday for employers of veterans for up to one year.

■ Veterans: Government Assistance

Simon Jupp:

[\[902185\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support veterans.

Leo Docherty:

This Government is committed to ensuring that veterans receive a gold standard of support and the recognition they deserve so that the UK becomes the best place in the world to be a veteran.

Later this year we will publish the next iteration of the Veterans Strategy Action Plan setting how we'll ensure veterans can lead successful civilian lives, this will build on the steps we have already taken through improved support for employment, housing and access to healthcare.

■ Yemen: Armed Conflict

Claudia Webbe:

[\[902181\]](#)

What recent discussions he had had with the Foreign Secretary on the involvement of British armed forces in the conflict in Yemen.

James Heappey:

The Secretary of State for Defence meets with the Foreign Secretary regularly to discuss security in the wider Gulf region.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Advertising

Daisy Cooper:

[\[23342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Advertising Standards Agency on making digitally altered images of a human body or body part in advertisements clearly labelled as such for consumers.

Caroline Dinanage:

The ASA's existing rules on social responsibility and misleading advertising are already applied to advertising of cosmetic interventions and advertising featuring digitally altered images.

The ASA held a public consultation on cosmetic interventions in 2020 and are following this up with a call for evidence on body image this year. The Government will remain closely in touch with the ASA as they undertake this consultation. The government will be launching the Online Advertising Programme (OAP) later this year which will explore how to address harms in the content and placement of advertising online, and to ensure the regulatory regime for the online advertising ecosystem is coherent, clear and effective. As part of this work, the Government will be considering whether any additional measures should be brought forward to address body image concerns.

■ **Broadband: Contracts**

Tom Tugendhat:

[\[23245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to announce further details on (a) dates and (b) contract values for Project Gigabit; and what assessment he has made of the broadband needs of people in Tonbridge and Malling constituency.

Matt Warman:

The government is committed to deliver lightning-fast, reliable broadband to everyone in the UK. Our plan - to stimulate investment, bust barriers and drive competition - is working. We're on track for one of the fastest rollouts in Europe and for 60% of all households to have access to gigabit capable speeds by the end of the year. It is a huge leap forward from 2019, when it was just 9%.

The government will announce the next areas to be connected via Project Gigabit shortly as it pushes ahead with efforts to connect at least 85 per cent of the UK to gigabit-capable broadband by 2025.

The telecoms market is thriving with new entrants and investments changing the picture on the ground. Project Gigabit is designed to be responsive to this and the ordering and timing of the procurement pipeline will remain dynamic with quarterly updates to the plan.

Kent is Phase 2 of Project Gigabit's procurement plans. There will be a procurement process for a supplier to provide gigabit coverage to all premises within the area which are not scheduled to get coverage through any other route (subject to a cost cap for the very hard to reach premises).

Both the new voucher scheme and the procurements are part of Project Gigabit, which we are supporting with funding of £5 billion so hard to reach communities are

not left out - starting to level up now, not waiting for the end of the commercial rollout, and adding to the half a million rural homes and businesses already given coverage through our support

To provide immediate support across the UK we are funding up to £210 million worth of vouchers over the next three years to help with the costs of installing gigabit capable networks to people's doorsteps and up to £110 million to connect up to 7,000 rural public buildings such as GP surgeries, libraries and schools.

Currently 93.64% of the constituency of Tonbridge and Malling have access to Superfast broadband, which is slightly lower than the national average of 96.84%. Tonbridge and Malling has seen 292 voucher connections with a value of over £447,805. There are also a further 312 vouchers that are pending connection, totalling £982,778.

■ **Burlington House: Tenancy Agreements**

Patrick Grady:

[\[25031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of importance of the Learned Societies ongoing tenancy at New Burlington House for the protection of the UK's cultural and heritage assets.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Government recognises the important cultural, scientific and heritage contributions of the Learned Societies of New Burlington House and has been working to identify solutions that will enable them to remain in situ.

Burlington House is owned by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Officials from DCMS and MHCLG have been working closely together on this matter. MHCLG has written to the Learned Societies and invited the Learned Societies to find a viable solution that will enable them to deliver public value and remain in situ at New Burlington House. The Department is not yet in a position to state when discussions with the Learned Societies will conclude.

■ **Charities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[24247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the reserves of charities.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[24248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to assess the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the finances of charities.

Rachael Maskell: [\[24249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the level of fundraising by charities since the start of that outbreak.

Rachael Maskell: [\[24250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on charities in the retail sector with reference to the (a) loss of revenue to and (b) financial stability of those charities.

Rachael Maskell: [\[24251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that have been lost in the charities sector as a result of funding challenges since March 2020.

Rachael Maskell: [\[24252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to measure the reduction in services provided by charities as a result of reduced funding since March 2020 due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Matt Warman:

The government understands that the pandemic has created significant challenges for many in the charity sector. This is why we made available a multi billion pound package of support, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, to protect against job losses in the sector.

There is no single source of data which can provide a real time picture of the financial and operational health of the sector. Government is therefore drawing evidence from a range of sources in order to shape our understanding of the overall impact.

A number of established surveys are providing a picture of the nuanced impact of the pandemic on financial outlook, workforce and levels of service delivery. These include the Covid-19 Voluntary Sector Impact Barometer from Nottingham Trent and Sheffield Hallam Universities, and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. While some respondents indicate increased financial and operation hardship, many others report a stable or improving position.

The Charity Commission has started to provide intelligence on the impact on reserves emerging from charitable returns, indicating the number of organisations with negative or no reserves has increased over the last year. My department is also continuing to gather intelligence from departments across government to understand risks and issues relating to critical services provided by charities and how these are being addressed.

My department will continue to monitor the health and resilience of the charity sector, and will explore ways to strengthen the evidence available to support our assessment. The government is working with the partners in the sector to shape a forward looking agenda that will support a strong and resilient civil society.

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Christian Matheson: [\[25003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of the successful applicants in Phase 2 of the Culture Recovery Fund have received all of the funds awarded to them.

Christian Matheson: [\[25004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of the successful applicants in Phase 2 of the Culture Recovery Fund are awaiting the receipt of funds; and how much funding remains to be paid.

Christian Matheson: [\[25005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the longest period of time was between the (a) acceptance of an application to the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) and (b) full payment of the award of funds during phase two of the CRF.

Jo Stevens: [\[25025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many applications were made in Phase 1 of the Cultural Recovery Fund.

Jo Stevens: [\[25026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of the successful applicants in Phase 1 of the Culture Recovery Fund have received all of the funds awarded to them.

Jo Stevens: [\[25027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of the successful applicants in Phase 1 of the Cultural Recovery Fund are awaiting the receipt of funds; and how much funding remains to be paid.

Jo Stevens: [\[25028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the longest period of time has been between the acceptance of an application and the full payment of the award of funds during phase 1 of the Cultural Recovery Fund.

Jo Stevens: [\[25029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many applications were made for Phase 2 of the Cultural Recovery Fund.

Caroline Dineneage:

The attached table provides figures addressing the questions asked.

Payments through the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) are typically made in multiple tranches. Final payment is typically made at the very end of the grant period, once activities and costs have been reported.

In both rounds of the CRF revenue grants programme, DCMS has been able to give recipients the flexibility to extend the grant period. For CRF1 awardees, they have been able to extend until 30 June 2021, and for CRF2 awardees until 31 December 2021.

As such, a significant number of CRF 1 awardees have only very recently concluded the grant period, and many CRF 2 awardees have not concluded the grant period yet.

Accordingly, final payment requests are still outstanding from both CRF1 and CRF 2 recipients. Only when final payment requests have been made will DCMS Arms Length Bodies make final payments.

In addition, payment schedules can be impacted by a number of factors, such as the provision of bank details and activity reports from applicants, as well as assurance processes undertaken by distributing arms-length bodies, in order to ensure best use of tax-payers' money.

As the numbers show, over 83% of all awarded CRF funding has been paid.

Figures include revenue grants, capital grants, and loans from within the Culture Recovery Fund.

Attachments:

1. Culture Recovery Fund [Culture Recovery Fund.pdf]

■ Culture Recovery Fund: West Yorkshire**Andrea Jenkyns:****[24284]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Culture Recovery Fund in supporting (a) businesses and (b) freelancers in (i) the Morley and Outwood constituency and (ii) West Yorkshire.

Caroline Dineneage:

The Culture Recovery Fund (CRF) to date, has seen over £1.2 billion awarded to over 5,000 organisations and sites, with 70% of grant funding going outside of London.

While freelancers have been supported through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, which has so far helped 2.8m self employed people, it is also the case that the CRF had significant indirect benefits for freelancers. In Round 2, organisations were asked to estimate how many FTEs and freelancers were protected by the fund until the end of June. Collectively, applicants reported that

52,000 full time staff and almost 100,000 freelancers would be supported until the end of June.

The Morley and Outwood constituency has currently received £55,000 of awards from the fund, while West Yorkshire as a whole has seen over £49m of support through the CRF. The organisations in West Yorkshire supported through CRF2 have self-reported that these grants will help them to support over 2,500 freelancers until the end of June.

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

Jo Stevens:

[24230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial payments his Department makes to its non-executive directors; how many times his departmental Board will meet in 2021-22; and what work the non-executive directors undertake.

Oliver Dowden:

This information is published in the Department's annual report and accounts, available on gov.uk.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-20>)

The Department's report and accounts for 2021-22 will be published in due course, in the usual way.

Departmental boards provide strategic leadership for each central government department, as well as advising on/challenging how the department is performing. Each board is chaired by the Secretary of State and includes junior ministers, the permanent secretary and non-executive board members. Non-executives are appointed to government departments from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Their role is to provide advice and bring an external perspective.

A summary of the work of non-executive directors across Government can be found in the Government Lead Non-Executive's annual report, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-lead-non-executives-annual-report-2019-to-2020>

Jo Stevens:

[24231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where is that information published.

Caroline Dinenage:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts.

Information on any relevant interests is published in the Department annual report and accounts, which are available on gov.uk.

Jo Stevens: [24232]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department's current non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight officials had of Ministerial appointments of non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of their experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on Departmental Boards of November 2014.

Jo Stevens: [24234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department's current non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight officials of his Department had of the Ministerial appointments of those non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of the applicants' experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on Departmental Boards of November 2014.

Oliver Dowden:

- Sherry Coutu was appointed on 11 March 2019
- Hemant Patel was appointed on 19 March 2020
- Baroness Laura Wyld was appointed on 15 June 2020
- Claudia Arney was appointed on 15 April 2021
- Priya Lakhani was appointed on 15 April 2021

Departmental officials have full oversight of all Non-Executive appointments. This includes providing advice and recommendations to me on the suitability of individuals to be appointed as Non-Executives.

The department aims to appoint Non-Executives who have experience within large and complex organisations and specific knowledge of the sectors it represents. This includes having an understanding and experience of organisations in both the public and private sectors. This is a key consideration made on the suitability of appointable candidates, without this experience it is unlikely an appointment will be made.

Departments follow the principles set out in Cabinet Office/HM Treasury ' [Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice](#). '

■ Destination Management Organisations: Reviews

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[24201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2021 to Question 10396 on Tourism: Coronavirus, what the timescale is for the Government's independent review of Destination Management Organisations.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government launched the independent review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) in England, led by Nick de Bois, in March. The review will examine how best to structure and support DMOs at a local and regional level in order to deliver the Government's tourism policy priorities and support economic growth.

The first phase of the review included a public consultation, stakeholder conversations, and a survey of DMOs. The review's second phase was formed of regional roundtables, taking place across England in June.

Nick de Bois will evaluate his findings and submit a written report, including recommendations, to the DCMS Secretary of State in Summer 2021.

■ Football: Defibrillators

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[24094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many referees in the (a) professional and (b) grassroots football sector are trained in administering CPR.

Nigel Huddleston:

First aid skills, including how to administer CPR, are important life skills for everyone. Recent events at UEFA EURO 2020 have demonstrated the particular value of first aid training for anyone involved in football, or indeed any sport.

The department does not hold information about the number of professional or grassroots referees who have been trained in CPR. This information is held by the relevant national governing body, which in England is The Football Association.

■ Football: First Aid

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[24096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring all (a) players, (b) coaches and (c) referees at each club level of football to undertake an emergency first aid course.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[24097]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring all football clubs operating stadiums and pitches to provide defibrillators at those locations.

Nigel Huddleston:

First aid skills, including how to administer CPR, are important life skills for everyone. Recent events at UEFA EURO 2020 have demonstrated the immense value of first aid training and access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) for anyone involved in football.

While I fully support everyone acquiring first aid skills, it is for The Football Association, as the national governing body for football in England, and the operators of the various league competitions to determine what courses should be mandatory for participants in football.

AEDs are already recommended best practice at all sports stadia, including football stadia, as set out in guidance from the Sports Grounds Safety Authority. Local authorities are able to mandate AED provision (at grounds designated under the Safety of Sports Grounds 1975 Act or sports grounds with regulated stands under the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 Act) through medical plans included in General Safety Certificates.

At the grassroots level, support over recent years has been provided by the Football Association and the British Heart Foundation to help ensure AEDs are available in football facilities. Building on this, I welcomed the Premier League's announcement in June 2021 of their new Defibrillator Fund, which will fund AEDs at thousands of football clubs and facilities across the country. Each grant recipient will be required to have at least one person successfully complete The FA Education's free online Sudden Cardiac Arrest course.

■ **Football: Racial Discrimination**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[24095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to promote anti-racism in football.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is clear that racism has no place in football, sport, or society at large. The sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation' has diversity and inclusion at its heart.

The Government continues to liaise closely and regularly with all the football authorities about their work to tackle discrimination. This includes actions targeted at and around football grounds, such as improving reporting systems, providing better training and support for referees and stewards, and improving the quality of CCTV around stadia.

We also welcomed the launch of The FA's 'Football Leadership Diversity Code' last year which is a step in the right direction to ensure English football better represents our modern and diverse society, on and off the pitch.

In January, the Government convened a roundtable with footballers, alongside the Chair of The FA's Inclusion Advisory Board and the Professional Footballers' Association, to discuss social media abuse and the upcoming Online Safety Bill. There is still progress to be made and the Government will continue to press the football authorities to build on their work to date to tackle discrimination.

■ **Gaming Machines: Northern Ireland**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[22184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with his Northern Irish counterpart on the operation of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) in Northern Ireland following the reduction in the maximum stake on FOBTs in Great Britain to £2 in 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Gambling in Northern Ireland is a devolved issue regulated under the Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985. I have not discussed the operation of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals following the 2019 stake cut with my Northern Irish counterpart.

■ **Lotteries: Licensing**

Craig Whittaker:

[\[24946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will consult on the potential merits of providing large society lotteries the choice of a £50 million or £100 million annual licence, as set out in the Response to the Consultation on Society Lottery Reform published on 16 July 2019.

Mr John Whittingdale:

In July 2020 the annual sales limit for society lotteries increased from £10 million to £50 million. This increase will enable us to monitor the impact on the sector and build a robust evidence base, particularly with regard to the impact on the proportion of proceeds being returned to good causes.

Any future change would need to increase good cause returns across the sector, and we wish to be confident that the regulatory framework is right for fundraising at this scale. We have no present plans to consult on making further changes to the annual sales limit.

■ **Ministers' Private Offices: Security**

Jo Stevens: [\[24233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what private companies are contracted to provide security services at his Department's buildings that contain ministerial private offices; and whether there are closed circuit television cameras in any ministerial private office within his departmental estate.

Oliver Dowden:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

■ **Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges**

Ruth Jones: [\[22021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Mobile phone operators on the re-introduction of roaming charges for people in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) the UK travelling to the EU.

Matt Warman:

Ministers have regular discussions with senior representatives of mobile operators on a range of issues, including on the issue of mobile roaming.

■ **Sports: Coronavirus**

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[21843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on covid-19 case rates of spectators at (a) school sports days and (b) Euro 2021 football matches held at Wembley Stadium.

Nigel Huddleston:

In order to gain entry to the EURO 2020 football matches held at Wembley stadium, all attendees must either provide proof of a negative NHS Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test taken within 48 hours of the time the stadium gates open; OR proof of two vaccinations with the second vaccination being given at least two weeks prior to entry of the event via the NHS App; OR have natural immunity, based upon a positive PCR test within 180 days of the event.

In addition to existing entry requirements, the FA will be conducting additional spot checks on ticket holders for the remaining matches at Wembley, and asking for additional LFD tests where necessary.

Public safety is our main priority, and we continue to work closely with the local authorities, DHSC, and PHE to closely monitor attendees; this includes monitoring any potential prevalence of COVID-19 as a result of the events. Where cases have been identified across Events Research Programme pilot events, public health teams have swiftly followed up on them. We are unable to comment on individual cases.

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

In respect of school sports, as per our response to PQ21844, schools that are planning sports days this term should complete thorough risk assessments and ensure that they are run in line with their system of controls. These are the actions that have been in place since the autumn term and that all schools must take to reduce risks and create an inherently safer environment. The system of controls are set out in the Department's guidance to schools, available to view here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#system-of-controls> (opens in a new tab).

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

■ Telecommunications: Christchurch

Sir Christopher Chope:

[24893]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will commission an inquiry into the effect on (a) domestic consumers and (b) businesses of the interference to internet and telecommunications services in Christchurch constituency on 28 June 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Matt Warman:

Reliable access to telecommunications services is vital for the operation of essential services, and our everyday home, work, education, and social lives, and I am sorry to hear about the recent issue experienced by your constituents.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport works with owners, operators and regulators to enable UK telecommunications networks and services to be as resilient as possible, and to respond quickly when incidents occur. As the UK's communications regulator, Ofcom plays an important role in ensuring the ongoing

security and resilience of the UK's public telecoms networks by enforcing the current duties under the Communications Act 2003. Communications providers are responsible for delivering their services, for the resilience of their infrastructure, ensuring faults are fixed and for keeping customers up to date on progress.

From the information you have provided, this appears to relate to an incident with BT affecting internet access in the local area, which was resolved before midday on 28 June 2021. I understand BT reported the fault to Ofcom in line with their obligations, and Ofcom will determine whether further investigation is needed in line with its normal process.

Further information for consumers and businesses can be found on Ofcom's website: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet>, which also describes the formal complaints procedure for consumers unhappy with the response from their provider.

■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure

David Mundell:

[24921]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish its next steps following the consultation on changes to permitted development rights for electronic communications infrastructure.

Matt Warman:

The technical consultation on changes to permitted development rights for electronic communications infrastructure in England closed on 14 June 2021. We are now considering the responses to the consultation and the Government will publish its response in due course.

John Nicolson:

[25852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with site owners potentially affected by his Department's proposed reforms to the Electronic Communications Code.

Matt Warman:

My Department published a consultation in January 2021 asking whether further reforms to the Code are needed in order to ensure the Code provides the right legislative framework to promote fast, cost effective network provision. The consultation covered a range of issues, including matters relating to negotiations and dispute resolution, rights to upgrade and share apparatus and problems relating to the renewal of expired agreements.

The consultation closed on 24 March 2021. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the possible outcomes of the consultation at this stage, or for my Department to meet with stakeholders, as responses are being considered. The consultation response will be published in due course.

John Nicolson:

[\[25853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will undertake an impact assessment on the financial consequences of any reforms to the Electronic Communications Code on affected (a) farmers, (b) churches, (c) businesses and (d) community organisations.

Matt Warman:

We are currently considering the responses to the consultation which closed in March. We will, of course, carefully consider the impact of our proposals on all stakeholders. We will carry out a full assessment of the impacts, in line with the usual processes. We will publish the response to this consultation shortly and will bring forward legislative proposals before this House as soon parliamentary time allows.

■ Visit Devon: Finance

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[24204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 June 2021 to Question 10396, how much of the £2.3 million was allocated to Visit Devon.

Nigel Huddleston:

Visit Devon received £77,414 in total from the £2.3m allocated by VisitEngland to provide emergency financial support to Destination Management Organisations (DMOs). It received £26,666 from the DMO Resilience Fund, and £50,748 from the DMO Emergency Financial Assistance Fund.

■ Youth Services

Owen Thompson:

[\[24278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Department's Youth Review announced as part of the 2020 Spending Review, what representations he has made to the Secretary of State for Education on the provision of support for international opportunities for young people outside of formal education settings.

Matt Warman:

DCMS and the Department for Education have worked closely together on the delivery of the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes in the UK. Officials in both departments have also discussed potential future international opportunities. While the Department for Education is responsible for the Turing scheme and international exchange in formal education settings, DCMS is responsible for international opportunities for young people outside of formal education settings.

International opportunities for the youth sector and young people outside of formal education settings are being considered as part of the DCMS-led Youth Review,

which was commissioned by the Treasury at the 2020 Spending Review. DCMS recognises the value of international opportunities and has been discussing this issue with other Government departments and the devolved administrations, as well as with young people and stakeholders as part of the Review. Future funding is subject to decisions at the next Spending Review.

■ Youth Services: Reviews

Owen Thompson: [\[24279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that the outcome of the Youth Review gives youth groups parity in support with the level of support they previously received under Erasmus+.

Matt Warman:

International opportunities for the youth sector and young people outside of formal education settings, such as the types of activities funded under the Erasmus+ programme, are being considered as part of the DCMS-led Youth Review, which was commissioned by the Treasury at the 2020 Spending Review. DCMS recognises the value of international opportunities and has been discussing this issue with the devolved administrations, as well as with young people and stakeholders as part of the Review. Future funding is subject to decisions at the next Spending Review.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices: Construction

Mr Richard Holden: [\[24367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to introduce (a) a level 3 apprenticeship or (b) construction T-level in plastering, painting and bricklaying.

Gillian Keegan:

This is a matter for the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. I have asked its Chief Executive, Jennifer Coupland, to write to the honourable member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[25102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the uptake of covid-19 testing during the summer 2021 term.

Nick Gibb:

Rapid testing is a vital part of the Government's plan to suppress COVID-19. Testing is voluntary but staff, pupils and students are strongly encouraged to participate in the education testing programme to help to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in school and college settings and the community.

Pupils, students, and staff have made an incredible and important contribution to the Government's mass testing programme. As of 23 June, over 60.5 million tests have been completed in total through education settings since January. In recent weeks, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has written open letters to all parents, and to schools and college leaders, to thank them for their contribution so far and to encourage them to continue their efforts to keep pupils and students testing until the end of term.

The Department has worked in partnership with NHS Test and Trace to understand the barriers to rapid testing amongst school and college students and to take steps to encourage uptake of both testing and the reporting of results. These steps have included: improvements to the digital journey for parents, providing advice and guidance to schools and colleges, utilising a range of communications channels to reach parents and pupils directly, collecting and sharing best practice, and giving schools and colleges access to aggregate testing data for their setting to support them to take action where participation rates are low.

■ **Department for Education: CCTV**

Kate Green: [23185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether a risk assessment has been carried out on the secure holding of CCTV footage within his Department.

Nick Gibb:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not Government policy to comment on security procedures in Government buildings.

■ **Department for Education: Email**

Kate Green: [23184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether any departmental business has been conducted on private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Kate Green: [23186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his departmental IT systems routinely allow officials, advisers and Ministers to access private email accounts from their office desktop computers, department-issue laptop computers and mobile phone devices.

Nick Gibb:

I refer the hon. Member to the Cabinet Office guidance to departments on the use of private emails, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-departments-on-private-email-use>.

■ Department of Education: Directors**Kate Green:** [24960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial payments his Department makes to its non-executive directors; how many times his departmental Board will meet in 2021-22; and what work the non-executive directors undertake.

Nick Gibb:

This information is published in the Department's annual report and accounts, and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-consolidated-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020>.

The Department's report and accounts for the 2021/22 financial year will be published in due course, in the usual way.

Departmental boards provide strategic leadership for each central government department, as well as advising on and challenging how the Department is performing. Each board is chaired by the Secretary of State and includes junior ministers, the Permanent Secretary and non-executive board members. Non-executives are appointed to government departments from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Their role is to provide advice and bring an external perspective.

A summary of the work of non-executive directors across Government can be found in the Government Lead Non-Executive's annual report, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-lead-non-executives-annual-report-2019-to-2020>.

Kate Green: [24961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where those interests are published.

Nick Gibb:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually. This information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts.

Information on any relevant interests is published alongside the Department annual report and accounts, which are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-consolidated-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020/list-of-board-members-interests-march-2020>.

Kate Green: [24962]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department's current non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight officials had of Ministerial appointments of non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of their

experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on Departmental Boards of November 2014.

Nick Gibb:

The Department follows the principles set out in the Cabinet Office/HM Treasury 'Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice', which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-governance-code-for-central-government-departments-2017>.

The Department's current non-executive directors are listed below with their dates of appointment:

- Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, appointed December 2015.
- Ian Ferguson, appointed January 2016.
- Richard Pennycook, appointed October 2017.
- Irene Lucas, appointed November 2018.
- Toby Peyton-Jones, appointed November 2018.
- Nick Timothy, appointed March 2020.

■ **Department of Education: Security**

Kate Green:

[24963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what private companies are contracted to provide security services at his Department's buildings that contain Ministerial private offices; and whether there are closed circuit television cameras in any Ministerial private office within his Department's estate.

Nick Gibb:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not Government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

■ **Education: Coronavirus**

Ed Davey:

[24888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of days of in-person learning that has been lost to pupils since schools reopened in March 2021 as covid-19 restrictions were eased.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education publishes weekly attendance figures in the 'Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' publication, including the number of children who were off school or self-isolating due to: a confirmed case of COVID-19, a suspected case of COVID-19, self-isolating due to potential contact with a case inside the school setting, self-isolating due to potential contact with a case outside the school setting, or their school being closed due to COVID related reasons.

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

Table 1B, which is an accompanying file available to download, has daily attendance figures which cover the period requested (March 2021-present).

Ed Davey: [24889]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on pupils attainment of the number of in-person learning days that have been lost to pupils since schools reopened in March 2021 as covid-19 restrictions were eased.

Nick Gibb:

Understanding the impact of COVID-19 disruption on the attainment and progress of all pupils is a key research priority for the Government. The Department has commissioned Renaissance Learning to provide a baseline assessment of missed learning for pupils in schools in England and to monitor progress over the course of the year. The latest interim findings from this research were published on GOV.UK on 4 June 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year-interim-report>.

Primary pupils were on average around 2 to 3.5 months behind expectations in March 2021 - similar to the amount pupils were behind expectations by when they returned to school in September 2020. The Department will be using the research to monitor progress for the rest of this year to further understand the continued impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on lost education and education recovery. The next phase of analysis will allow us to assess the impact of any disruption to education since schools reopened to all pupils in March 2021. The full report will be published once the study is completed in October 2021.

■ Education: Eating Disorders

Catherine West: [24295]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what mandatory education is provided to pupils and students at (a) schools and (b) universities on eating disorders.

Vicky Ford:

Through our new compulsory relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum, pupils can learn about how to stay safe and healthy, and how to positively manage their academic, personal and social lives.

Body image and mental wellbeing are explicitly covered in the RSHE curriculum and, at secondary level, teachers may choose to discuss eating disorders when teaching these topics. However, schools are not medical professionals. It is important that school staff understand eating disorders to inform the pastoral support that they offer to pupils and how to seek specialist support where it is needed, particularly as there has been an increase in referrals to eating disorder services during the COVID-19 outbreak. The government's £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme

funded advisers in every local authority in England, reaching up to 15,000 schools with free expert training, support and resources for education staff to help them understand and respond to the mental wellbeing issues faced by children and young people. The department is providing an additional £7 million in this financial year to extend that support with an additional focus on directing schools towards the right local support.

Higher education providers are autonomous bodies, independent from the government and have a responsibility to support students with mental health conditions. They are well placed to identify the needs of their particular student body, including those who may have eating disorders. It is for each provider to determine what welfare and counselling services are needed by its students.

The government has set up the first waiting time standard for children and young people eating disorder services so that 95% of children with an eating disorder will receive treatment within one week for urgent cases, and within four weeks for routine cases. In the 2021-22 financial year, NHS England will receive around an additional £500 million to support recovery, which includes £79 million to expand children's mental health services significantly, including allowing 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services.

■ Education: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [\[22178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps is he taking to measure the educational attainment gap.

Rachael Maskell: [\[22179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of changes in the level of the educational attainment gap.

Nick Gibb:

The Government recognises the challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak has caused for young people's education, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Schools continue to receive additional funding through the pupil premium, worth over £2.5 billion in 2021/22, to help them support their disadvantaged pupils.

To assess the education attainment gap, the Department has developed a Disadvantage Gap Index. The index shows that, between 2011 and 2019, the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils narrowed by 13% at age 11 and 9% at age 16.

The Department also commissioned Renaissance Learning to provide a baseline assessment of education loss and catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England and to monitor progress over the course of the year. We estimate that in the second half of the autumn term the gap in education loss between disadvantaged pupils and their more affluent peers remains at around half a month.

■ Further Education: Buildings

Mike Amesbury: **[24310]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what existing capital funding streams for new build campuses are available for new further education or sixth form colleges.

Gillian Keegan:

There are currently no capital funding streams available that can be used for new build campuses for new further education (FE) or sixth form colleges.

The free schools programme has opened a number of 16-19 academies in response to an identified need. The department remains committed to the free schools programme. However, we are not currently seeking new free school proposals, with decisions on capital funding in future years, including on free schools, to be made through the Spending Review.

The £1.5 billion FE Capital Transformation Fund is available to FE colleges to upgrade their existing estate. Further capital funding of £83 million has been made available in the 2021-22 financial year to existing post-16 providers, including FE colleges and sixth form colleges, to enable them to accommodate the demographic increase in 16-19 year olds. In addition, capital funding is available to existing providers to support delivery of T Levels and the establishment of Institutes of Technology.

■ GCSE: Arts and Design

Peter Kyle: **[25093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils achieved GCSEs in (a) art, (b) design and technology, (c) music and (d) drama in each of the last 10 calendar years.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is published at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-4-performance-revised>. This shows the number of entries to the Art Design, Applied Art and Design, Design and Technology, D & T: Electronic Products, D & T: Food Technology, D & T: Graphic Products, D & T: Resistant Materials, D & T: Systems & Control, D & T: Textiles Technology Music and Drama, as well as the percentage of pupils achieving A*-G/9-1 and A*-C/9-4 in these subjects: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/b4bd53da-dbea-4f25-804b-d61e0bac8987>.

The information is available for each academic year between 2009/10 and 2019/20 in state funded schools.

■ Higher Education: Veterans

Stuart Anderson:

[22205]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to enhance access for veterans to a higher education.

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education co-funds two schemes with the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The Service Leavers Scheme (or Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education Scheme) and the Armed Forces Bereavement Scheme contribute to the delivery of the joint cross-government strategy of support for Service Leavers and their families as part of the Armed Forces Covenant, which emphasises the mutual obligation between the nation, the government and the Armed Forces. The Department for Education provides a grant of £5 million to MOD to support the higher education (HE) aspects of these schemes for study in England.

Furthermore, my right hon. Friend, Prime Minister, announced in September 2020 the government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee, which promises to help people across England get the skills they need at every stage of their life. As part of this, the 'free courses for jobs' offer, which started in April 2021, gives an estimated 11 million adults in England who are 24 and over, and do not yet have A levels or equivalent qualifications, the opportunity to take their first level 3 qualification for free.

The Publicly Funded Further Education/Higher Education Scheme provides service leavers access to a first full level 3 (GCE A Level or vocational equivalent), or a first HE qualification (a foundation degree or first undergraduate degree or equivalent) with tuition fees funded to a maximum of £9,250 per year of study. Full details of this scheme can be found at the Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Service website: www.enhancedlearningcredits.com.

■ Lifetime Skills Guarantee: Food

Daniel Zeichner:

[22170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, for what reason his Department did not include the food sector in the Lifetime Skills Guarantee; and if he will reconsider its exclusion to help promote a sustainable future for British farming and enhance UK food security.

Gillian Keegan:

Through the Free Courses for Jobs offer, we are making courses available that offer good wage outcomes and address skills needs in the economy, empowering adults with the tools they need to secure a better job.

We have identified hundreds of courses that can give adults the skills they need in the labour market, and this includes agriculture and land-based engineering qualifications.

Many of the qualifications available support employers regardless of their sector, including those in the food and drink industry – for example, business, accountancy, and digital qualifications.

We are keeping the list of qualifications and the sector subject areas in scope under review and will consider requests for including courses that meet the published criteria.

Qualifications not included in this offer will still be eligible for Advanced Learner Loans. Advanced Learner Loans are income-contingent loans that provide extensive coverage of regulated qualifications at level 3 to level 6, helping to meet the upfront tuition fees. Applications in the 2019/20 academic year have been to study at nearly 450 training providers, and over 3000 qualifications are currently in scope.

■ Schools: Arts

Peter Kyle: [\[25094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much money has been provided to schools for art materials in each of the last 10 calendar years.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is delivering the largest cash boost for schools in a decade. Core school funding increased by £2.6 billion in the 2020/21 financial year and is increasing by £4.8 billion and £7.1 billion in the 2021/22 and the 2022/23 financial years respectively, compared to 2019/20. In 2021/22, mainstream school funding is increasing by 3.5% overall.

The National Funding Formula (NFF) continues to distribute this funding fairly, based on the needs of schools and their pupil cohorts. It is for head teachers to decide how they use their core funding distributed through the NFF, and no separate allocation is made specifically for arts materials.

This Government values the arts and supports the creative arts throughout the education system. Alongside funding for schools, the Department has invested nearly £620 million from 2016 to 2021 in a diverse portfolio of music and arts education programmes to ensure all children, whatever their background, have access to a high-quality education in music and arts. A further £84 million has been made available for music programmes and a range of arts and cultural programmes in this financial year.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[25103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will review the decision to reduce the funding available to help schools in England cover the costs of implementing covid-19-related mitigations.

Nick Gibb:

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, schools have continued to receive their core funding regardless of any periods of reduced attendance. School budgets increased by £2.6 billion in the 2020/21 financial year and will increase by a further £4.8 billion in 2021/22 and £7.1 billion in 2022/23 compared to the 2019/20 financial year. Any decisions on future funding will be made as part of this year's Spending Review.

The Department has provided additional funding to schools, on top of existing budgets, to cover unavoidable costs associated with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Through the exceptional costs fund, schools could claim costs incurred between March and July 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak that could not be met from their budgets. The Department has paid schools £139 million for all claims within the published scope of the fund across both application windows.

There are no current plans to reopen the exceptional costs fund. Schools will be able to use their existing budgets to help with all other costs associated with COVID-19.

The COVID-19 workforce fund for schools and colleges helped those schools with high staff absences and also facing significant financial pressures to remain open. It funded the costs of teacher absences over a threshold from 1 November 2020 until the end of the autumn term 2020.

The Workforce Fund was introduced at a time when workforce absence and community transmission were high nationally. Workforce absence has since reduced and remained lower than in the autumn term. Schools may need to alter the way in which they deploy their staff, and use existing staff more flexibly as set out in our guidance. These include making best use of teaching assistants, hosting initial teacher trainees, using volunteers, engaging supply staff using in-year allocated budget, and seeking support from their local authority or trust.

Schools continue to be able to access existing support for financial issues, including a wide range of school resource management tools, and in serious circumstances, additional funding or advances from local authorities for maintained schools, or the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academy trusts.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance**Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[25159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will publish a list of schools to be rebuilt under the School Rebuilding Programme.

Mary Kelly Foy:[\[25160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will publish a priority list for school rebuilds to allow the conditions of schools to be compared.

Nick Gibb:

In February 2020, the Department announced the first 50 of 500 projects to replace or refurbish buildings through the School Rebuilding Programme (SRP). Further information on the projects is available [here](#):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme-first-50-schools>.

The Department does not hold a priority list for school rebuilds, beyond the schools confirmed for the SRP. We collect data on the condition of school buildings through the Condition Data Collection (CDC) programme. The CDC programme collected data on 22,031 schools, comprising 63,942 teaching blocks, across 9 geographical regions of England, between 2017 and 2019. The CDC programme followed a predecessor programme, the Property Data Survey (PDS) which ran from 2012 to 2014. A third condition data collection programme (CDC2) is now underway, to update the Department's condition data. Further information on CDC2 is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/condition-data-collection-2-cdc2-programme>.

The prioritisation process for the second round of 50 SRP projects is ongoing, informed by data from CDC as well as further investigations and site visits. The process that the Department is using to prioritise these projects is explained here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme/school-rebuilding-programme>.

The Department plan to consult later this year on the approach to prioritising schools for the SRP. Following this, we will confirm the approach for future projects.

■ Students: Rented Housing

Mary Kelly Foy:

[25161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what reports he has received on university students being charged additional fees by landlords if they are told to self-isolate due to the covid-19 outbreak at their term time accommodation beyond the end of their tenancy; and what steps the Government plans to take to support students in that position.

Michelle Donelan:

Universities and private accommodation providers are autonomous and are responsible for setting their own rent agreements. The government plays no direct role in the provision of student residential accommodation whether the accommodation is managed by universities or private sector organisations.

If a student is contractually committed to move home and has been told to self-isolate, they should seek to delay their move until all members of their household have come to the end of their self-isolation period. All parties involved should prioritise agreeing amicable arrangements to change move dates where someone is self-isolating or has tested positive.

There is no prohibition on moving house where necessary, and anyone in England who wishes to move house can do so. This includes forming new households and moving into and out of shared student accommodation and houses in multiple occupation. Guidance is available here for: landlords and tenants on renting and COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-and-renting-guidance-for-landlords-tenants-and-local-authorities>.

If a student thinks their accommodation provider is treating them unfairly, they can raise a complaint under the accommodation codes of practice as long as their provider is a code member. The codes can be found here:

<https://www.thesac.org.uk/>, <https://www.unipol.org.uk/the-code/how-to-complain>,
<https://www.nrla.org.uk/>.

The government is aware of the disproportionate impact the crisis will have on some students and we recognise that in these exceptional circumstances some students may face financial hardship. The department has worked with the Office for Students (OfS) to clarify that providers are able to use existing funds, worth around £256 million for this academic year, towards hardship support. The government has made an additional £85 million of student hardship funding available to higher education (HE) providers in the 2020/21 academic year. Providers have flexibility in how they distribute the funding to their students, in a way that best prioritises those in greatest need.

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

Some students may also be eligible for a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme, if they are required to self-isolate.

Information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/test-and-trace-support-payment>.

It is vitally important that universities continue to make sure that students feel as supported as possible should they have to self-isolate. This robust package of support needs to include mental health and wellbeing support, daily communications and ensuring students have access to suitable free or affordable food.

Universities UK have also produced a checklist for providers to support students who are required to self-isolate as well as bespoke guidance for HE providers on how to prepare for and care for students who are required to self-isolate on arrival in the UK. We encourage providers to review this guidance when considering how best to support their international and other students arriving from overseas.

The OfS have published a statement on support for students in self-isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak, available here: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/news-blog-and-events/blog/ofs-student-panel-statement-on-support-for-students-in-self-isolation-during-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic/>.

■ Teachers: Arts

Peter Kyle:

[25092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools lack a qualified teacher in (a) art and design, (b) drama and (c) music.

Nick Gibb:

The number of state-funded schools in England with no teachers holding a relevant post-A level qualification in art and design, drama or music is provided in the attached table.

To reduce burden during the COVID-19 outbreak, schools and local authorities were not required to provide information on teacher qualifications in 2020. Therefore, the information provided relates to the November 2019 School Workforce Census.

Please note that this information relates to qualifications of teachers, not the subjects taught. Information on subjects taught and teacher post-A level qualifications is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

Attachments:

1. Table for teacher employment qualifications
[25092_table_teachers_without_post_a_level_qualification_Art_Drama_music.xls]

Teachers: Arts and Design

Peter Kyle: [25095]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers are employed to teach (a) art, (b) design, (c) music and (d) drama in each English region.

Nick Gibb:

It is not possible to provide information on teachers by subject taught at a regional level due to the manner in which data is collected from a sample of secondary schools.

A national level headcount of teachers by subjects taught is published in the 'School Workforce in England' statistical publication at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**Chemicals: Reproduction**

Fleur Anderson: [24359]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when a review of reproductive toxicity will take place under Article 138(9) of REACH; and when he plans to publish the results of that review.

Fleur Anderson: [24360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the (a) criteria and (b) methodology he plans to use when carrying out a review of reproductive toxicity under Article 138(9) of REACH.

Rebecca Pow:

In accordance with UK REACH legislation the Secretary of State will carry out a review of the testing requirements for reproductive toxicity within 18 months of the end of the Transition Period. We are developing our approach to this review and as part of this we are considering how to inform and involve stakeholders and other interested parties.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: CCTV

Luke Pollard: [23319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether a risk assessment has been carried out on the secure holding of CCTV footage within his Department.

Victoria Prentis:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not Government policy to comment on security procedures in Government buildings.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Directors

Cat Smith: [25035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what declaration of interests has been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and when that declaration will be published.

Victoria Prentis:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

In Defra, board members are required to submit any declarable interests twice a year; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts. Information on any relevant interests will be published shortly on gov.uk and this will be referenced in the Department's annual report and accounts.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Email

Luke Pollard: [23318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether any departmental business has been conducted on private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the Hon. Member to the Cabinet Office guidance to departments [on use of private emails](#).

Luke Pollard: [23320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his departmental IT systems routinely allow officials, advisers and ministers to access private

email accounts from their office desktop computers and department-issue laptop computers and mobile phone devices.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the Hon. Member to the Cabinet Office guidance to departments [on use of private emails](#).

It is Government policy not to comment on specific technical security controls; however, the incidental personal use of private email accounts from departmental systems is subject to our Acceptable Use policy, in spare time.

■ **Fisheries: EU Countries**

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[24369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that mechanisms are in place to allow data exchange with EU (a) institutions and (b) member states to help manage fish stock levels.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries protection is a devolved matter. Nonetheless, Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive continue to work together to share information and ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement across UK waters.

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement requires both Parties to share information on such matters. The two parties exchange information on records of catches of quota species from the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) on a monthly basis, supplemented with International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)-rectangle (geographical areas) level data to provide assurance of the robustness of the EEZ-level data.

We are working closely with counterparts in EU Member States to ensure effective coordination of intelligence-sharing and inspections. It is a legal requirement for all registered fishing vessels over 12m operating within UK waters, including EU vessels, to be fitted with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) device. Data from this device is relayed via the flag member states providing the UK Fisheries Authorities with live positional data.

■ **Fishing Vessels**

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[24370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taken to increase quotas for UK fishing vessels since the UK's departure from the EU; and if he will distribute the UK quota to increase allocation to small-scale fishing boats.

Victoria Prentis:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU provides for a significant uplift in quota for UK fishers equal to 25% of the value of the average annual EU catch from UK waters and will be phased in over five years, with the majority of this value (15%)

being transferred in the first year (2021). It ensures a smooth and managed transition to new quota sharing arrangements and a framework for annual negotiations between the UK and the EU.

We set out how the additional quota would be apportioned between the four administrations on 24 March. How each administration distributes that to industry is a devolved issue.

For England we set out the new distribution method on 14 April and this provided significant uplifts for under 10 metre vessels.

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

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

■ Hedgehogs: Animal Welfare

Dr Rupa Huq:

[24290]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to grant hedgehogs greater legal protection.

Rebecca Pow:

As set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government is committed to taking action to recover our threatened native species.

As part of the recently announced Green Paper, my department will explore opportunities to enhance and modernise protections for declining native species such as the hedgehog. We intend to publish the Green Paper and seek views later this year.

Our Environment Bill will also strengthen our commitment to our native species. We have amended the Bill to require a new, historic legally binding target for species abundance for 2030 to be set, aiming to halt the decline of nature. We are also taking action through our net gain provisions in the Bill, to support the role of new development in helping protect, improve and create the habitat that our native species, including hedgehogs, need to thrive.

Beyond the Bill, we are introducing three schemes that reward the delivery of environmental benefits: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Local Nature Recovery scheme and the Landscape Recovery scheme. These schemes will pay for sustainable farming practices, creating and preserving habitat such as woodland, heathland and species-rich grassland, as well as making landscape-scale environmental changes, all of which could benefit species such as hedgehog.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers

Dr Rupa Huq:

[25104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take cross-departmental steps to ensure that restrictions on lorry drivers' working hours are not relaxed in response to recent shortages of HGV drivers potentially leading to food shortages on supermarket shelves; and what steps he is taking to increase (a) capacity for HGV driving tests and (b) training to help provide new HGV drivers who are resident in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

My Rt Hon Friend the Environment Secretary has discussed with the Secretary of State for Transport the logistical challenges for the food industry caused by a shortfall of HGV drivers. Defra officials are continuously gathering intelligence from food sector's stakeholders to keep abreast of the impact of shortages on food supply.

Our officials are also working closely with counterparts in the Department for Transport who monitor any potential requirements to consider an extension of driver delivery hours under Article 14(2) of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 to accommodate deliveries.

Our officials are continuously working closely across government on a diverse range of solutions to driver shortages in the short and long term. These include the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) increased capacity to test drivers to reach 3,000 practical tests each week. The Department for Education's (DfE) Large Goods Vehicle drivers apprenticeship programmes with an increased funding opportunity to £7,000 to improve UK labour supply.

Overall, UK food supply is highly resilient. The food industry is well versed in dealing with scenarios that can impact food supply. Consumers in the UK have access to a range of sources of food, including countless domestic food producers and imports from a range of stable sources.

■ Marine Protected Areas: Fishing Vessels

Cat Smith:

[23235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's plan to introduce management measures in 40 English offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPA) over the next three years, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential benefits to mobile fish stocks of banning supertrawlers from the offshore MPA network.

Victoria Prentis:

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

We will manage fishing within existing, sustainable use MPAs to ensure recovery of the features to a good, healthy condition, and will designate Highly Protected Marine Areas to allow full recovery. We are developing ambitious plans to protect our

existing MPAs from any fishing activity that could prevent them achieving their conservation objectives, such as trawling on the seabed. 98 MPAs in inshore waters have management measures in place to protect sensitive features from bottom towed fishing gears. All existing MPAs in our offshore waters will be protected from fishing as required through a three-year programme being undertaken by the Marine Management Organisation.

Supertrawlers generally target pelagic species of fish within the water column and are unlikely to damage the seabed habitats for which most MPAs are designated. We are currently reviewing our policy on these vessels and working to develop more robust management of non-quota stocks which these vessels are targeting, as well as quota stocks.

■ **Nutrition: Health Education**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[24100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to introduce targets for the promotion of healthy eating as identified in the National Food Strategy.

Victoria Prentis:

We want the entire supply chain to help deliver healthier food and encourage healthy eating and look forward to seeing Henry Dimbleby's review. Our Food Strategy White Paper will set out future policy, building on existing work such as that developed under the Agriculture Act and the Obesity Strategy, to help ensure that our food system delivers healthy and affordable food for all people and is built upon a resilient and sustainable agriculture sector.

■ **Pâté de Foie Gras: Imports and Sales**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[22152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will set out the Government's (a) roadmap and (b) timeframe for bringing forward legislative proposals to ban the (i) import and (ii) sale of foie gras made by force-feeding.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese using force feeding raises serious welfare concerns. The production of foie gras by force feeding has been banned in the UK for over 15 years following the introduction of the Animal Welfare Act 2006. It is a legal requirement to provide for an animal's welfare needs, such as supplying a suitable diet and protecting the animal from injury and disease. Under this legislation, it is a criminal offence to allow an animal to suffer unnecessarily, which clearly reflects the UK public's attitudes to welfare standards.

Whilst a member of the EU, we were subject to rules regarding the movement of goods within the EU market. Now that our future relationship with the EU has been established, we are able to take further steps where there is clear evidence of low welfare standards. We are now considering any further steps that could be taken in

relation to foie gras that is produced overseas using force feeding practices, such as restrictions on import and sale.

We are gathering information and will continue to speak to a range of interested parties about the issues involved. This is in line with the Government's commitment to improving animal welfare standards as set out in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare which was published on 12 May, and will be used to inform any future action taken regarding foie gras produced from force feeding practices.

■ **Pets: Tagging**

Wera Hobhouse:

[22189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing compulsory scanning of pets' microchips by vets.

Victoria Prentis:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

We consulted on compulsory scanning of microchips in the recent consultation on Cat and Dog Microchipping and Scanning in England. We are currently analysing the responses and we will respond to the consultation in the autumn.

We have worked closely with the veterinary profession and jointly agreed that the principle of scanning healthy dogs prior to euthanasia should be incorporated in the guidance that underpins the Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons. This guidance is now in force and applies to all veterinary surgeons operating in the UK.

■ **Public Bodies: Email**

Luke Pollard:

[23321]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether any official business has been conducted on private email addresses within the (a) Environment Agency, (b) Rural Payments Agency and (c) other agencies or public bodies that support his Department; and what mechanisms are in place within each agency to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the Hon. Member to the Cabinet Office guidance to departments [on use of private emails](#).

■ **Water Abstraction**

Sir Charles Walker:

[24920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will provide a definition of sustainable abstraction in respect of removing water from chalk stream (a)

aquifers and (b) rivers; and what criterion his Department takes into account in protecting such water environments from environmental damage.

Rebecca Pow:

Restoring England's internationally important chalk streams is a Government priority.

The Environment Agency (EA) regulates abstraction from chalk streams and aquifers in the same way as from any other source. It set out its approach in a recent policy paper, [Managing Water Abstraction](#).

An abstraction licence is unsustainable if:

- the River Basin Management Plan actions cannot be achieved because:
- it contributes to a reason for not achieving the water body flow objective
- it has caused or contributed to deterioration against the current RBMP baseline
- increasing abstraction within the limits of the licence risks deterioration
- it is affecting or could affect a site [designated](#) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
- it is affecting or could affect a site designated under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Sites of Special Scientific Interest)
- it could compromise [Biodiversity 2020](#) objectives

For rivers, the EA uses the Environmental Flow Indicator as the default flow required to support Good Ecological Status in water bodies and to prevent deterioration. For existing abstraction, local ecological evidence is used to show whether an abstraction is causing environmental damage.

For groundwater, the EA uses 4 tests to assess groundwater bodies:

1. Groundwater balance - a numerical quantification based on fully licensed abstraction, recent actual abstraction and recharge.
2. Check of the water resource availability of any rivers fed by the groundwater body.
3. Assessment of any saline or other intrusions occurring within the unit because of groundwater abstraction.
4. Check of the quality of any wetlands fed by the groundwater body.

The EA is developing long term plans to reduce our reliance on chalk streams. The publication of the CaBA Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy later this year will set out recommendations on how to restore and protect England's chalk streams. The EA is committed to working with all chalk stream stakeholders to better understand what more it can do in both the short and long term to make a difference on the ground.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Brazil: Human Rights**

Kerry McCarthy: [\[24917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the Brazilian Government on legislation that concerns the rights of indigenous communities in the Amazon region of that country.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[24918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with representatives of indigenous peoples in Brazil on deforestation in their territory and the Amazon region.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[24919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the Brazilian Government on recent protests in Brasilia by representatives of indigenous peoples in the Amazon region of that country.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to promoting and defending the human rights of all individuals, and we regularly discuss issues affecting indigenous people with Brazilian authorities. The UK continues to support work with indigenous communities across Brazil, including in the Amazon region. UK programmes on building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic include a focus on vulnerable groups, including in the Amazon region, and work on issues such as solar energy, primary healthcare, and skills development. The UK has also supported local and indigenous people in the Amazon through our International Climate Finance Programmes, with nearly £120 million invested since 2012.

The Foreign Secretary, and the Secretary of State for International Trade have regular discussions with their Brazilian counterparts on a range of issues. They have raised the crucial importance of combatting illegal deforestation at the UK-Brazil Strategic Dialogue in October 2020, and at the Joint Economic and Trade Committee in November 2020. More recently, the Foreign Secretary discussed climate and environment matters with the Brazilian Foreign Minister in June 2021. The UK stands ready to support Brazil's efforts to counter increasing deforestation rates, and we welcome the recent reduction of approximately 25% in areas under deforestation alerts.

■ **Cameroon: Politics and Government**

Layla Moran: [\[23309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the role of constitutional issues pertaining to the cultural identity of anglophone Cameroonians and their political marginalisation in the ongoing violence in anglophone Cameroon.

James Duddridge:

The Government remains deeply concerned about the crisis in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon. We assess that the root causes of the conflict are varied and complex. These include constitutional issues and the different legal and education systems in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, and the need for sustained political will on all sides to resolve the crisis.

These were discussed at the Grand National Dialogue in 2019 and we continue to urge progress on the issues identified, including further inclusive dialogue to address the root causes of the crisis. In a visit to Cameroon in March, I met President Biya, Prime Minister Ngute and Foreign Minister Mbella Mbella, where I set out the UK's commitment to supporting a peaceful resolution. I also met the President of the South-West Regional Assembly, civil society, political opposition and religious leaders, to hear the experiences of the affected communities.

China: Developing Countries**Jim Shannon:**[\[22162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle Chinese political dominance over smaller and poorer countries.

Nigel Adams:

The UK recognises China as a source of aid, trade and investment for many countries. However, we also recognise the potential risks associated with China's global economic and political influence and take a nuanced approach that distinguishes carefully between the threats and opportunities that China poses to UK foreign policy interests. It is precisely because we recognise China's role in the world that we expect China to live up to its international obligations and international responsibilities and we will hold China to account when it does not.

Sovereign countries have the right to make their own decisions on investments and their own development. We want to help developing countries make these long-term decisions on the basis of the best information, and according to best practice. We also want to ensure developing countries have a choice of high quality, fair financing options.

China: Export Controls and Import Controls**Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**[\[24881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to (a) the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 16 June 2021, Official Report, column 287 and (b) his oral contribution of 12 January 2021, Official Report, column 162, and pursuant to the Answer of 25 June 2021 to Question 16783 on Import Controls China: whether the Government plans to implement (i) import and (ii) export controls on goods made in China, believed to be the product of forced labour.

Nigel Adams:

On 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced a review of existing export controls as they apply to Xinjiang to identify whether we can bring into scope any additional goods which could be used for internal repression or human rights violations in the region. This review is ongoing. Import and export controls are governed by different processes and legislation, and the Foreign Secretary's announcement on 12 January referred only to export controls. The Government has serious concerns about the situation in Xinjiang and we keep our policy response under close review.

■ **China: Import Controls****Sir Iain Duncan Smith:**[\[24880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to (a) the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 16 June 2021, Official Report, column 287 and (b) his oral contribution of 12 January 2021, Official Report, column 162, and pursuant to the Answer of 25 June 2021 to Question 16783 on Import Controls: China, whether the Government has import controls on goods made in China, believed to be the product of forced labour.

Nigel Adams:

On 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced a review of existing export controls as they apply to Xinjiang to identify whether we can bring into scope any additional goods which could be used for internal repression or human rights violations in the region. This review is ongoing. Import and export controls are governed by different processes and legislation, and the Foreign Secretary's announcement on 12 January referred only to export controls. The Government has serious concerns about the situation in Xinjiang and we keep our policy response under close review.

■ **China: Taiwan****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[24103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to offer support to the Taiwan people in respect of the current political climate involving China.

Nigel Adams:

HMG considers the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue. However, we remain concerned by any action which raises tensions and risks destabilising the status quo.

■ **Cyprus: Politics and Government****Patrick Grady:**[\[25032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last held discussions with his counterparts in (a) Turkey and (b) Cyprus aimed at securing a settlement of the Cyprus issue based on a UN-backed bi-communal, bi-zonal federation with political equality.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to supporting the UN process to reach a Cyprus Settlement, which will be good for Cyprus, regional stability and UK interests. On 27-29 April, in support of the efforts led by the UN Secretary General to find common ground on a way forward to resolve the Cyprus Issue, the Foreign Secretary represented the UK as a Guarantor Power at informal UN talks in Geneva.

At the meeting, the Foreign Secretary continued to urge all sides to demonstrate flexibility and compromise to find a solution to the Cyprus Issue within the UN Security Council parameters of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation which we believe are broad enough to meet the objectives of all sides. This followed UK messaging to the parties ahead of the talks, including the Foreign Secretary's visit to the island on 4 February, where he met President Anastasiades, Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and the UN. Ahead of the talks, during my visit to Cyprus (7-9 April), I reiterated this message and the UK's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue. Most recently, I spoke to Deputy Foreign minister Faruk Kaymakci during my visit to Turkey on 28-30 June, where I reiterated the importance of avoiding any action that could impact negatively on the Settlement process. FCDO ministers and officials are regularly in contact with all parties and partners across the EU, underlining the importance of a Cyprus Settlement for the stability and security of the island and the wider region.

Patrick Grady:[\[25033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the EU on the resumption of negotiations on Cyprus since the Crans-Montana Conference on Cyprus in 2017.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to supporting the UN process to reach a Cyprus Settlement, which will be good for Cyprus, regional stability and UK interests. On 27-29 April, in support of the efforts led by the UN Secretary General to find common ground on a way forward to resolve the Cyprus Issue, the Foreign Secretary represented the UK as a Guarantor Power at informal UN talks in Geneva.

At the meeting, the Foreign Secretary continued to urge all sides to demonstrate flexibility and compromise to find a solution to the Cyprus Issue within the UN Security Council parameters of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation which we believe are broad enough to meet the objectives of all sides. This followed UK messaging to the parties ahead of the talks, including the Foreign Secretary's visit to the island on 4 February where he met President Anastasiades, Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and the UN. Ahead of the talks, during my visit to Cyprus (7-9 April), I reiterated this message and the UK's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue. Most recently, I spoke to Deputy Foreign Minister Faruk Kaymakci during my visit to Turkey on 28-30 June, where I reiterated the importance of avoiding any action that could impact negatively on the Settlement process. FCDO ministers and officials are regularly in contact with all parties and partners across the EU,

underlining the importance of a Cyprus Settlement for the stability and security of the island and the wider region.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Directors**

Florence Eshalomi: [\[24373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department's current non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight officials had of Ministerial appointments of non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of their experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on Departmental Boards of November 2014.

Nigel Adams:

Departments follow the principles set out in Cabinet Office/HM Treasury 'Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice.'

The biographies for all four FCDO Non-Executive Directors are available on GOV.UK

Florence Eshalomi: [\[24374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where those declarations are published.

Nigel Adams:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts. Information on any relevant interests will be published alongside the Department annual report and accounts, which are available on gov.uk.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Security**

Florence Eshalomi: [\[24375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what private companies are currently contracted to provide security services at his Department's buildings that contain Ministerial private offices; and whether there are closed circuit television cameras in any Ministerial private office within his departmental estate.

Nigel Adams:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

■ Gaza: Overseas Aid and Reconstruction

David Simmonds:

[\[22222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the extent of potential misappropriation of UK aid and reconstruction materials by Hamas in Gaza since the 2014 conflict.

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.

■ Indonesia: Coronavirus

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[24151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the (a) Indonesian Government's response to and (b) support provided by the UK Government for the covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia; and what assessment he has made of the need to provide additional support to that country.

Nigel Adams:

Indonesia has suffered a recent rise in Covid-19 cases, with the total number of cases now over 2 million. We welcome the Indonesian's government response of tightening lockdown measures, and travel restrictions in Jakarta and across Java. We are aware that the health system has been severely impacted in some provinces. The UK is providing direct support on digital healthcare systems, in genomics to better identify variants, and funding new programmes on enhancing Anti-Microbial Resistance. The UK has responded to an Indonesian government request by providing £1 million to provide hygiene, Covid-19 awareness materials and fire prevention measures for peatland communities at increased risk from Covid-19. In partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children, the UK Government is also providing up to £2.4 million for projects in seven Indonesian provinces. More broadly, the UK has provided £548 million to COVAX to support the distribution of vaccines internationally. COVAX has delivered 8.4 million vaccines, to date, in Indonesia. The Foreign Secretary met with Health Minister Budi in April this year and discussed joint efforts to tackle Covid-19 with Foreign Minister Marsudi at the G20 summit on 29 June.

■ International Atomic Energy Agency

Karen Bradley: [\[24959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the International Atomic Energy Agency's ability to verify and monitor Iran's nuclear activities.

James Cleverly:

On 23 February Iran suspended its application of the Additional Protocol and the transparency measures under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The Foreign Secretary, alongside his E3 partners, has made clear that Iran must reverse these restrictions and co-operate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The UK has also repeatedly stated that Iran must co-operate on all issues related to the IAEA's separate safeguards investigation. We are currently engaged in intensive discussions in Vienna with JCPOA participants and the US, aimed at returning Iran back into full compliance with its JCPOA commitments, and restoring the benefits of the deal for all.

■ Iran: Nuclear Power

David Simmonds: [\[22223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of Iranian compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action since the UK, France and Germany triggered the dispute resolution mechanism in January 2020.

James Cleverly:

Iran continues its systematic non-compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) commitments, undermining the JCPOA and putting at risk the intensive efforts underway to restore the deal. On 16 April Iran announced that it had started uranium enrichment up to 60% using advanced centrifuges. 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. Iran restricted access and oversight by the IAEA of its nuclear programme from 23 February. We have issued statements with our French and German partners expressing our deep concern at these steps.

We are 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.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Steve Double: [\[22172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing with the US Administration an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

James Cleverly:

The UK government shares the objective of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. In support of this, we continue to fund peacebuilding projects focused on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. US planning for the International Fund is at a very early stage and they have not yet approached us to discuss it. Once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration

Kashmir: Self-determination of States**Sarah Owen:**[\[25168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in the (a) Indian Government, (b) Pakistani Government, and (c) the Government of Jammu and Kashmir on the potential merits of holding a referendum on self-determination for the people of Kashmir.

Nigel Adams:

The UK government continues to discuss the situation in Kashmir with both the Governments of India and Pakistan, and with our contacts in Kashmir, through our diplomatic networks in both countries. The UK's longstanding position is that it is for India and Pakistan to identify a lasting resolution to the situation in Kashmir, one that takes into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Lebanon: Overseas Aid**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[25114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £15 million of aid in Lebanon set out on devtracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

James Cleverly:

The final audited spend for 2021/22 will be published in the Annual Report and Accounts. The final 2021 spend will be published in Statistics on International Development and will contain detailed breakdowns of the UK's ODA spend for 2021.

Ministers: Mobile Phones**Lisa Nandy:**[\[24957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he uses or has used since his appointment his personal mobile phone for diplomatic purposes including direct contact, via call or direct message, with other foreign ministers and senior figures in international organisations.

Nigel Adams:

It has been the long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on security related matters.

■ Ministers: Security

Lisa Nandy: [\[24954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential security risks associated with the Secretary of State's personal information, including a private mobile phone number, being available publicly online for the past eleven years.

Nigel Adams:

It has been the long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on security related matters.

Lisa Nandy: [\[24955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what advice he received on his appointment from officials and the security services on ensuring his personal information, including his private mobile number, was not publicly available online.

Nigel Adams:

It has been the long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on security related matters.

Lisa Nandy: [\[24956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his private mobile phone has been made available to the security services for assessment of any potential breaches of security related to his personal mobile phone number being available publicly online for the last 11 years.

Nigel Adams:

It has been the long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on security related matters.

Lisa Nandy: [\[24958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) he, (b) officials in his Department and (c) the security services have made an assessment of the potential risk of hostile actors being able to (i) compromise and (ii) intercept messages or calls from Ministers' private mobile phone numbers that are publicly available.

Nigel Adams:

It has been the long-standing practice of successive Governments not to comment on security related matters.

■ Myanmar: Human Rights and Politics and Government

Rachael Maskell:

[\[22180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make the UK a joint signatory to the International Court of Justice case taken against the human rights abuses and political situation in Myanmar.

Nigel Adams:

The UK supports the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case which is establishing whether Myanmar has breached the Genocide Convention in relation to the Rohingya. The provisional measures ruling is vital as it is putting pressure on the military to protect the Rohingya. We pressed the elected civilian government to engage constructively and transparently with the process. We urge the military to comply with the provisional measures rulings. We have reiterated our support to the ICJ process in Parliament, at the UN Security Council, and through public statements. We provided funding to enable Rohingya refugees to attend the ICJ hearing in December 2019. The ICJ Statute does not make provision for a third country to become a 'joint signatory' to an existing case, however it does set out how a state can apply to intervene in a case.

■ Nigeria: Christianity

Helen Hayes:

[\[24288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of reports of violence against the Igbo people and other Christian communities in northern Nigeria.

Helen Hayes:

[\[24289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Nigerian counterpart on reports of violence perpetrated against the Igbo people in northern Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

We condemn all violence against civilians in Nigeria, irrespective of their religion and ethnicity. In the North East, terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, continue to cause immense suffering to both Muslim and Christian communities. These groups seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion or belief by indiscriminately attacking those of all faiths who do not subscribe to their extremist views. We are providing a comprehensive package of humanitarian and stabilisation assistance to support communities affected by the conflict.

We are concerned by sharpening social divisions within Nigeria, including between north and south. We encourage reconciliation and constructive dialogue between the many ethnic groups and communities that make up and contribute to the strength and diversity of Nigeria. I visited Nigeria in April and discussed increasing insecurity across the country with the President's Chief of Staff, the Foreign Minister and community leaders. We continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take

urgent action to protect all those at risk of violence, to bring perpetrators to justice and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

■ Northern Cyprus: Aviation

Fabian Hamilton: [\[24087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart on the UK's policy of aircraft disembarkation before flights reach northern Cyprus.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary has not held discussions with his Turkish counterpart on this issue. Arrangements for passengers arriving in Turkey from the UK who are transferring to other flights are a matter for the Turkish authorities and airlines concerned.

Fabian Hamilton: [\[24088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will review the UK's policy on aircraft disembarkation for passengers flying from North Cyprus' Ercan Airport.

Wendy Morton:

A review by FCDO in 2018 concluded that no alteration to the position on travel between Ercan airport and the UK was possible. In accordance with legal obligations under the 1944 Chicago Convention, there are no direct flights between Ercan and the UK. Passengers who book a flight from Ercan to Turkey and then an onward flight to the UK are required to disembark in Turkey before boarding their UK bound flight, as these are separate flights.

■ Oman: Economic Situation

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which organisations are being paid through the Gulf Strategy Fund to support economic reform in Oman.

James Cleverly:

In the 2020/21 financial year, the Gulf Strategy Fund worked with TetraTech International, HMRC, Plexal, CyLon and Imperial College London to support economic reform programmes in Oman.

■ Palestinians: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[25116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is planning on spending more than £10 million of aid in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as set out on his Department's Development Tracker in the financial year 2021-22.

James Cleverly:

Full budgets per country will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Palestinians: Schools**Mark Jenkinson:**[\[22206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the EU report into the Palestinian Authority school curriculum; and if he will make a statement.

Mark Jenkinson:[\[22207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the findings of the EU report into the Palestinian Authority school curriculum, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK aid to the Palestinian people does not finance material inciting violence or antisemitism.

James Cleverly:

It is essential to have a strong and thriving Palestinian education system to provide opportunities for the next generation. This report on Palestinian textbooks highlights progress in key areas, but also indicates that anti-Israel content remains. We have been clear that incitement to hatred or violence is unacceptable from all parties and should have no place in education. We will continue to raise concerns about this with the Palestinian Authority (PA) and continue to urge all parties to condemn incitement wherever and whenever it occurs. The UK does not fund textbooks in the OPTs. Our education funding to the PA contributes to the salaries of carefully vetted teachers/education workers.

■ Rwanda: Overseas Aid**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[25113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is planning to spend more than £21 million of aid in Rwanda set out on devtracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

James Duddridge:

Full budgets per country for 2021-22 and a final audited spend for 2020-21 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Syria: Overseas Aid**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[25115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £48 million of aid in Syria set out on devtracker in this 2021-22 financial year.

James Cleverly:

Full budgets per country and a final audited spend for 2021/22 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Uganda: Politics and Government**Feryal Clark:**[\[23381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Ugandan counterpart on attacks on (a) freedom of speech and (b) opposition politicians in that country.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is concerned about restrictions placed on freedom of expression, and over the treatment of opposition candidates and their supporters in the run-up to and since the Ugandan elections. Following the unacceptable constraints placed on the opposition candidate, Robert Kyagulanyi, the British High Commission in Kampala pressed the Ugandan authorities to remove restrictions on his political freedoms.

In my statement after the elections, I urged the Government of Uganda to meet its human rights commitments and to respect the right of freedom of speech for all Ugandans. I also raised my concerns over the treatment of the opposition, including the reports of missing persons and arbitrary detention, with the then Ugandan Foreign Minister, Sam Kutesa, on 21 April 2021 and with the Ugandan High Commissioner on 16 June. I urged the Government of Uganda to solve these issues swiftly.

The UK, along with 17 members of the Media Freedom Coalition, issued a statement in the week of the elections expressing concern about the situation for journalists and media freedom in Uganda. We called for the Ugandan authorities to investigate attacks on the press and hold those responsible to account, ensuring that journalists are provided with the necessary protections, accreditation, and access that they need to do their jobs. As a long-standing partner to Uganda, the UK will continue to press for the rights of all Ugandans to be upheld.

■ Yemen: Overseas Aid**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[25112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is planning to spend more than £69 million of aid in Yemen set out on devtracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

James Cleverly:

Full budgets per country will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development website and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Abortion****Scott Benton:**[\[22213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what threshold of evidence on fetal viability would prompt his Department to (a) review and (b) reduce the current upper gestational limits on abortion.

Helen Whately:

It would be for Parliament to decide whether to make any changes to the law on abortion. As with other matters of conscience, abortion is an issue on which the Government adopts a neutral stance and allows hon. Members to vote according to their moral, ethical or religious beliefs.

Sir Edward Leigh:[\[23048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the research by Hakansson et alia, published in the journal Pediatrics in July 2004, on increases in the number of babies born at 22 weeks gestation that can survive outside the womb and the increase in that number with proactive perinatal care, what plans his Department has to review the time limits on abortion in the UK.

Helen Whately:

It is for Parliament to decide whether to make any changes to the law on abortion. As with other matters of conscience, abortion is an issue on which the Government adopts a neutral stance and allows hon. Members to vote according to their moral, ethical or religious beliefs.

■ Abortion: Drugs**Mr David Jones:**[\[24134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commission independent research on the impact of early medical abortions on (a) those experiencing domestic violence, (b) trafficked women and sex workers and (c) other vulnerable groups before any decision on their continuation is made.

Helen Whately:

There are no plans to do so. commission research on these issues. The Government's public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women asked questions on the impact of making permanent the temporary measure on people with protected characteristics. The consultation also sought views on the potential for making permanent home use of both pills for early medical abortion to reduce or increase inequality in health outcomes experienced by different socioeconomic groups. The consultation has now closed

and we will be considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year.

Bob Blackman: [\[24160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that calls to abortion providers in response to complications arising from early medical abortions are adequately followed up by those providers; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Department's Standard Operating Procedures, which all independent abortion providers must comply with, set out that all providers should have protocols in place covering support for women following an abortion procedure.

Abortion providers will discuss possible complications with the woman during the consultation and women will be provided with written advice and information about possible symptoms, including those which would necessitate urgent review. Women have access to a 24 hour telephone helpline should they have any concerns.

Bob Blackman: [\[24163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice his Department has provided to coroners on women who are prescribed early medical abortion pills by post and medicate with them beyond the 10 week legal and licensing limit; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Department has not provided such advice.

■ Acute Beds

Margaret Greenwood: [\[774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish the primary diagnosis codes of conditions that patients have who are discharged from acute care under the Discharge to Assess model.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 17 May 2021]: NHS Digital publish data on hospital admitted patient care activity annually. Analysis covering the period since 2020 is not yet available.

■ Aducanumab

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[12336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of the Alzheimer's drug Aduhelm.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is monitoring regulatory developments regarding Aducanumab (Aduhelm). We are unable to

formally comment on any product that is not approved for use in the United Kingdom due to commercial and market sensitivities surrounding the approval process of a product. As with all other treatments for life threatening or debilitating conditions, the MHRA will ensure a thorough and expedited assessment of this medicine.

■ Autism and Learning Disability

Barbara Keeley:

[\[6246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) suitable housing, (b) suitable social care providers and (c) robust community teams are being provided to support people with learning disabilities and prevent admission to inpatient units.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[6247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to make adequate funding available to ensure there are (a) suitable social care providers and (b) robust community teams in every local area for people with learning disabilities to prevent admission to inpatient units.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: Since 2015, NHS England and NHS Improvement have delivered a dedicated capital programme to support the development of short and long term accommodation in the community for people with a learning disability and autistic people leaving mental health inpatient care or at risk of being admitted. National and regional housing leads also provide guidance and support to local systems to develop strategic housing plans, embed strong relationships between commissioners and local housing partners and share best practice. NHS England is working with the National Development Team for Inclusion and the Local Government Association to help local systems develop and sustain small, bespoke providers who can support the people with the most complex needs in their own home.

■ Care Homes: Quarantine

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[6382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the Visit out of Care Homes guidance states residents must self-isolate for 14 days rather than the standard 10 days.

Helen Whately:

The 14-day isolation requirement in the guidance was agreed by senior clinicians and reflects current understanding of clinical vulnerability and the potential for longer incubation periods in care home residents.

■ Carers

Rachael Maskell: [\[15314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he (a) has taken and (b) plans to take to help ensure that carers register as carers with their GPs.

Helen Whately:

The NHS Long Term Plan set out an intention to improve the identification, recognition and support for carers. NHS England and the Care Quality Commission have published and are promoting 'Supporting carers in general practice: a framework of quality markers'. This is a best practice framework which aims to increase the identification and support of carers in general practitioner practices and demonstrate how effective they are in recognising and supporting carers.

Most recently, many unpaid carers were identified through the COVID-19 vaccine programme.

■ Chronic Illnesses: Research

Claire Hanna: [\[24368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that clinical studies for (a) ME, chronic fatigue syndrome and (b) long-covid are conducted using appropriate outcome criteria.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have invested in research into *myalgic encephalomyelitis*, chronic fatigue syndrome and 'long' COVID-19. All research commissioned by the NIHR and UKRI is subject to robust peer review processes to ensure that all the studies funded use appropriate outcome criteria to assess and measure their impact.

■ Clinical Trials

Alex Norris: [\[22009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government plans to take to ensure that the regulation of clinical trials is not weakened as the UK leaves the European Medicines Agency system.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 29 June 2021]: The Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 provides targeted delegated powers which enable the regulatory regime for clinical trials to be updated. Using these powers we can design and strengthen a regulatory environment for clinical trials that will support the development of innovative medicines and ensure that the regulation of trials is not weakened following the exit from the European Union.

Alex Norris:

[\[25120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Life Sciences Sector Deal 2, what recent progress the Government has made on strengthening the UK environment for clinical trials.

Edward Argar:

We have established five national Patient Recruitment Centres dedicated to the delivery of late-phase commercial research and launched the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway to support all stages of trial design development and approval, enhanced capability to deliver innovative trials and improved approvals and set-up times for studies.

In March 2021, the Government published 'The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery', setting out a vision to build a patient-centred, pro-innovation and digitally-enabled clinical research environment. This was followed by an implementation plan for 2021/2022.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[3892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) financial and (b) other steps his Department is taking to support the health and social care workforce in (i) Coventry, (ii) the West Midlands and (iii) England during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: For National Health Service staff we are planning a pay uplift despite a general pause across the public sector. For adult social care we have given councils an additional £1 billion to ensure key priorities are met, including paying care workers at least the National Living Wage. Many of the lowest paid care workers will have benefitted from at least a 2.2% pay rise.

We have put in place a comprehensive mental health and wellbeing offer that includes a 24 hours a day, seven days a week helpline and specialist bereavement support and a further £37 million investment is ensuring that the 40 mental health and wellbeing hubs continue to provide rapid support and outreach services through 2021/22. These hubs are accessible by both NHS and social care staff.

Hubs in Coventry and the West Midlands were launched in March and are offering psychological therapy for trauma, anxiety and depression and providing mental health training for managers to hold supportive and compassionate health and wellbeing conversations.

■ **Coronavirus: Public Inquiries**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[21332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet families bereaved by covid-19 in preparing for the public inquiry into the handling of the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 29 June 2021]: We will continue to have meetings with those bereaved as a result of the pandemic, in order to hear and learn from their experiences.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination****Philip Davies:****[13903]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been hospitalised within 28 days of receiving a covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

This data is not available in the format requested.

The technical briefing published by Public Health England provides the latest data regarding hospitalisations and deaths by variant, including the Delta variant and data on those who are vaccinated with one and both doses and unvaccinated. This data is available at the following link:

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

Daniel Zeichner:**[15266]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the covid-19 vaccines approval process and whether lessons from that process can be applied to support the development and approval of other innovative medicines and treatments.

Daniel Zeichner:**[15267]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) adopts innovative processes to help UK patients get earlier access to regulatory-approved medicines.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The rapid approval and delivery of clinical trials in the United Kingdom to respond to COVID-19 has made a leading contribution to the international vaccine and therapeutics effort. In March the Government set out its vision for the future of clinical research delivery to create a patient-centred, pro-innovation and digitally-enabled research environment. Implementation plans and strategies setting out how the Government and devolved administrations will begin to deliver the vision during 2021 to 2022 will be published shortly.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) launched the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP) at the start of 2021, to reduce the time to market for innovative medicines. The ILAP combines the MHRA's independence and high standards of quality, safety and efficacy, with improved efficiency and flexibility. It provides a single integrated platform between the MHRA, partners and the medicine developer, to ensure that patients receive the highest quality medicines and treatments as soon as they become available.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Directors

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[23403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where those declarations are published.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually. This information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts.

Information on any relevant interests will be published in the Department's annual report and accounts, which is available on GOV.UK.

Attachments:

1. Round Robin Guidance [2021.07.01 - Round Robin Guidance - Declaration of Interests made by Non-Executive Directors.docx]

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Re-employment

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire as a negotiating tactic is not being used in his Department and associated arms length bodies.

Edward Argar:

The Department's human resources (HR) policies on organisational change and dismissal specify the legally permitted reasons for dismissal and the relevant process that must be followed. These are in line with ACAS and Civil Service HR guidance. There is no scope within our policies to allow 'fire and rehire' as a negotiating tactic. We expect our arm's length bodies to adhere to the same guidance regarding dismissal procedures.

■ Eating Disorders: Children

Jim Shannon:

[\[23188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the increased number of children with eating disorders in the UK; and if he will ensure that those children have the support they require.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The NHS Long Term Plan provides an extra £53 million a year for children and young people's community eating disorder services from 2021/22. This funding will enhance the development of more than 70 new or improved community eating disorder teams. An additional £79 million has been made available, some of which will be used to

allow an additional 2,000 children and young people to be able to access eating disorder services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also announced additional early intervention services for young people aged 16 to 25 years old with eating disorders in 18 areas across the country, so young adults seeking support could be contacted within 48 hours and begin treatment within two weeks.

■ Eating Disorders: Health Services

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[23194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is giving to the NHS to provide care for the increased number of patients in need of urgent treatment for an eating disorder.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Tim Farron MP) on 1 June to Question [5175](#).

■ Health Services

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[24148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Future Fit programme remains a priority for NHS England.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Department wrote to the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust on the 19 November 2020 confirming they remained committed to supporting the scheme.

■ Hospices: Children

Fabian Hamilton: [\[23062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of an annual ring-fenced disabled children's grant for children's hospices.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: We have made no specific assessment. Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess the social care needs of disabled children and young people, with clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) holding the equivalent responsibility for their health needs. Local authorities and CCGs should work together to plan and commission the most appropriate package of care for the children and young people with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions in their area.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Rachael Maskell: [\[25061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of when the number of patients on hospital waiting lists will peak.

Edward Argar:

No estimate has been made.

We continue to work closely with the National Health Service to monitor and plan for the recovery of services.

■ Integrated Care Systems

Margaret Greenwood: [\[6324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the (a) pay and (b) terms and conditions of NHS staff will vary in accordance with the Integrated Care System area in which those staff work.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 27 May 2021]: The pay and terms and conditions of National Health Service staff are a matter for employers. The NHS uses a number of national pay structures and terms and conditions.

■ Knee Replacements: Plymouth

Luke Pollard: [\[24323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are on the waiting list for knee replacement surgery in Plymouth.

Edward Argar:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Maternity Services: Coronavirus

Tim Loughton: [\[24878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the guidance entitled Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic: actions for NHS providers in enabling parents' full access together to their baby in neonatal units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have worked closely with trusts to adopt the actions set out in the guidance and to remove barriers which prevent parental presence in neonatal units. The guidance is clear that parents of babies in neonatal critical care are partners in care and should not be considered to be visitors.

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review**Daisy Cooper:** [\[23348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Written Statement of 11 January 2021, Update on the Government's response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, HCWS692, when he plans to complete his consideration of the recommendation for a redress scheme for people affected by (a) hormone pregnancy tests, (b) sodium valproate and (c) pelvic mesh; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We will respond further to the report of the Review later in 2021.

■ Members: Correspondence**Chris Bryant:** [\[19506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Rhondda of 22 April 2021 on vaccination passports.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 1 July 2021.

■ Motor Neurone Disease**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[24129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the future funding of motor neurone disease (a) research and (b) treatment ahead of the 2021 Spending Review.

Helen Whately:

There have been no specific discussions. However, we are currently working on ways to significantly boost further research on dementia and neurodegeneration at all stages. The Department funds research on health and social care through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including motor neurone disease (MND). Applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

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

■ NHS: Fees and Charges

Navendu Mishra:

[\[23376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of older people who are paying for previously free NHS ancillary services in (a) England, (b) the North West and (c) Stockport as a result of (i) the size of waiting lists and (ii) reduced services.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: We have made no such estimate as the number of people purchasing private care is not collected centrally.

■ Orthopaedics: Waiting Lists

Luke Pollard:

[\[24326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average waiting time is for orthopaedic surgery in (a) England, (b) Devon and (c) Plymouth in the latest period for which that data is available.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Patient Recruitment Centres

Alex Norris:

[\[25118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how he plans to monitor the performance of National Patient Recruitment Centres across the NHS.

Edward Argar:

Progress of each Patient Recruitment Centre (PRC) is monitored through defined contractual management arrangements through the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR reviews progress against defined metrics on performance, which are specified and monitored by the PRC Programme Office. PRCs also provide regular operational reports to the Programme Office as well as producing an annual report and a formal contract review.

Alex Norris:

[\[25119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to expand the number of National Patient Recruitment Centres.

Edward Argar:

No decisions on expanding the number of Patient Recruitment Centres has yet been made.

■ Perinatal Mortality: Coronavirus**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[24099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch to report on the national review entitled Intrapartum stillbirth during COVID-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch is aiming to publish its report in September 2021.

■ Pregnancy: Ethnic Groups**Catherine McKinnell:** [\[24175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the National Institute for Health and Research's Policy Research Unit in Maternal and Neonatal Health and Care's research into the disparities in pregnancy complications and near misses among women from different ethnic groups, what his timescale is for the publication of that research.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The research has been submitted to a journal for peer review. The publication timeline is determined by the journal.

■ Streptococcus: Clinical Trials**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[24102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the National Institute for Health Research is on schedule to report the results of clinical trials on universal screening for Group B Strep during pregnancy in 2023.

Jo Churchill:

The trial was paused last year due to the pandemic and it is now expected that the results will be in the public domain in early 2025.

HOME OFFICE**■ Alcoholic Drinks and Tobacco: Misuse****Crispin Blunt:** [\[R\] \[24874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 10 June 2021 to Question 11460, if she will ask the ACMD to advise whether alcohol and tobacco should be controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; and for what reasons her Department makes a distinction between alcohol and tobacco and controlled drugs when there is no provision in the MDA that specifically excludes legally regulated drugs such as alcohol and tobacco.

Kit Malthouse:

We have no plans to control alcohol or tobacco under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and no plans to commission advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) on this matter. Parliament considered arguments about their inclusion at the time of the Bill's passage, including the reasons for the distinction between them and controlled drugs. Alcohol is regulated under the Licensing Act 2003 in England and Wales and tobacco is regulated under The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016.

■ Asylum: Employment**Janet Daby:****[22204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what procedures her Department has in place when reviewing asylum applications to (a) identify and (b) rectify the effect of departmental processing errors that may prevent applicants securing paid employment.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office will consider applications for paid employment or volunteering at the point a Permission to Work (PTW) application is made. The application for PTW would instigate a review of the circumstances around the delay and assess an individual's right to work.

It is not part of the PTW decision process to routinely review the outstanding asylum protection claim to see if they have been affected by a departmental processing error that may prevent applicants securing paid employment; we are led by the information provided in the application and make the assessment based on evidence and individuals the right to work. Caseworkers dealing with a PTW application must first establish the reason for the delay and ensure that the case is not unnecessarily delayed any further.

Caseworkers follow Home Office published policy (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handling-applications-for-permission-to-take-employment-instruction>) which reflects our obligations under Immigration Rule 360.

The Home Office does deal with a small number of cases in which an applicant's right to work has been affected by not recognising extant leave at the point of claim. This is usually flagged by the applicant or the applicant's legal representatives once they receive the Application Registration Card and quickly rectified where appropriate.

■ Asylum: Finance**Stuart C McDonald:****[24997]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of asylum seekers in the asylum support system who do not have (a) a new or (b) functioning payment card that would allow them to access financial support.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[24998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her policy is on asylum seekers in receipt of emergency payments following the transition to a new asylum support payment card.

Stuart C McDonald: [\[24999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has plans to compensate charities that have provided emergency funds and food to people who have not had access to asylum support following the transition to a new payment card from May 2021.

Kevin Foster:

Fully functioning Aspen cards, including translated instructions on how to activate them, were distributed to all service users via first class post prior to the transition date of 24 May. The majority of eligible card holders had completed this activation process by 24 May and have had access to funds via their card. However, some card holders had yet to successfully activate their card by this date. We continue to work with strategic delivery partners to ensure all cards are successfully received and activated with targeted assistance.

Emergency cash payments (ECPs) are a longstanding operational contingency provision which has been in place for several years. The position on ECPs has not changed, and they have been used to support service users who had issues with their Aspen card over the transition period.

The only element which has changed during the service transition is the value of payments (increasing from £20 to £40 per week) and the fact accommodation providers can now self-authorise Emergency Cash Payments to expedite requests. Emergency Cash Payments will continue to be provided to service users who have not yet activated their new Aspen card.

The Home Office is in regular dialogue with Charities and third sector partners about the support they provide to service users.

■ Cannabis

Crispin Blunt: [\[R\] \[24877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 14128, for what reasons cannabis continues to be controlled as a class B drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 when the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) recommended that cannabis be controlled as a class C drug (a) since it was asked to review that classification by David Blunkett following a recommendation by the Police Foundation in 2000 and (b) in its recent report on Cannabis classification and Public Health, published in 2008.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government considers advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) before making any classification or scheduling decisions under the Misuse of

Drugs Act 1971. ACMD advice is not binding and decisions are ultimately for Ministers. The decision to control cannabis as a Class B drug was taken under a previous government. However, this Government remains of the view that cannabis is a harmful drug for which the current controls are proportionate.

■ Crimes of Violence: Corrosive Substances

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[23073]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of recording data on crimes involving (a) acid and (b) corrosive fluid.

Kit Malthouse:

We have put in place an Annual Data Requirement on police forces to collect data on corrosive attacks. Data is published annually as part of the Office for National Statistics' crime statistics. The latest data available which is for the year ending March 2020 showed that the police recorded 619 violence against the person and robbery offences involving corrosive substances (figures exclude offences for Greater Manchester Police). It is not possible to breakdown the offences between those which involved the use of acid and those which involved other corrosive substances. We expect that data for the year ending March 2021 will be published on 22 July.

The Government is working closely with the police to ensure that they are able to take effective action to tackle and prevent acid or corrosive attacks. We have also strengthened the law on corrosives through the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 with legislative measures specifically stopping the sale and delivery of acid and corrosive substances to under 18s and making it an offence to possess acid or a corrosive substance in public. We expect to commence these measures later this year.

■ Drugs: Misuse

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [24077]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's Review of the Psychoactive Substances Act, published in November 2018, what steps her Department has taken since the publication of that report to resolve that lack of evidence to evaluate the impact of the Act on rates of drug use and related harm.

Kit Malthouse:

We continue to collect and monitor a range of data on the use and harms of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), including:

- Use of NPS among those aged 16 to 59 as part of the drug misuse module of the Crime Survey for England and Wales;
- Use of NPS among 10 to 15 year olds in the Smoking, Drinking and Drug Use survey;
- People entering treatment for problems with NPS; and
- Deaths involving NPS.

These allow us to monitor trends and any changes in the use of, and harms from, NPS.

Alongside this data, our engagement with partners inside and outside government (including policing, charities, treatment providers and the devolved administrations) also provides an opportunity to gather and share any soft intelligence related to the use and harms of NPS.

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[24078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 14127, on Drugs: Misuse, what criterion the Home Office Accounting Officer uses to assess the value for money of her Department's drugs misuse programmes.

Kit Malthouse:

All major investments and proposals for funding go through economic appraisal which is conducted in line with Green Book guidance. This is guidance issued by HM Treasury on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects, as well as the design and use of monitoring and evaluation throughout implementation. For major Home Office investments these appraisals are reviewed by the Finance and Investment Committee (FIC) which involves sign off by the Home Office Chief Analyst/HOAI Director. Where relevant evaluations already exist these are used, as well as existing management information, to form the basis of economic appraisal for new investments.

Programmes being delivered as part of the Government's whole-system response to tackling drug misuse, including investment to disrupt drug supply and county lines, drug treatment and Project ADDER (Addiction, Disruption, Diversion, Enforcement and Recovery) have been subject to this approach. We will continue to monitor and evaluate our drug misuse programmes across Government to learn what is most effective and inform future spending decisions.

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[24080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7725 on Drugs: Misuse, and with reference to the Government's response to the Health and Social Care Committee's First Report of Session 2019, on Drugs policy, HC 1178, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policy of the absence of recent analyses of harm for several controlled and illicit drugs.

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[24081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 5140, and to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7725 on Drugs: Misuse, what assessment she has made of the ethical implications of imposing legal penalties for use of drugs that have not been shown to cause harm.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government does not impose legal penalties on possession of drugs unless they have been shown to cause harm or to have the potential to cause harm. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) regularly provides advice on substances and their appropriate control status, and these are published on the gov.uk website. Drugs which have been controlled under the 1971 Act for a considerable period of time may not have been subject to recent analysis of their harms by the ACMD. The Government introduces new controls over drugs only after considering advice from the ACMD.

■ Entry Clearances: Overseas Students**Munira Wilson:**[\[24352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to grant cost exemptions to students who need to extend their visas to complete their course in the UK as a result of the duration of their courses being extended due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

We have no plans to exempt students from paying an application fee where they require further time to complete a course of study.

Munira Wilson:[\[24353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the number of students applying for visa extensions in response to the duration of their courses being extended as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office Migration Statistics do not capture the number of estimated student visa extension applications submitted in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

The Home Office does though publish data on the number of student visa extension applications submitted and how many of these have been granted. The data shows the year on year comparison. These can be found in our published statistics:

[Extensions tables](#)

■ Frontier Workers: Glass**Hilary Benn:**[\[24393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will work with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to provide a 12 month extension to the Frontier Worker Permit scheme to allow the UK glass industry to continue to have access to critical overseas technical glass workers for the rebuilding and maintenance of glass furnaces, pending a longer term solution on that matter.

Kevin Foster:

The Citizens' Rights Agreements protect those EEA or Swiss citizens who were frontier workers in the UK by the end of the transition period at 11pm on 31 December 2020 and who continue to be so.

The UK's frontier worker permit scheme, which has been open to applications since 10 December 2020, allows those protected frontier workers to obtain a permit, free of charge, as evidence of their right to continue entering the UK as a frontier worker after 30 June 2021.

There is no deadline by which protected frontier workers must apply for a permit, though it is mandatory for non-Irish frontier workers to hold a frontier worker permit to enter the UK for work from 1 July 2021.

Where an overseas worker is not protected by the Citizens' Rights Agreements, the new points-based immigration system provides routes for skilled workers and specialist services suppliers which can be utilised by industries such as the glass sector. Such work visas are typically issued within three weeks, making the UK system one of the fastest visa services in the world.

■ Greater Manchester Police: ICT**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[24165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of Greater Manchester Police's iOPS computer system.

Kit Malthouse:

Operational decisions, such as the procurement of ITC systems, are matters for individual forces and the Home Office was not involved in the procurement of Greater Manchester Police's Integrated Operational Police System (iOPS).

It is the responsibility of the Labour Mayor, Andy Burnham to hold the Chief Constable and force to account and he is democratically accountable to the public for this.

A HMICFRS report in March 2020 made recommendations which the force responded to.

■ Hamas**Steve Double:**[\[22173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the extent of involvement of Hamas's political wing in its military activities; and if she will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

■ Heroin: Rehabilitation

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[24875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reasons Heroin Assisted Treatment programmes are not eligible to apply for funding from Project ADDER.

Kit Malthouse:

Injectable opiate treatment programmes compliant with legislation and clinical guidance are supported by the Home Office and Public Health England and are in scope for Project ADDER funding. The Home Office and Public Health England have worked closely with delivery partners in each of the pilot Project ADDER areas to develop a delivery plan based on local need to provide a whole-system response to drug misuse and drug-related harms locally.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron:

[\[24906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence of 6 April 2021 from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay and chase up correspondence of 5 May and 9 June on a constituent with reference JB32141.

Chris Philp:

I apologise for the delay. The MP Account Management team, UK Visas and Immigration responded on 1 July 2021.

■ Migrant Workers: Food

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[22171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of including key food workers on the shortage occupation list to help tackle labour shortages in the meat industry.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary wrote to the Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) on 23 October 2020 setting out the Governments response to their review of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL).

A copy of the full letter can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-the-mac-on-the-shortage-occupation-lists-report>.

The UK labour market is changing as a result of the global pandemic, hence general 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 in the first instance.

■ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Clive Lewis: [\[25091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the compatibility of the provisions of Part 3 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Bill with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 19 and 21.

Kit Malthouse:

In the development of the measures in Part 3 of the Bill we have carefully considered the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

We believe that the measures are compatible with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice the Rt. Hon. Robert Buckland QC MP has made a statement to Parliament confirming the Bill's compatibility with the European Convention rights.

■ Scottish Police Authority: Counter-terrorism

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to UK counter terrorism operations, what (a) protocols and (b) guidance her Department has issued to the Scottish Police Authority to support its oversight of Police Scotland.

Kit Malthouse:

The Scottish Police Authority is responsible for the governance, oversight and administration of the Police Service in Scotland. The CONTEST Strategy sets out the UK's approach to and objectives for reducing the risk to its citizens and interests overseas from terrorism. Since 2011 the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations have worked together with a shared recognition of the threat posed across the UK by terrorism and a shared strategic response. This close collaboration ensures that we are collectively able to fulfil the objectives of CONTEST across the UK recognising that many local delivery mechanisms, including policing, are devolved in Scotland. Furthermore, Scotland is able to use the police to police mechanism of mutual aid from an incident response perspective to request support from any other local forces as and when required.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Buildings: Insulation

Feryal Clark: [\[23384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the number of buildings that will have (a) dangerous cladding and (b) other fire safety defects beyond June 2022.

Christopher Pincher:

For high-rise residential buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding, the Department is continuing to work with building owners to advance applications for the Building Safety Fund at pace so more remedial works can begin as swiftly as possible. We expect applicants to the Building Safety Fund to start works on site by 30 September 2021 where possible.

No estimate has been made for i) non high-rise residential buildings, nor ii) high-rise residential buildings with non-unsafe cladding defects.

The Building Safety Bill will bring about a fundamental change in both the regulatory framework for building safety and construction industry culture, ensuring those responsible for buildings make sure fire and structural safety risks are properly managed.

■ Buildings: Sales**Florence Eshalomi:**[\[25183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department provides support to leaseholders whose building owner or manager refuses to commission an external wall survey as required by mortgage lenders for the sale of that property.

Christopher Pincher:

EWS1 is not a Government form or regulatory requirement, and it is not a safety certificate. EWS1 was created by industry to help with mortgage valuations for flats in blocks with cladding. It is designed to identify whether a block is likely to need value-affecting remediation work.

Building owners are responsible for ensuring their building is safe and they have a legal duty to maintain an up-to-date fire risk assessment. This should include the external walls and Government has clarified the Fire Safety Order, through the Fire Safety Bill, to ensure this is abundantly clear.

We will continue to work with lenders to help them to recognise alternative forms of assurance of building safety such as a comprehensive Fire Risk Assessment which includes the external walls.

■ Burlington House: Tenancy Agreements**Patrick Grady:**[\[25030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what progress has been made on discussions between the Government and the Learned Societies on their continued tenancy at New Burlington House.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department has written to the Learned Societies and has invited them to work with us to find a viable solution that will enable the Learned Societies to deliver public

value and remain in situ at New Burlington House. Discussions with the Learned Societies are ongoing.

■ First Time Buyers

Colleen Fletcher:

[24219]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of rising house prices on the (a) ability of first-time buyers to get on the property ladder and (b) levels of home ownership among first-time buyers in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England; and what steps his Department is taking to support homeownership among first-time buyers in those areas.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to supporting first-time buyers. Over 717,000 households have been helped to purchase a home since Spring 2010 through Government-backed schemes such as Help to Buy: Equity Loan and Right to Buy. New initiatives including First Homes, the new model of Shared Ownership and the £11.5 billion affordable homes programme will bring more affordable housing to those who need it.

Data on the number of first-time buyers in the West Midlands, the Coventry North East constituency and across Coventry is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-december-2020>.

The English Housing Survey homeownership rates 2019-20 is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-housing-survey>. Data for 2020-21 will be published shortly.

■ High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

Florence Eshalomi:

[25184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what information his Department holds on the number of residential multi-occupied buildings (a) above 11 metres tall and (b) under 18 metres in height that have undergone an external wall survey in the last three years broken down into (i) private and (ii) social housing sectors.

Christopher Pincher:

This information is not held. External wall surveys, in the form of EWS1 assessments, are an industry process and data on them is not collected by MHCLG.

The Department has published estimates regarding EWS1 requirements on residential buildings in England, which are available online here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-estimates-of-ews1-requirements-on-residential-buildings-in-england/building-safety-programme-estimates-of-ews1-requirements-on-residential-buildings-in-england>

Florence Eshalomi:

[25185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will make an estimate of the proportion of external wall surveys conducted in the last three years on residential multi-occupied buildings in England above 11 metres tall which have resulted in a B2 fire safety rating.

Christopher Pincher:

The EWS1 process is an industry one, as is the EWS1 form. The Department accordingly does not hold this data.

■ High Rise Flats: Private Sector

Florence Eshalomi:

[25186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of private sector, residential, multi-occupied buildings in England between 11 and 18 metres in height.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department's most recent estimate on the total number of residential buildings between 11 metres and 18 metres in height can be found in the Building Safety Programme Monthly data release. The most recent publication is available online here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-monthly-data-release-may-2021>

■ Housing: Construction

Rachael Maskell:

[23256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to prevent land banking.

Christopher Pincher:

Sir Oliver Letwin reported in his 2018 independent review of build out rates - building on the work of Dame Kate Barker and many others before them - that the often-repeated idea of housebuilders 'sitting on' land is overstated. However, the Government does recognise how important build-out is to communities. The Government is absolutely clear that new homes should be built out as soon as possible.

Where build-out is delayed, it is for councils and developers to work closely together to overcome any barriers. To ensure this happens, we are exploring further options to support faster build-out as part of our proposed planning reforms.

■ Housing: Insulation

Andrew Selous:

[24916]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what provisions are available to leaseholders trying to sell their properties whose purchasers' mortgage lender requires an EWS1 form on buildings in the event that the local Fire and

Rescue service have no issues of concern for that property; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

EWS1 is not a Government form or regulatory requirement, and it is not a safety certificate. EWS1 was created by industry to help with mortgage valuations for flats in blocks with cladding. It is designed to identify whether a block is likely to need value-affecting remediation work.

On the 8 March, RICS published its updated EWS1 guidance to allow for a more proportionate approach to be taken. It outlines clearly when the EWS1 process is required.

Most major lenders, representing roughly 80% of the whole mortgage market have adopted the approach in the RICS guidance or already take a significantly less risk averse approach. This makes clear the process is for financial valuation and not building safety.

We estimate nearly 500,000 homeowners should no longer need to produce an EWS1 to sell or re-mortgage.

■ **Leasehold**

Helen Hayes:

[\[25096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to (a) reform the leasehold sector and (b) support leaseholders presented with high bills for major works.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. The Government is taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market.

This includes making it easier for leaseholders to buy their freeholds, extend their leases or exercise their right to manage buildings. We will reform the process of enfranchisement valuation that leaseholders must follow to calculate the cost of extending their lease or buying their freehold. The Government will abolish marriage value, cap the treatment of ground rents at 0.1% of the freehold value, and prescribe rates for the calculations at market value. The Government will also introduce an online calculator, further simplifying the process for leaseholders and ensuring standardisation and fairness for all those looking to enfranchise. These changes to the enfranchisement valuation process will result in substantial savings for some leaseholders, particularly those with less than 80 years left on their lease. Our reforms to enfranchisement valuation also ensure that sufficient compensation is paid to landlords to reflect their legitimate property interests.

The measures will be translated into law as soon as possible, starting with the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rents) Bill, which was introduced into Parliament on 12

May. This Bill will make homeownership fairer and more transparent for thousands of future leaseholders, by legislating to prevent landlords under new residential long leases from requiring a leaseholder to pay a financial ground rent. This will be the first part of major two-part legislation to implement leasehold and commonhold reforms in this Parliament.

The law is clear that service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard.

The 'Section 20' consultation process (of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) aims to ensure that leaseholders contributing towards the upkeep and maintenance of the building where they live have sufficient input into how their money is spent on major works.

Where the works relate to building safety, we have made direct funding of an unprecedented £5.1 billion available for cladding remediation on buildings of 18 metres and above, which will protect hundreds of thousands of leaseholders from the cost of remediating unsafe cladding on their homes. We are also stepping in to provide a generous finance scheme for the removal and replace of unsafe cladding on medium rise buildings.

Helen Hayes:

[\[25097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a cap on bills for major works to support leaseholders.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. The Government is taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market.

The law is clear that service charges must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard. We believe very strongly that any fees and charges should be justifiable, transparent, and communicated effectively and that there should be a clear route to redress if things go wrong.

The 'Section 20' consultation process (of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985) aims to ensure that leaseholders contributing towards the upkeep and maintenance of the building where they live have sufficient input into how their money is spent on major works.

■ **Listed Buildings: Land Use**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[25166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his announcement of 20 March 2021 that pubs, restaurants and listed buildings are to be given more flexibility to use their land, including erecting marquees for

summer 2021, what steps he has taken to provide guidance on that matter to local authorities, including for listed buildings.

Christopher Pincher:

To support hospitality businesses and historic visitor attractions to utilise outdoor space, on 16 April legislation came into force which introduced a new temporary permitted development right, until 1 January 2022, to allow for the provision of moveable structures on land within the curtilage of cafes, restaurants and drinking establishments such as pubs including where these are listed buildings, and historic visitor attractions only where they are listed buildings.

We have set out more information on the measures in the Explanatory Memorandum which accompanies the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 at:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/467/pdfs/ukxiem_20210467_en.pdf

■ **Local Government: Meetings**

Anne Marie Morris:

[23204]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing hybrid local council meetings to continue while there are still cases of covid-19.

Luke Hall:

The Government issued Covid-19 guidance to ensure local council meetings take place safely. The guidance is aimed at those who manage council buildings, and many council buildings are also workplaces which host a variety of meetings in addition to statutory meetings of local authority members. Where in-person attendance is not required these meetings should continue to be held virtually. The guidance also actively encourages local authorities to continue to provide remote public access until 19 July, at which point it is anticipated that restrictions on indoor gatherings will be lifted. It is for local authorities to satisfy themselves they have met the necessary requirements.

We launched a call for evidence which closed on 17 June to gather views on a longer-term decision about provision for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid form on a permanent basis. The Department is reviewing the responses and will respond shortly.

■ **Local Government: Somerset**

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[23083]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many people responded to his Department's consultation on proposals for locally-led reorganisation of local government in Somerset; and where those people live.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[\[23084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make a statement on the local referendum on the future of local government in Somerset and its outcome.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[\[24394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications of the outcome of the referendum held by the district Councils in Somerset on the matter of unitary authorities.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[\[24907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the split was and number of votes were for the two options in the Government consultation on the unitary proposals for Somerset; and how many responses there were in total.

Luke Hall:

On 27 April I said in response to the Hon Member's questions of 20 April (UIN 184363, 184364, 184365, 184366, 184367, 184368) that thousands of responses had been received to the consultation on local government reorganisation in Somerset, and that these responses were being analysed. I can now confirm that over 5,000 responses have been received from this consultation on the two proposals for unitary local government in Somerset.

The Secretary of State is now carefully considering the reorganisation proposals for Somerset to decide which, if any, should be implemented, subject to Parliamentary approval. In doing so, he will have regard to all the relevant information available to him, including the results of the local poll, and to all the representations he has received, including representations about the local poll and its conduct.

The Secretary of State expects to announce his decisions on the unitary proposals before the summer along with a summary of consultation responses.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Consultants

Grahame Morris:

[\[24948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much his Department has spent on external consultancy services in the last 12 months; and what those roles were.

Eddie Hughes:

The department is currently preparing the Annual Report and Accounts for 2020/21, which will be published shortly following the relevant audit and assurance processes. The full cost to the department of consultancy support and the key areas of spend in the 2020/21 financial year will be provided as part of the Annual Report and Accounts, and will be available upon publication.

■ Parking: Key Workers

Sir Alan Campbell:

[23082]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the extension of covid-19 restrictions beyond 21 June 2021, if he will review his decision to revoke his Department's guidance on emergency parking passes for (a) NHS staff members, (b) social care workers and (c) NHS volunteer responders.

Luke Hall:

At the end of March 2020, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government reached an agreement with the Local Government Association that local councils in England would voluntarily offer free car parking to all NHS workers, social care staff and NHS volunteer responders during the emergency response period.

With the national lockdown drawing to a close, and an increasing number of councils moving toward offering local concessions for health workers and other groups, it was agreed that the national pass guidance should be withdrawn.

This is reflected in new joint parking enforcement advice provided in April to local authorities by the Local Government Association, British Parking Association and London Councils.

Councils are responsible for setting their own local policy and those interested in local parking concessions can check their local councils' website for further details of any local schemes.

NHS staff continue to be eligible for free parking in hospital car parks and funding for this has been provided to NHS Trusts by Government.

■ Permitted Development Rights

Steve Reed:

[24211]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has plans to undertake a review of the operation of permitted development rights; and if he will make a statement.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department commissioned research into the quality standard of homes delivered under permitted development rights for change of use. This is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902220/Research_report_quality_PDR_homes.pdf

■ Respite Care: Children

Alexander Stafford:

[23401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what funding the Government is making available to assist local authorities in meeting their statutory duty to provide short breaks and respite for seriously ill children.

Luke Hall:

Supporting the most vulnerable children and young people, and local authorities in maintaining their statutory services, continues to be a key priority for this Government.

The Spending Review 2020 confirmed that the Core Spending Power of local authorities will rise by 4.6% in cash terms from £49.0 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, which is a real terms increase. This real-terms increase builds on the largest year-on-year increase in spending power in a decade and recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain children's services, including their statutory duty to assess the social care needs of seriously ill children and young people, and to provide respite care where necessary.

The Government has also given over £6 billion in un-ringfenced funding directly to councils to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of Covid-19 spending pressures. This unprecedented level of funding is un-ringfenced in recognition that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet service pressures in their local area, including for children and young people.

Liz Twist:[\[24299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a ring-fenced grant to assist local authorities in meeting their statutory duty to provide short breaks and respite for seriously ill children.

Luke Hall:

Supporting the most vulnerable children and young people, and local authorities in maintaining their statutory services, continues to be a key priority for this Government.

The Spending Review 2020 confirmed that the Core Spending Power of local authorities will rise by 4.6% in cash terms from £49.0 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, which is a real terms increase. This real-terms increase builds on the largest year-on-year increase in spending power in a decade and recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain children's services, including their statutory duty to assess the social care needs of seriously ill children and young people, and to provide respite care where necessary.

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■ Towns Fund

Steve Reed: [\[24207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which towns selected for the Towns Fund have agreed Heads of Terms with his Department.

Luke Hall:

So far, we have agreed Heads of Terms with 53 towns. We are in the process of finalising Heads of Terms agreements with the 33 towns offered Town Deals in June.

Steve Reed: [\[24208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 20605 on Towns Fund, whether additional funds will be released to lead authorities before details on each Town Deal are published by his Department.

Luke Hall:

We are continuing to support all towns in the development of their Town Deal proposals. Heads of Terms set out our in-principle commitment to invest in towns. The first payments for Town Deals are made to towns as per the agreed spend profile once business cases have been approved.

Steve Reed: [\[24209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 20419 on Towns Fund, if he will publish the referenced framework.

Steve Reed: [\[24210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 20419 on Towns Fund, what the process will be for funds that do not deliver on the objectives as set out in the referenced framework.

Luke Hall:

We want to maximise the impact of our funding and understand the difference it is making across the country. We have established a robust and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy, with regular reporting and payments dependent on performance. The payments and assurance process is informed by the regular monitoring data submitted by places.

Steve Reed: [\[24983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential risk of failure in the next six months of projects outlined in Town Deal bids.

Steve Reed: [\[24984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many projects outlined in Town Deal bids have been identified by his Department as at risk of failing in the next six months.

Luke Hall:

My officials are in regular contact with towns and expert support is also provided by the Towns Fund Delivery Partner. This allows us to spot issues early and work with towns to address them. We have a robust monitoring and evaluation strategy in place, with regular review points and payments linked to performance. As part of this strategy, places submit regular risk updates and spend/delivery data which results in RAG ratings so that issues can be flagged and resolved early.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Agricultural Products: Trade Promotion****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[24928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many dedicated agricultural counsellors are working in British Embassies abroad to promote British agricultural products.

Graham Stuart:

There are dedicated agriculture counsellors based in China and the UAE as well as a team of trade promotion staff serving UK food and drink in 119 markets worldwide.

■ Aircraft: USA**Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[25814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress her Department has made in resolving trade disputes between the UK and the US on large civil aircraft.

Greg Hands:

The UK has struck an historic deal with the US on the Airbus-Boeing disputes, which comes six months after the UK made the first move to de-escalate the conflict by suspending retaliatory tariffs.

The arrangement will maintain for five years the suspension of harmful retaliatory tariffs, which hit producers of iconic UK goods such as cashmere, machinery, and single-malt Scotch whisky, and it establishes a framework for continued cooperation.

The UK and US will now work together to put the arrangement into practice and strengthen their collaborative and constructive relationship in the large civil aircraft sector.

■ Digital Technology: Singapore**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[25071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the potential benefits for businesses located in (a) Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) the rest of the UK of the Government's proposed UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement.

Greg Hands:

The Digital Economy Agreement (DEA) will expand access to Singapore's digital economy – worth an estimated £9.4 billion in 2019 – for British businesses in Morley and Outwood and across the country.

In 2019, the UK sold almost £5 billion worth of services to Singapore, 70% of which were digitally delivered. The DEA will open further opportunities for British businesses to deliver their services through digital trade.

UK businesses also sold £5.5 billion worth of goods to Singapore in 2019. Digitising and streamlining customs and border processes can greatly reduce the administrative and other costs goods encounter at the border, benefiting both businesses and consumers.

The DEA would help to cut red tape and boost growth for British businesses who want to trade more efficiently using electronic transactions, e-signatures and e-contracts. It also will aim to remove unjustified data localisation requirements which can add significant costs to UK businesses, effectively shutting smaller traders out of new markets.

Members: Correspondence**Sir Desmond Swayne:**[\[24075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the Rt hon. Member for the New Forest West constituency of 16 April 2021, on his constituent and difficulties in exporting and importing classic cars.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade's correspondence team has transferred your letter to the Cabinet Office for a response as the subject of the letter sits within their portfolio.

Oil: Shetland**Caroline Lucas:**[\[24152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the risk that arbitration claims could be filed under the (a) Energy Charter Treaty and (b) other trade or investment treaties by the (i) concession holders and (ii) shareholders in the Cambo oil fields in the event that a future government decided to end the concession before 2050.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has investment agreements with Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions with over 90 trading partners, including within the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). There has never been a successful ISDS claim brought against the United Kingdom, nor has the threat of potential claims affected decisions taken by HM Government.

HM Government cannot comment on potential implications of hypothetical action that may be taken by a successor Government in the future.

■ Overseas Trade: China

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[24244]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 15295 on Overseas Trade: China, what steps her Department plans to take in response to the sanctioning of hon. Members by the Chinese Government; what assessment she has made of the compatibility of the statement in that Answer that her Department's trade policy with China is rooted in the UK's values and interests with trade with that country in the context of the sanctioning of those hon. Members; and what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of human rights violations committed against Uyghur people in Xinjiang, China.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

I refer my hon. Friend to the answers I gave her on 26th May (UIN: 5209), 7th June (UIN: 8649) and 14th June (UIN: 13118) with regard to HM Government's response to Chinese sanctions, including on trade policy; and to those given by my Rt. hon Friend the Minister of State for Trade Policy on 24th May (UIN: 3030) and 21st June (UIN: 15295) with regard to the violations of rights in Xinjiang.

■ Trade Agreements: USA

Gareth Thomas:

[24885]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on how many occasions and on what dates did senior officials in her Department (a) meet and (b) hold discussions with the Trump Administration during 2020 on a potential trade agreement with the US; and if she will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The UK and US negotiating teams have held five productive rounds of negotiations for the UK-US Free Trade Agreement, beginning in May 2020. A significant proportion of legal text has been agreed across multiple chapters throughout the course of negotiations so far. All rounds were held virtually.

- Round one took place from 5-15 May 2020
- Round two took place from 15-26 June 2020
- Round three took place from 27 July to 7 August 2020
- Round four took place from 8-18 September 2020
- Round five took place from 19-30 October 2020

Links to the outcome statement for each of the five rounds are as follows: Round One: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-05-18/hcws238>

Round Two: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-06-30/hcws324>

Round Three: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/negotiations-on-the-uks-future-trading-relationship-with-the-us-update--2>

Round Four: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-22/hcws461>

Round Five: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-11-02/hcws545>

JUSTICE

■ Courts and Tribunals: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[24221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the backlog of (a) criminal cases and (b) First Tier Tribunal Social Security and Child Support appeals before HM Courts and Tribunal Service in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England; and what estimate he has made of the size of the backlog of cases at venues in those areas.

Chris Philp:

In 2020/21, the Government allocated over a quarter of a billion pounds on court and tribunal recovery making court buildings safe, rolling out new technology for remote hearings, recruiting additional staff and opening Nightingale courtrooms. In 2021/22, there will be no limit on the number of days Crown Courts can sit. This will enable Crown Court judges to hold as many COVID secure hearings as possible as we continue to recover from the pandemic. In addition, this Government is moving forwards with plans to legislate giving Crown Court Judges the power to send cases back to the magistrates' court.

The latest data relating to outstanding cases in the Coventry, West Midlands, and English and Welsh Crown and Magistrates courts can be found on gov.uk [Criminal court statistics quarterly: January to March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021)

As for First Tier Tribunal Social Security and Child Support (SSCS) appeals, they have continued to be decided on the papers or heard using telephone and other remote technology. Additionally, HM Courts and Tribunals Service has introduced safety measures so that face to face hearings can be held for any cases which cannot be decided on the papers or heard remotely. The decision as to how a hearing is conducted is a matter for the judge, who will determine how best to uphold the interests of justice.

Information about appeals to tribunals is published quarterly on gov.uk at www.gov.uk/government/collections/tribunals-statistics. The latest period for which data about SSCS are available is January to March 2021. However, due to issues identified as the Tribunal was being migrated to a new operational system, SSCS

data at venue level requires further quality assurance. Therefore, caseload data for a) Coventry b) West Midlands c) England are not currently available. These data will be made available as soon as they have been quality assured.

■ **Drugs: Misuse**

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[24079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) recent progress the Prisons Minister has made on reporting on the implementation of recommendations in the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs report on Custody-Community Transitions, published on 12 June 2019, (b) the expected timescale is for receipt of that report and (c) Departmental bodies will receive that report once completed.

Alex Chalk:

The government responded to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' (ACMD) report on Custody to Community Transitions in October 2019. The MoJ is working closely with key departments across government to tackle the misuse of drugs. We are keen to align this work with any recommendations stemming from Part two of Dame Carol Black's review, which is due for publication shortly. This forms part of cross departmental work on combatting drug misuse, including support for those moving from custody to the community. This includes many areas highlighted in the ACMD Custody to Community transitions report.

In January, the Department of Health and Social Care received £80m additional funding for drug treatment in 2021/22. The bulk of the funding (£55m circa) has been given to local authorities via a specific grant allocation to support delivery of services to reduce drug related deaths and target the offender cohort. This funding will be used to enhance drug treatment and the numbers of treatment places available, including for those leaving prison, to reduce drug-related crime. It will also tackle the rise in drug-related deaths via the provision of naloxone to prevent drug overdoses. The remainder will fund the treatment element of the ADDER Accelerator programme and an increase the number of inpatient detoxification placements available, for people with the most complex needs.

■ **Holme House Prison: Drugs**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[24915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his timetable is for the Drug Recovery Prison pilot at HMP Holme House to (a) conclude and (b) report its findings.

Alex Chalk:

The Drug Recovery Prison (DRP) at HMP Holme House is jointly run and funded by the MoJ/HMPPS and NHS England/Improvement (the body responsible for overseeing NHS trusts and independent healthcare providers). The DRP aims to create a whole prison approach to tackle the supply of drugs into prison, together with creating an environment where prisoners have access to the full range of health

services that meet individual needs and are given support to lead a drug free life while they are in custody and also following their release into the community.

The DRP pilot began in April 2017 and ended in March 2020. The DRP was mentioned in part one of Dame Carol Black's Review of Drugs as an example of good practice. MoJ/HMPPS and NHSE have though continued to fund the work of the DRP as part of business as usual funding.

The pilot will be subject to three evaluations. A process evaluation is currently being finalised and will be published in Autumn 2021. Following this, economic and impact evaluations of pilot will be conducted and will be published in 2023/24 (the lag in the impact and economic evaluations is due to the delay in the 1-year reoffending statistics becoming available). Findings from the evaluations of the pilot will help to inform future health and justice interventions across the prison estate.

■ Judges: Bullying and Discrimination

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[21827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps are being taken to tackle reports of discrimination and bullying in relation to the (a) appointment and (b) promotion of judges within the judiciary system.

Chris Philp:

The Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC) is the independent body that has responsibility for recommending candidates for the appointment and promotion of judicial office in courts and tribunals in England and Wales, and for some tribunals with UK-wide jurisdiction. JAC processes are constantly reviewed and regularly independently assessed. They have been found to be fair, objective and in line with best practice.

The Lord Chancellor is concerned about any reports of discrimination and bullying within the judiciary, whilst recognising that the Lord Chief Justice is responsible for the welfare of the England and Wales courts judiciary and the Senior President of Tribunals for the welfare of judges in the UK unified tribunals. Judicial Grievance policies provide a route for judges to raise issues of bullying, harassment and/or discrimination and provide a framework for raising complaints formally or informally. In addition, the Judicial Guide to Conduct offers assistance to judges, coroners and magistrates about their conduct through the provision of a set of core principles.

■ Ministry of Justice: Directors

Angela Rayner:

[\[24215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what declarations of interests have been made by his Department's non-executive directors; and where those declarations are published.

Chris Philp:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts.

Information on any relevant interests is published in the Department annual report and accounts, which are available on gov.uk.

Angela Rayner:

[24217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what financial payments his Department makes to its non-executive directors; how many times his departmental Board will meet in 2021-22; and what work the non-executive directors undertake.

Chris Philp:

This information is published in the Department's annual report and accounts, available on gov.uk.

[Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-report-and-accounts-2019-20)

The Department's report and accounts for 2021-22 will be published in due course, in the usual way.

Departmental boards provide strategic leadership for each central government department, as well as advising on/challenging how the department is performing. Each board is chaired by the Secretary of State and includes junior ministers, the permanent secretary and non-executive board members. Non-executives are appointed to government departments from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Their role is to provide advice and bring an external perspective.

A summary of the work of non-executive directors across Government can be found in the Government Lead Non-Executive's annual report, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-lead-non-executives-annual-report-2019-to-2020>

Angela Rayner:

[24988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, when his Department's current non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight officials had of Ministerial appointments of non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of their experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on Departmental Boards of November 2014.

Chris Philp:

Departments follow the principles set out in Cabinet Office/HM Treasury '[Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice](#).

Our current non-executive directors are:

Mark Rawlinson (Lead Non-Executive) Appointed 4 June 2018 [Mark Rawlinson - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Shirley Cooper OBE Appointed 4 June 2018 [Shirley Cooper - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Nick Campsie Appointed 4 June 2018 [Nick Campsie - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Paul Smith Appointed 1 April 2020 [Paul Smith - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/people/paul-smith)

■ **Probate: Standards**

Derek Twigg: [\[24897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the time taken to process probate applications in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Chris Philp:

I refer the right honourable member to the answer given to PQ 11482 on 10 June 2021.

The answer can be found here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-07/11482>

TRANSPORT

■ **Airports: National Policy Statements**

Andy Slaughter: [\[23111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the comments of Sir Howard Davies on 15 June 2021, what plans he has to review the Airports National Policy Statement.

Andy Slaughter: [\[23112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish an updated economic appraisal of the Airports National Policy Statement.

Robert Courts:

We have always been clear that Heathrow expansion remains a private sector project which must meet strict criteria on air quality, noise and climate change, as well as being privately financed, affordable, and delivered in the best interest of consumers.

■ **Customs: Kent**

Hilary Benn: [\[23061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress has been made on development of the Sevington lorry park and checking facility in Ashford; and how many lorries a day is that site processing as at 28 June 2021.

Rachel Maclean:

Sevington Inland Border Facility (IBF) has operated well since it opened in January, conducting COVID-19 testing for hauliers leaving the UK. This has been an important operation in order to keep freight moving in times when the pandemic has peaked, and countries have had to instigate COVID-19 border protocols.

HMRC successfully transitioned their operations from Waterbrook IBF to Sevington IBF in March. The total number of vehicles processed by HMRC at Sevington on 28 June was 723, with a total of 676 COVID-19 tests being carried out on the same day.

Landscaping commenced with the beginning of the planting season, which is an important part of our environmental strategy to mitigate against visual impacts and to enhance biodiversity. The Department is also reviewing lighting on-site following feedback from local residents and the public and will be looking to implement some changes shortly.

Construction of the Border Control Post (BCP) has been progressing well with structures for all buildings now in place and accommodation buildings being erected. Completion of the BCP is on course for the end of the year.

■ **Cycling and Walking**

Feryal Clark:

[25178]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to encourage the uptake of cycling and walking in (a) Enfield North constituency, (b) the London Borough of Enfield, (c) London and (d) England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The responsibility for transport in London is devolved to the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL), and decisions on cycling and walking schemes in Enfield are a matter for the borough and for TfL. In 2020/2021 the Department provided over £100 million of funding to support active travel in the capital, and its financial support to TfL over the period from May to December 2021 includes a further £100 million for active travel.

The Department for Transport is investing an unprecedented £2 billion in active travel schemes in England over the course of this Parliament. This is the biggest ever boost for cycling and walking. The funding will be spent on a wide range of measures, as set out in the Prime Minister's July 2020 Gear Change plan.

■ **Dartford-Thurrock Crossing: Road Traffic**

Sir David Evennett:

[24904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department has taken to reduce delays on the roads approaching the M25 to cross the Dartford Crossing.

Rachel Maclean:

Both the Department and Highways England are committed to improving traffic flows and journeys for road users around the Dartford Crossing. A Road User Charge (RUC) has been in place at the Crossing since 2003 to manage high demand for its use, after a 2001 study reported that traffic levels would be 17% higher if the charge was removed.

The Department committed £10 million for improvements to tackle congestion surrounding the Crossing. This has been used to upgrade the M25 Junction 2 to

improve journey times for traffic using the junction south of the Crossing, design an improvement scheme to widen the west-bound link on the A206 bridge across the A282 at Junction 1a to increase capacity and reduce queuing; and has supported co-operation with Kent Police to provide improved enforcement of traffic violations in this area, including of yellow box markings on the A282 at Junction 1b.

Additionally, the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) will ease congestion on the Dartford Crossing, by almost doubling road capacity across the Thames east of London through the longest road tunnel in the UK. Highways England is continuing to develop its plans for the LTC and intends to re-submit its Development Consent Order application later this year.

■ Department for Transport: Directors

Cat Smith: [24238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department's non-executive directors were appointed; what oversight did officials have of ministerial appointments of non-executive directors; and what assessment was made of their experience against the requirements for breadth and depth of experience set out in the Cabinet Office guidance on departmental boards of November 2014.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Departments follow the principles set out in Cabinet Office/HM Treasury '[Corporate governance in central government departments: code of good practice.](#)'

The Department for Transport's current Non-Executive Directors (NED) are listed below with their appointment dates:

Ian King (Lead NED): Appointed on 1st November 2017

Tony Poulter: Appointed on 19th September 2016

Tracy Westall: Appointed on 1st November 2017

Richard Keys: Appointed on 1st December 2017

Dame Sarah Storey: Appointed on 1st April 2021

Ranjit Baxi: Appointed on 1st April 2021

■ Department for Transport: Security

Cat Smith: [25037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what private companies are contracted to provide security services at his Department's buildings that contain Ministerial private offices; and whether there are closed circuit television cameras in any Ministerial private office within his departmental estate.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards

Derek Twigg: [\[24896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the time taken by the DVLA to process new driving licence applications in the last three months.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services have been available throughout the pandemic and are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application for a driving licence. The DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day which must be dealt with in person. Fewer operational staff have been on site to allow for social distancing, in line with Welsh Government requirements. This, as well as ongoing industrial action by members of the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) has led to delays.

Currently, driving licence applications made on paper are likely to take six to ten weeks to process. More information on turnaround times is available online. There may be additional delays in processing more complex transactions, for example, if medical investigations are needed.

■ East Coast Railway Line

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent representations he has received from the Scottish Government on (a) timetabling changes on the East Coast Main Line and (b) the effect of those changes on services within the Edinburgh-Newcastle corridor.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Government and (b) Transport Scotland on an Edinburgh to Berwick and Newcastle rail service.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made since 2018 of the potential merits of an Edinburgh to Berwick and Newcastle rail service.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[24343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to an Edinburgh to Berwick and Newcastle service, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of Transport Scotland's decision not to proceed with plans for that service in favour of the stopping of fast-through services at several stations.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Department for Transport officials have had several meetings with Transport Scotland and Network Rail officials with regards to the Edinburgh to Berwick and Newcastle passenger rail service.

■ Electric Scooters: Accidents**Mr Steve Baker:**[\[24951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will record road casualty data from electric scooters in his Department's publications separately from other modes of transport and not include them within the motorcycle casualty statistics.

Rachel Maclean:

Data on personal injury road accidents is collected via the STATS19 system of accidents reported by the police.

Electric scooters and other micromobility vehicles are not currently one of the designated vehicle types collected in STATS19, and as such they would be classed as 'other' and can only be identified using a free text field in the STATS19 database.

Data for 2020 are currently being collated and validated. Subject to the data recorded in the free text field being of sufficient quality, we intend to publish data on e-scooters and other vehicle types which can be reliably identified from the free text field alongside the annual Reported Road Casualties Great Britain statistics publication in September 2021.

■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes**Elliot Colburn:**[\[24349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the end of e-scooter trials in March 2022 on rates of (a) car use, (b) bus use, (c) train use and (d) walking and cycling.

Elliot Colburn:[\[24350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of e-scooter trials on CO2 emissions.

Elliot Colburn:[\[24351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to extend e-scooter trials beyond March 2022.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has in place a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme for the trials. This evaluation includes a range of data sources and approaches including data sharing arrangements with operators, surveys, interviews and focus groups with users and non-users and interviews with key local and national stakeholders. The evaluation will help us to understand any shift from other modes of transport to e-scooters. A final report will be published in spring 2022.

E-scooters are less polluting than petrol/diesel powered vehicles, so using an e-scooter instead of driving will reduce emissions and improve air quality. They may result in less congestion. A lot depends on mode shift. If people use an e-scooter instead of a car we will see environmental benefits. Our monitoring and evaluation programme is in place to assess the extent of modal shift.

Future decisions on e-scooters will be based on the evidence we gather in our trials. These decisions include what happens to trials after 31 March 2022. There are a number of potential options, but no decisions have yet been taken.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

Virginia Crosbie:

[25181]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the number of electric vehicle public charging points across the UK to help meet the Climate Change Committee's recommendation of 150,000 points by 2025.

Rachel Maclean:

Government is investing £1.3 billion in accelerating the roll out of charging infrastructure over the next four years, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major roads, and installing more on-street chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. Our grant schemes and the £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund will see thousands more electric vehicle charge-points installed across the UK.

We have set ambitious targets for chargepoints on our strategic road network in England to support long distance journeys. By 2023, we aim to have at least 6 high powered, open access chargepoints (150 - 350 kilowatt capable) at all motorway service areas and by 2030, we are planning for there to be around 2,500 high powered chargepoints across England's motorways and major A roads. However, we have not set an overall target for the number of chargepoints. Having a "target" number risks assuming technology stands still and creating a uniform approach to charging mixes and needs across the country.

Government and industry have supported the installation of almost 25,000 publicly available charging devices. This includes more than 4,500 rapid devices. To ensure the private sector can continue to expand the charging network at pace in the 2020s, the Government will invest £950 million in future proofing grid capacity along the Strategic Road Network and launching a £90 million Local EV Infrastructure Fund to support the roll out of large on-street schemes and potentially rapid charging hubs in England.

Later this year we will publish an EV Infrastructure Strategy to set out the vision and action plan for charging infrastructure rollout needed to achieve the 2030/35 phase out successfully. This will set expected roles for different stakeholders and how government will intervene to address the gaps between the current market status and our vision.

■ Network Rail: Trees

Daisy Cooper: [24334]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to require Network Rail to record the (a) number and (b) location of every tree removed from its land.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail manages a vast estate, with an estimated six million trees, and approximately 23% woodland coverage, substantially higher than the average woodland coverage across Britain.

The Secretary of state does not plan to require Network Rail to record the number and location of every tree removed from its land.

For the Hon Member's information, in 2019, Network Rail pledged £1m to plant new trees across England over a four-year period, with over 80,000 already planted in the first planting season and published its Biodiversity Action Plan in December 2020:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Network-Rail-Biodiversity-Action-Plan.pdf>

■ Railways: West Midlands

Daniel Kawczynski: [25759]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of track upgrade works on the Birmingham-Shrewsbury railway line on (a) levels of rail travel and (b) the UK's progress to becoming carbon neutral.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Midlands Connect is currently developing proposals to improve the rail connection between Birmingham and Shrewsbury. The outputs of this work will be presented in a strategic outline business case. Electrification of the line is also being considered as part of this work, which would contribute towards the Government's ambition to reduce carbon emissions to net zero.

■ Road Signs and Markings: Poultry and Toads

Chris Grayling: [24104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the installation by a local authority of warning signs in the road indicating that (a) toads and (b) ducks may be crossing is required to be approved by his Department.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities may install the toad crossing warning sign only during the migratory period at a site which is approved by the Froglife Trust. The wild fowl warning sign may be installed where birds are habitually found in the road near ponds and watercourses. Both signs are prescribed in The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and need no further approval.

■ Shipping: Energy Supply

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions officials of his Department have had with relevant stakeholders on investment in UK ports to develop shore power facilities.

Robert Courts:

Shore power has a role to play in immediately reducing emissions from vessels visiting port. I and my officials routinely engage with industry stakeholders such as port operators to discuss investment to develop lower emission infrastructure, including shore power facilities.

Shore-side low and zero carbon fuelling including bunkering of such fuels are in scope of the £20m Clean Maritime Demonstration Competition, which will fund feasibility studies and initial technology trials to support the transition to zero emission shipping and cleaner, greener ports.

■ Shipping: Training

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[24212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department is providing to maintain 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.

■ Transport: West Yorkshire

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[24283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase transport infrastructure in (a) Leeds and (b) West Yorkshire.

Rachel Maclean:

As part of its Levelling Up agenda, the Government is committed to improving transport connectivity in the North. We have recently announced a share of £15m for two new rail stations at White Rose and Thorpe Park in Leeds from the New Stations Fund and £173.5m from the Department has been used to support Leeds' Public Transport Investment Programme (LPTIP) which has delivered significant

improvements, including the UK's first fully solar powered park and ride site opening in September.

This is in addition to the £317m that we are providing to the wider West Yorkshire region through our Transforming Cities Fund and the £49.6m provided in 2021/22 to support highway maintenance, pothole repairs and local transport measures. West Yorkshire Combined Authority also has access to the £4.2bn Intra-City Transport Settlements, to improve transport connectivity within West Yorkshire and the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund, launched at the Budget 2021. Bids have now closed for the first round of this Fund however, there will be further opportunities in the coming years.

The Government has committed £906m to upgrade the Transpennine main line between Leeds, Huddersfield and Manchester. The second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2), published in 2020, has also included funding for Highways England to develop proposals to upgrade M1 Leeds Eastern Gateway, M1/M62 Lofthouse Junction and M1 Junctions 35A-39.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[24294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to remove travel restrictions for people who have been fully vaccinated against covid-19.

Robert Courts:

Our intention is that later in the summer, arrivals who are fully vaccinated will not have to self-isolate when travelling from amber list countries nor take a test on day 8. They will still be required to take a test on Day 2. We expect this to occur in phases, starting with people who have had their COVID-19 vaccine in the UK.

Public health remains our priority and we are taking a cautious approach as we set out our resumption on international travel. We have not made any changes for Green or Red countries in the June checkpoint review. Formal reviews will take place at checkpoints no later than 31 July and 1 October 2021 to take account of the domestic and international health picture, and to see whether current measures can be eased.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[24330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of introducing an international vaccine passport.

Robert Courts:

We have equipped people with the ability to prove their vaccination status using the NHS app, which is already used by some countries to allow British passengers to enter with fewer restrictions. Our intention is that later in the summer, arrivals who are fully vaccinated will not have to self-isolate when travelling from amber list countries nor take a test on day 8. We expect this to occur in phases, starting with people who have had their COVID-19 vaccine in the UK. We continue to engage with

international partners bilaterally and multilaterally to shape our policy on vaccine certification.

■ Urban Areas: Access

Rachael Maskell:

[\[24265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the accessibility of urban centres; and what steps he is taking to support local authorities to make those centres more accessible.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities are free to make their own decisions about the streets under their care, provided they take account of the relevant legislation. They are responsible for ensuring that their actions are within the law and are accountable to local people for their decisions and their performance. Local councillors are responsible for ensuring that local decisions about street infrastructure take account of the needs and opinions of local people.

The Department has issued guidance for local authorities on reallocating road space in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. This can be accessed at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities.

The guidance reiterates that the needs of disabled people must be taken into account and states that an Equalities Impact Assessment should be carried out for proposed changes.

TREASURY

■ Businesses: Government Assistance

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[24202\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support businesses with employees who may be reluctant to come off of furlough arrangements and return to the workplace as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Jesse Norman:

As clearly stated in the CJRS guidance, employees will need to be able to work for the employer that has placed them on furlough if their employer decides to stop furloughing them or start flexibly furloughing them.

If the employer decides to take an employee off furlough and has followed the correct contractual procedures and it is reasonable to expect the employee to return, then the employee may be in breach of contract and subject to disciplinary action if they refuse to work.

■ Cars: VAT

Sir Desmond Swayne: [\[24076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will negotiate a consistent rate of VAT with the EU across all EU member states on the sale and purchase of classic cars.

Jesse Norman:

The VAT rates applicable in EU Member States are a matter for the EU. In the UK, a lower rate of 5% import VAT is available for classic cars where these are collectors' pieces of historical interest.

■ Cash Dispensing: Fees and Charges

Fleur Anderson: [\[23360\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that communities have local access to free ATMs.

Fleur Anderson: [\[23361\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the level of local access to free ATMs across the UK.

Fleur Anderson: [\[23362\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Government policy is on local communities which do not have access to a free ATM.

Fleur Anderson: [\[23363\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has held with the (a) Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (b) Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government on community access to free ATMs.

Fleur Anderson: [\[23364\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department holds information on local access to free ATMs in (a) London, (b) Wandsworth, (c) Putney constituency and (d) West Putney ward.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that cash is important to the daily lives of millions of individuals and businesses across the UK, and has committed to protecting access to cash for those who need it and ensuring that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

The Government made legislative changes via the Financial Services Act 2021 to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase, which will allow shops and other businesses to offer a new form of cash withdrawal service to local communities.

On 1 July the Government published a consultation on broader legislative proposals to protect access to cash. These proposals seek to ensure that people only need to travel reasonable distances to pay in or take out cash, and that the right regulatory

oversight for cash access is in place for the future. The consultation is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/access-to-cash-consultation>.

Regarding access to free-to-use ATMs, there are already measures in place. LINK (the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network) has commitments to protect the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs and is held to account against these commitments by the Payment Systems Regulator. Specifically, LINK has committed to protect free-to-use ATMs more than one kilometre away from the next nearest free ATM or Post Office, and free access to cash on high streets (where there is a cluster of five or more retailers) that do not have a free-to-use ATM or a Post Office counter within one kilometre. Furthermore, LINK's members have made £5 million available to fund ATMs at the request of communities with poor access to cash.

LINK publishes the total number of free-to-use ATMs across the UK online. As of May 2021, it reported that there were around 41,000 free-to-use ATMs in the UK. LINK's Monthly ATM Footprint Report also includes information monthly ATMs at a local level.

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

■ Energy: Conservation

Christian Wakeford:

[24379]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential net economic benefits of long-term investment in energy efficiency programmes in (a) the North West and (b) England.

Kemi Badenoch:

Maximising the potential economic benefits of long-term investment in energy efficiency programmes is a central component of the government's approach to making our building stock greener on the path to Net Zero. The Clean Growth Strategy set our aspiration to raise the energy efficiency of all homes to EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, cost-effective and affordable. These ratings make a real difference to people's lives. A dwelling with an EPC of Band A/B will have an average dual fuel cost of £396 per year. For a Band G dwelling this is £2,988, a difference of 650%.

Since June, we have provided £1.5bn to support low income households across the country improve their energy efficiency, including in the North West, while also expanding the Energy Company Obligation to £1bn per year. Together, this is estimated to support over 25,000 jobs and save households an average of £350-450 per year on their energy bills.

The upcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy will set out further detail on the Government's plans to maximise the potential economic benefits of improving energy efficiency.

■ Flood Control: Red Diesel

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[24905\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the removal of the right to use red diesel from April 2022 for flood risk management purposes on the cost of pumping operations by IDBs and others; what consultation he has had with those likely to be affected; and what steps the Government plans to take to ensure that future flood prevention activities are not compromised.

Kemi Badenoch:

The changes to the tax treatment of red diesel from April 2022 are designed to incentivise greater energy efficiency and the switch to more environmentally friendly alternatives in both the public and private sectors. The Government recognises that these changes may affect some public sector bodies, including Internal Drainage Boards, and Treasury officials met representatives from the drainage, water level and flood risk management sector to discuss these tax changes. The Treasury will discuss spending pressures that may arise in the public sector as part of the next Spending Review.

The Government takes flood risk very seriously. That is why it has doubled the amount it invests in flood and coastal defences to £5.2 billion by 2027.

■ Help to Buy Scheme: Individual Savings Accounts

Daisy Cooper:

[\[23347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to (a) align the house price ceiling for the Government bonus for the discontinued Help to Buy ISAs with the new £450,000 level that applies to new Lifetime ISAs; or (b) disregard the £4,000 annual limit when whole balance transfers are made from discontinued Help to Buy ISAs into Lifetime ISAs.

John Glen:

The Help to Buy: ISA scheme aims to help those that are struggling to save enough to get onto the housing ladder. The property price cap allows the Government to target support at the first-time buyers who need it the most. The scheme includes a higher property value cap of £450,000 for properties in London compared to £250,000 anywhere else in the UK.

Since the scheme launched in 2015, 386,728 property completions have been supported through the scheme with a mean property value of £174,531 compared to an average first-time buyer house price of £210,727 and a national average house price of £251,500.

The Lifetime ISA was launched in April 2017 and for the duration of the 2017-18 tax year, savers with a Help to Buy: ISA could transfer their full balance to a Lifetime ISA as a transitional measure. Any transfers from a Help to Buy: ISA to a Lifetime ISA made from 2018-19 onwards are subject to the Lifetime ISA's annual subscription limit of £4,000.

■ London Capital and Finance: Insolvency

Neale Hanvey:

[\[25169\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Answer of 4 February 2021 to Question 148019 on London Capital and Finance: Insolvency, what progress the Government has made on setting up a compensation scheme which will assess whether there is justification for further compensation payments in certain circumstances for some LCF bondholders.

John Glen:

I know that this has been a very difficult time for LCF bondholders. The Government has announced that it will establish a compensation scheme that will provide 80% of LCF bondholders' principle investment up to a maximum of £68,000. The scheme will be available to all LCF bondholders who have not already received compensation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).

The Treasury is working to finalise the details of the scheme and guidance for bondholders on their next steps. The Government will provide further details on how the scheme will operate in due course. Bondholders do not need to do anything at this stage.

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) will administer the Scheme. They are committed to ensuring that payments are made to all eligible LCF bondholders within 6 months of the Compensation (London Capital & Finance plc and Fraud Compensation Fund) Bill securing Royal Assent. This Bill was brought forward by the Government at the earliest possible opportunity and was introduced on 12 May 2021.

I hope that the compensation offered by the Government scheme will offer some relief to the distress and hardship suffered and provide closure on this difficult matter.

■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

Owen Thompson:

[\[24271\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions officials of his Department have had with the representatives of the Scottish Government on the distribution of the Investment Reserve arising from the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme.

Steve Barclay:

Responsibility for policy and engagement relating to the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme rests with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and therefore there have been no meetings by HM Treasury officials on this matter.

■ Money

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[24101\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of the use of cash by people since April 2020.

John Glen:

The Government continues to engage with the regulators and industry to monitor and assess trends and risks around cash, including those resulting from COVID-19. The Government created the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group in 2019, which has provided a forum for the public bodies to formally co-ordinate regarding access to cash. This is chaired by HM Treasury and attended by the Bank of England, Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Group published an update on the actions of the Group's members in July 2020. This included work led by the PSR and FCA to develop a comprehensive picture of cash access infrastructure across the UK.

UK Finance publishes annual analysis on payment trends in the UK. The UK Payment Market Report 2021 was published on 16 June 2021 and shows that cash remained the second most frequently used method of payment in the UK, as of 2020, representing almost a fifth of payments.

The Government recognises that cash remains important to the daily lives of millions of people and businesses across the UK and has committed to protecting access to cash for those who need it and ensuring that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

To these ends, the Government made legislative changes via the Financial Services Act 2021 to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase, and on 1 July published a consultation on broader legislative proposals to protect access to cash. These proposals seek to ensure that people only need to travel reasonable distances to pay in or take out cash, and that the right regulatory oversight for cash access is in place for the future. The consultation is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/access-to-cash-consultation>.

Sir Charles Walker:**[24133]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the Government's policy is on the continued use of physical currency in the form of notes and coins; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that cash is important to the daily lives of millions of individuals and businesses across the UK, particularly to those who may be in vulnerable groups.

Therefore, the Government has committed to protecting access to cash for those who need it and ensuring that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

The Government made legislative changes via the Financial Services Act 2021 to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase, which will allow shops and other businesses to offer a new form of cash withdrawal service to local communities.

On 1 July the Government published a consultation on broader legislative proposals to protect access to cash. These proposals seek to ensure that people only need to

travel reasonable distances to pay in or take out cash, and that the right regulatory oversight for cash access is in place for the future. The consultation is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/access-to-cash-consultation>.

■ Mortgages: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[24218]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the number of households that have fallen into arrears with their mortgage provider in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to supporting borrowers that have been impacted by Covid-19, and that is why we have worked with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) to oversee an unprecedented package of forbearance measures for mortgage customers, including the provision of 2.7 million mortgage payment holidays and a ban on repossessions. While these temporary measures have now ended, FCA guidance also requires firms to continue providing support through tailored forbearance options, including further payment holidays, for borrowers facing ongoing financial difficulties as a result of Covid-19.

The Government will continue its efforts to support mortgage borrowers. For example, the Government will continue to offer Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) loans to homeowners on a low income to help prevent repossession. The Government also helps people avoid repossession through protection in the courts under the Pre-Action Protocol which makes it clear that repossession must always be the last resort for lenders.

HM Treasury does not hold arrears data at a regional or constituency level. However, Bank of England data released on 8 June shows that arrears remain at low levels, with the proportion of total loan balances with arrears at 0.96% across the UK. Any borrowers worried about being able to pay their mortgage should make early contact with their lender to discuss their options.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Tax Allowances

Anne Marie Morris:

[24200]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when his Department plans to share further details on the additional £1.5 billion of business rates relief for businesses that are ineligible for retail discount or business grant schemes as announced on 25 March 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government is currently preparing guidance to support local authorities ahead of rollout of the £1.5 billion business rates relief fund. The final guidance, its specifics and level of prescription, will reflect considerations including the existing framework of Government support, information held by local authorities and their capacity to administer various parameters, as well as subsidy control considerations.

This discretionary relief pot approach has been taken to get funding to businesses as soon as possible and on the basis of their actual economic exposure to COVID-19 rather than the pandemic's hypothetical impact on property rental values. The alternative of prolonged litigation and appeals through the Material Change of Circumstance provision could have taken years.

The Government will support local authorities to enable ratepayers to apply for relief awards as soon as possible this year, once the legislation relating to Material Change of Circumstance provisions has passed, and local authorities have set up local relief schemes.

■ Treasury: Buildings

Bridget Phillipson: [\[23169\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as at 3 June 2021, how many jobs in his Department have moved from his Department's premises in central London to Treasury North in Darlington.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[23171\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many roles have been moved out of central London by his Department in the last three months; and how many of those roles have been filled by staff (a) of his Department who previously filled that same role when it was located in central London, (b) who previously worked for his Department in other roles and (c) who have not previously worked for his Department.

Kemi Badenoch:

There will be at least 750 roles based at the Darlington economic campus, with the Treasury expecting to provide 200 – 300 of these. We are working at pace to establish the campus as quickly as possible. The Treasury's workforce in Darlington will be made up of existing staff who voluntarily relocate from London and people who are recruited directly to the campus. An expression of interest process is open for existing Treasury staff who wish to move, and relocations are taking place on a gradual basis. A Treasury Director General has been appointed to lead the new office. There are also a number of live HMT vacancies where successful candidates can choose to work from Darlington. We will publish details of relocations and recruitment in HMT's 21/22 annual report and accounts. The campus will be fully operational by the end of this Parliament.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[23170\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the mean overall proportion is of officials of his Department physically working in the office as opposed to working from home or elsewhere whose office is in (a) Darlington and (b) London in each day in each of the last three months.

Kemi Badenoch:

Our offices remain open for those who need to use them and the majority of HMT staff have been working in our offices at some point over the last 3 months. We do not have separate breakdowns for new offices.

WALES**■ Fisheries: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement****Virginia Crosbie:**[\[24371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Welsh fishing industry on the effect on that sector of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Simon Hart:

I have regular discussions with stakeholders, including those from the seafood sector on maximising opportunities from the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement.

Under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK has secured tariff-free access for fisheries products and a substantial transfer of quota from the EU benefitting fishing communities across the UK including those in Wales. The transfer is equivalent to 25% of the value of the EU's historic catch in UK waters worth £146 million delivered over 5 years. All fisheries administrations will have regulatory control, giving the Welsh Government powers over part of the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) adjacent to Wales.

■ Industry**Ruth Jones:**[\[23326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a new industrial strategy.

Simon Hart:

This Government is keen to ensure we build back better in a way that supports the whole economy and delivers for all parts of the UK. Our Plan for Growth sets out the opportunities we will seize across the UK to drive economic growth, create jobs and support British industry.

The Plan for Growth will support our efforts to unite and level up the country: tackling geographic disparities; supporting struggling towns to regenerate; ensuring every region and nation of the UK has at least one globally competitive city; and strengthening the Union.

In addition, I recently launched the Plan for Wales, which outlines the UK Government's ambitious plans for Wales, which aim to deliver thousands of skilled jobs and ensure Wales' place as a hub for innovation and the green industries of the future. Over the next 12 months, the Wales Office will continue to work with BEIS on

a vision for high growth sectors, an Innovation Strategy, as well as strategies for net zero, hydrogen and space.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality Act 2010: Scotland

Kenny MacAskill: [902047]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions the Government has had with the Scottish Government on the implementation of the Equality Act 2010.

Kemi Badenoch:

Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website. In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not usually disclosed.

■ Government Equalities Office: CCTV

Marsha De Cordova: [23317]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether a risk assessment has been carried out on the secure holding of CCTV footage within her Department.

Kemi Badenoch:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

■ Government Equalities Office: Email

Marsha De Cordova: [23316]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, whether any departmental business has been conducted on private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Kemi Badenoch:

I refer the Hon. Member to the Cabinet Office guidance to departments [on use of private emails](#).

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Bespoke Patterns

Grahame Morris: [24157]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she taking to support people referred to Bespoke Patterns Ltd under the Kickstart scheme in response to that employer's failure to pay those workers.

Mims Davies:

Department for Work and Pensions Work Coach support is available for young people employed with Kickstart employers. The Grant Funding Agreement between DWP and employers makes clear that they should carry out their obligations in accordance with all applicable law including employment law.

Grahame Morris:[\[24158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the total pay withheld from people referred to Bespoke Patterns Ltd under the Kickstart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Department for Work and Pensions arranges grant agreements with employers. The grant agreement requires the employer to put in place a contract of employment with each young person that takes up a Kickstart job. DWP is not a party to these contracts because Kickstart jobs are real jobs and subject to all relevant employment law.

■ Carers: Disability**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[24924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps Department is taking with other Departmental colleagues to reduce the amount of paperwork required to be filled out by carers of people with profound disabilities.

Justin Tomlinson:

The responsibility for unpaid carers sits across Government. DWP can provide support to eligible carers through the benefit system. The main benefit for unpaid carers is Carer's Allowance, and we have already taken considerable steps to modernise and improve the way Carer's Allowance can be claimed.

Carer's Allowance can be applied for online and since this option was made available in October 2013 over 1.5 million people have applied that way. Since April 2020, over 90% of Carer's Allowance applications have been made online and over 90% of those customers have said they are happy with the online service.

Going forward, the Department is planning further simplification of the online claim process and in the way claimants report changes online. We are also designing enhancements to support faster and more accurate decisions/payments. Where we already hold information claimants won't be asked to provide it to us. And our online digital service will be fully compliant with Government accessibility standards to ensure it can be used by those with physical or cognitive impairments.

■ Carers: Young People**Stuart Anderson:**[\[23339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of young people resident in the Wolverhampton

South West constituency who are informal carers; and what steps her Department is taking to ensure that those young people receive adequate welfare support.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Government recognises and appreciates the vital contribution made by informal carers, including younger carers, who provide invaluable support for relatives, partners, friends and neighbours who are ill, frail or disabled.

Carers aged 16 and over can apply for Carer's Allowance if they meet the qualifying conditions, such as providing 35 hours of care or more a week, and not being in full-time education. As of November 2020, there were 75 carers aged 16 to 25 in the Wolverhampton South West constituency that were receiving Carer's Allowance. There will undoubtedly be other young carers in the constituency who are not receiving benefits, but the department does not hold any information on them.

As well as Carer's Allowance, carers have access to the full range of social security benefits according to their circumstances.

The Government is also committed to making sure young carers are not left behind and to do so in a way that supports their own health and wellbeing. Under the Children's and Families Act 2014, young carers are entitled to a young carers assessment. And, the Government's focus on supporting carers during the pandemic has included: providing over £11 million to the "See, Hear, Respond" programme to support young carers; guidance tailored to carers; actions to help carers self-identify; and ongoing work to help carers access the support they need.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Directors**

Cat Smith:

[\[25038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what declarations of interests have been made by her Department's non-executive directors; and where that information is published.

Guy Opperman:

Non-executive directors comply with the provisions of the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies.

Board members are required to submit any declarable interests annually; this information forms part of the independent National Audit Office review ahead of the publication of Departmental annual report and accounts.

Information on any relevant interests will be published in the Department annual report and accounts, which will be available on gov.uk.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information**

Cat Smith:

[\[25043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 21940 on Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information,

if she will publish the number of freedom of information requests her Department has referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House for advice on handling in 2020-21.

Guy Opperman:

The Department currently has no plans to publish this information. We do not capture data on the number of requests which are referred to the Cabinet Office Clearing House.

Official statistics on Freedom of Information requests are published by the Cabinet Office on a quarterly basis, available on gov.uk here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics>

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Security**

Cat Smith:

[24239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what private companies are contracted to provide security services at her Department's buildings that contain ministerial private offices; and whether there are closed circuit television cameras in any ministerial private office within the departmental estate.

Guy Opperman:

As has been the case under successive Administrations, it is not government policy to comment on security procedures in government buildings.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Colleen Fletcher:

[24220]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the disability employment gap in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested can be derived from the Annual Population Survey and is publically available through Nomis. This can be accessed with the following link:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/apsnew>

Data on the disability employment rate at the constituency, local authority, regional and country level can be found here, along with the non-disabled employment rate. The disability employment gap can be calculated from the difference in the employment rate between the disabled and non-disabled employment rates.

However, it should be noted that:

- The Annual Population Survey dataset covers a one-year period. The latest available data is from January- December 2020 so does not cover the full pandemic period.
- Sample sizes at the constituency and local authority level may be small. Estimates for the disability employment gap at this level are therefore likely to be subject to a large degree of sampling variation and should be used with caution.

■ Employment: Graduates**Dr James Davies:**[\[24267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to offer specialised assistance to new graduates seeking employment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

The Government's Plan for Jobs is delivering a comprehensive package of support for young people, including graduates, which DWP is providing in collaboration with the Department for Education, employers and other partners

The DWP Youth Offer is the wrap-around support programme, helping young people access so much of the positive provision stood up as part of the Plan for Jobs, (including Kickstart, Sector-based Work Academy Programme, Apprenticeships and traineeships), alongside local work-related provision. The Youth Offer includes 13-week Youth Employment Programme, complimented by joined-up local delivery through our Youth Hubs and specialist Youth Employability Coaches.

The Government has implemented a range of measures to help deliver on our commitment to provide all young people with opportunities to develop skills that will enable them to secure jobs in productive and fulfilling careers, including help for young people through Kickstart. Jobs from the Kickstart Scheme are open to 16–24-year-olds, who are claiming Universal Credit, and are at risk of long-term unemployment. Young people can speak to their work coach to find out more.

Our experienced and well-trained jobcentre Work Coaches have access to tools that help them understand vacancies, opportunities and skills needs and are well versed in collaborating with their local partners, including employers, local authorities and independent volunteer and charity organisations.

We are publicising our offer for young people and have launched the JobHelp website in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. JobHelp offers job search advice, showcases recruiting sectors and signposts to job vacancies to help people successfully find work. The JobHelp campaign encourages young people under 25 to visit the JobHelp advice and signposting hub where they can access careers advice, job opportunities and signposting to initiatives such as Kickstart and Access to Work.

We have supported the development of the Department for Education's Graduate Employment and Skills Guide that is published on the Office for Students website. The guide is designed to help final year students and recent graduates by signposting to a range of public, private and voluntary sector opportunities, to help build employability skills, gain work experience or enter the labour market.

Dr James Davies:

[\[24268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to engage with local employers to support new graduates into employment.

Mims Davies:

We are working closely with employers and other partner's to deliver the Government's Plan for Jobs, providing a comprehensive package of support for all young people – including graduates.

Our national and local Employer and Partnership Teams are engaging with employers across the country to bring in employment opportunities in a variety of sectors. These include many of the opportunities established as part of the Plan for Jobs, including Kickstart, Sector-based Work Academy Programme, Apprenticeships and traineeships. These provide a wide range of ways for young people to access work in their local area and enable employers to engage their future workforce. Young people, including new graduates will have access to these through their local Jobcentre Plus and via the Government's official job matching service Find a Job website.

We have supported the development of the Department for Education's Graduate Employment and Skills Guide that is published on the Office for Students website. The guide is designed to help final year students and recent graduates by signposting to a range of public, private and voluntary sector opportunities, to help build employability skills, gain work experience or enter the labour market.

We have provided Plan for Jobs information for employers on GOV.UK and employers can access our Help for Employers website which offers a range of advice to help businesses overcome challenges associated with the coronavirus pandemic. Whether employers are needing to expand rapidly, or worried about redundancies, they can find advice on next steps and the best ways to support their staff.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Grahame Morris:

[\[24156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many businesses participating in the Kickstart scheme have been investigated by her Department for failing to meet their obligations to participants.

Mims Davies:

Under the terms of the Kickstart Scheme Grant Funding Agreement, employers and Kickstart Gateways have a responsibility to carry out their obligations in accordance with all applicable law. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will investigate any organisation where there is evidence of a failure to meet obligations. To date we have rescinded 10 grant agreements as a result of our investigations.

■ Pensions: EU Nationals**Darren Jones:** [\[22193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what arrangements her Department has put in place to maintain EU member state derived pension entitlements for EU citizens residing in the UK following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Darren Jones: [\[22194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the Government has made representations to the Greek Government on unpaid pension entitlements due to Greek citizens residing in the UK.

Guy Opperman:

The EU Withdrawal Agreement and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement set out the rules on the payment of state pensions when individuals of any nationality have moved, or move in future, between the UK and EU member states.

These agreements maintain the same rules as prior to the UK's withdrawal from the EU in respect of the payment of their state pension and the coordination between states in its calculation. The UK and EU Member State governments are bound by obligations in those agreements.

The agreements also provide mechanisms for raising issues relating to the UK's withdrawal from the EU with the European Commission and the governments of Member States.

■ Universal Credit**Helen Hayes:** [\[25098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 815 on Universal Credit, when the managed migration pilot in Harrogate will resume.

Will Quince:

I refer the Honourable Member to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question [815](#). A date for the resumption of Move to UC will be determined in due course.

Helen Hayes: [\[25099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 815 on Universal Credit, whether her Department plans to transfer up to 10,000 people from legacy benefits to universal credit as part of the migration pilot as announced on 11 March 2019.

Helen Hayes: [\[25100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 815 on universal credit, what plans she has to bring forward further regulations to enable the migration of the remaining legacy benefit caseload to universal credit.

Will Quince:

This is currently under review.

■ **Veterans: Employment**

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[24098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the range of support provided by her Department to members of the armed forces in the transition to civilian life; what proportion of veterans are employed within three months of discharge; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The Department remains committed to the Armed Forces Covenant and will do what is necessary to help and support members of the Armed Forces Community to transition to civilian life.

We have recently introduced our new model for Armed Forces Champions which comprises 50 Armed Forces Champions working alongside 11 Group Leads at managerial level.

It means for the first time that there is at least one Armed Forces Champion in each Jobcentre Plus District and resources in the new network are targeted where there are particularly high levels of demand, for example in garrison towns, and here the Armed Forces work will form a significant part of that done in individual Jobcentres.

In addition to the Armed Forces Champions roles, all 27,000 DWP Work Coaches are trained to provide veterans and others with the help and support they need.

We have also recently introduced an Armed Forces “identifier” on to the Universal Credit system, giving customers the opportunity to tell us whether they are a veteran or currently serving. This will help us ensure that veterans and serving personnel receive any additional support they need.

We have a range of other support arrangements in place for members of the Armed Forces community. For example, veterans are given early voluntary entry to the Work and Health Programme.

We also work alongside the Career Transition Partnership, whose resettlement provision helps personnel leaving the Armed Forces prepare for entering the civilian job market and to make a successful transition to employment. The outcomes are good; 84% of veterans are employed within 6 months of discharge. These rates compare very favourably with the wider population, where 76% are in employment.

The Government’s preferred method is to look at employment outcomes from within 6 months of discharge as those collected earlier are likely to provide unfair reflections on “unplanned exits” who are only able to receive minimal employment support prior to leaving service.

■ Work Capability Assessment**Dame Diana Johnson:****[24923]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason carers of people with profound disabilities are required to complete the capability for work questionnaire on multiple occasions.

Justin Tomlinson:

As part of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) most claimants are required to complete a health questionnaire which allows them (or the person completing it on their behalf) to explain the impact of their disability or health condition. It is also important in helping us to establish if they can be assessed solely on the available paper evidence. Where we can, we will always conduct an assessment based on the paper evidence provided by the claimant and their supporting professionals.

WCA reassessments are designed to ensure that claimants receive appropriate financial support and are set the appropriate level of work-related requirements, and take account of changes in how health conditions and disabilities affect people over time. We want to ensure claimants who can work are supported to do so, and reassessments are an important part of that process.

However, since September 2017 people found to have limited capability for work and work-related activity (LCWRA) who have the most severe and lifelong health conditions or disabilities, and whose level of function would always mean they are unlikely ever to be able to move into work, are no longer routinely reassessed.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

TREASURY

■ VAT update on UK emissions trading scheme

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman):

[\[HCWS148\]](#)

The Government is announcing today that legislation will be introduced at the earliest opportunity to allow a VAT zero rate to apply to trades in UK emissions trading scheme allowances within the VAT Terminal Markets Order (SI 1973/173) (TMO).

A UK Emissions Trading Scheme (UK ETS) replaced the UK's participation in the EU ETS on 1 January 2021. The scheme has been established to increase the climate ambition of the UK's carbon pricing policy, while mitigating the risk of carbon leakage through free allowances.

Market participants can bid for UK ETS allowances on the UK auction platform or can acquire futures contracts in UK ETS allowances on the secondary market.

The TMO permits VAT zero rating for transactions on terminal commodity markets. It is seen as an important VAT trade facilitation measure by those involved in trading commodity futures contracts, where often on these markets there are very substantial volumes of transactions over short periods of time. The zero-rating relief provided by the TMO avoids the administrative and cash flow burdens of accounting for VAT and should have no effect on the VAT amount collected at the final stage of consumption.

I can confirm today the treatment will be provided from the time when these important trades commenced in May.