

**Daily Report****Tuesday, 6 July 2021**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 6 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:49 P.M., 06 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

■ Rape: Trials

Rachael Maskell:

[23267]

To ask the Attorney General, for what reason does the CPS withdraw its support for rape cases going to full trial after a trial date has been set.

Lucy Frazer:

When deciding whether to prosecute a criminal case, prosecutors must follow the Code for Crown Prosecutors. This is the starting point for every decision they make and requires prosecutors to apply two key tests: the evidential test and the public interest test.

Prosecutors have a continuous duty to review cases, and there are a range of reasons that may mean a case no longer meets the Code test. The most common changes that result in a discontinuance include new undermining evidence, existing evidence being ruled as inadmissible, and victim withdrawal from proceedings.

The CPS is committed to improving victims' confidence in and experience of the criminal justice process. The CPS is working tirelessly with its cross-government and criminal justice partners to make sure victims are supported from the moment they report a rape or sexual assault through the criminal justice process.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: ISS

Chris Stephens:

[R] [25863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the compliance of the facilities management contractor ISS with employment practices for staff based in his Department's buildings.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government Property Agency (GPA) is the contract holder for the facilities management provider ISS. Both GPA and BEIS work closely with all their suppliers on all aspects of service delivery. GPA and the Department draw facilities services from a Crown Commercial Service framework supplier to help ensure confidence in the supplier base.

Chris Stephens:

[R] [25864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) covid-19 health and safety practices of facilities management contractor ISS and (b) potential effect of those practices on staff based in his Department's buildings.

Amanda Solloway:

BEIS collaborates closely with the Government Property Agency which manages the facilities management contract with ISS. BEIS has reviewed the COVID-19 health and safety practices of ISS, which include risk assessments, training information and protocols for ISS staff working within the BEIS demise of buildings.

The review of ISS practices gives the Department assurance that sufficient COVID-19 mitigations are in place to enable BEIS staff, or others working within the BEIS demise of buildings, to work safely.

■ **Electric Vehicles****Simon Fell:**[\[24333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has made an assessment of the effect of increased numbers of electric cars on the grid capacity of the (a) UK and b) North West.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is working with the energy industry to plan for electric vehicle uptake, and the market is already set up to bring forward investment in new generation capacity; for example, the Contracts for Difference scheme supports investment in new low carbon generation, and additional demand can be managed through adjustments to the amount of capacity secured through the Capacity Market auctions.

Ensuring the adequacy of the electricity network is the responsibility of electricity network companies, and they are incentivised to do so through the regulatory framework set out by Ofgem, the independent regulator. Electricity distribution network operators (DNOs) submitted their draft business plans for the next price control (RIIO ED2), which will run from 2023-28, on 1 July. As part of this, DNOs, including Electricity North West, will include forecasts for electric vehicle uptake and how they plan to ready the network for these technologies.

As well as creating significant new demand, the transition to electric vehicles offers opportunities for flexible management of the electricity system. Smart charging during off-peak periods, when demand is low, can reduce peak demand and avoid triggering unnecessary network reinforcement. It can also maximise use of renewable electricity and can benefit consumers with cheaper electricity.

■ **Energy: Council Housing****Christian Wakeford:**[\[24380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to improve the energy efficiency of homes through local authorities.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is funding a number of schemes as part of its commitment to retrofit homes to cut energy bills for households and to make them greener on the path to Net Zero.

The Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD), which supports projects to install energy efficiency measures such as various types of insulation, and low-carbon heating systems for low-income households, has already provided £500million to Local Authorities for upgrades to low-income households across England, and is being delivered up to December 2021.

On 16th June 2021, the Government launched the Sustainable Warmth Competition enabling Local Authorities to apply for further funding under the £200million Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 scheme and from an initial allocation of £150million for the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 scheme, for delivery up to March 2023.

In addition, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator has awarded £62million of funding to social landlords across England and Scotland to test innovative approaches to retrofitting at scale, seeing over 2300 social homes improved to at least EPC band C. The Government has announced around a further £160million for the first wave of the £3.8bn manifesto commitment in financial year 21/22, delivering up to March 2023.

The Government announced in the Sustainable Warmth Strategy a four-year, £4 billion successor scheme to ECO, to accelerate our efforts to improve homes to meet fuel poverty targets. ECO will continue to be an obligation on suppliers.

■ Energy: Scotland

Alan Brown:

[902299]

If he will provide further support to energy transition projects in Scotland.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is intending to support the development of at least two Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) clusters to support the energy transition at industrial sites across the UK. This process is ongoing with an announcement expected later this year.

Stuart C McDonald:

[902304]

If he will provide further support to energy transition projects in Scotland.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is intending to support the development of at least two Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) clusters to support the energy transition at industrial sites across the UK. This process is ongoing with an announcement expected later this year.

■ European Marine Energy Centre: Finance

Alan Brown:

[23247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2021 to Question 8655 on European Marine Energy Centre: Finance, whether she plans to hold discussions with the European Marine Energy Centre on the requirement for replacement funding following the end of EU funding.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We do not currently have plans to hold talks with the European Marine Energy Centre on replacement funding for previous EU funding. EMEC was established through support from the UK Government in 2003 in Orkney. The Government has a long history of supporting the development and deployment of wave and tidal stream technologies in the UK. Since 2003 various bodies across Government have provided innovation/R&D funding of £175m to the wave and tidal sectors (almost £80m since 2010).

■ Geothermal Power: Finance**Owen Thompson:**[\[24272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to incentivise (a) investment in and (b) development of deep geothermal energy projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government believes that geothermal energy has an important role in the United Kingdom's transition towards net-zero, particularly in the decarbonisation of heat. The most promising use of geothermal energy in the UK is in district heating schemes, also known as heat networks.

The Government has been supporting the deployment of heat networks powered by geothermal energy. Geothermal projects can seek capital funding from the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) (2018-2022) and as part of the project we have funded a £3.5m to an innovative Colchester shallow geothermal network. In terms of future support, we are currently considering geothermal energy as a low carbon technology to be within scope of our new £270m Green Heat Network Fund (2022-2025). The eligibility criteria for the fund were the subject of our consultation which closed on 29th January this year, and the response will be published in due course.

Finally, to encourage investment and drive costs down, the Government has funded £31m to the UK Geoenergy Observatories which will provide world-class infrastructure for a wide range of geoenergy related research. This research facility aims to attract leading geothermal scientists and engineers from all over the world, and the knowledge, expertise and technology generated from this research will propel the UK to becoming a leader in this field.

■ Geothermal Power: Mines**Owen Thompson:**[\[24273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with representatives of the Coal Authority on the (a) feasibility and (b) potential merits of extracting geothermal energy from mine water in abandoned mines.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I can confirm that we are in close contact with the Coal Authority and that we see working with them to develop energy from mine water as essential to decarbonising the UK's heating systems.

Heating and hot water make up around 40% of the UK's energy consumption and nearly a third of the UK greenhouse gas emissions. Around 25% of UK homes are situated in the former coalfields and since the water in the now flooded mines is geothermally heated Around 25% of UK homes are situated in the former coalfields, the Coal Authority estimates there is sufficient energy in the geothermal water found in former coal mines to heat all of the homes on the coalfields.

Depending on the depth from which the water is extracted, the temperature varies from 21 degrees Celsius to 40 degrees Celsius. Where mine water reaches the surface, the heat can be extracted through a heat pump and transmitted through heat networks to both industrial and domestic customers. Using naturally warmed water, rather than already chilled water, for these systems reduces the energy requirement involved in these systems.

The Seaham Gardens heat network in County Durham is a great example of the merits of this. Working with the Coal Authority and Durham County Council we have recently awarded £3.8m for commercialisation and construction of a mine-water heat network scheme through our Heat Network Investment Project. When finished the scheme will use 6MW of heat to supply 1,500 homes.

■ Heating: Rural Areas**Mark Pritchard:**[\[24149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government's Heat and Buildings strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that the costs of low carbon heating are sustainable for people in (a) Shropshire and (b) other rural areas.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is planning to publish a *Heat and Buildings Strategy* in due course. This will include information on the Government's approach to the transition to low carbon heating through a comprehensive policy package comprising targeted regulatory, market-based and public investment measures.

In transitioning to low carbon heat, it will be important that future costs are allocated in a way that is fair to all consumers and incentivises them to use cost-effective low-carbon technologies.

As announced in the Energy White Paper last December, we will shortly issue a call for evidence on affordability and fairness in the energy market which will explore these issues further. This will include looking at policy costs placed on gas and electricity prices and gathering evidence on the extent to which these act as a significant barrier to the deployment of low-carbon technologies such as heat pumps.

In order to ease consumer costs, the Government has also been providing financial support through schemes such as the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive. In addition, from April 2022, the Clean Heat Grant will provide support to households switching to low carbon heating.

In respect of rural homes in particular, we recognise that many homes in rural areas that are not connected to the gas grid use high-carbon heating systems such as oil so decarbonising this stock will be vital to meet our net zero ambitions. The recently launched Home Upgrade Grant, backed by an initial £150 million of funding will support energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating for low-income households living off the gas grid in England, including in Shropshire.

■ Industry

Ruth Jones:

[23331]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the potential merits of a new industrial strategy.

Amanda Solloway:

We are 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 as we level-up and build back better out of this pandemic – succeeding the Industrial Strategy published over four years ago.

We want to understand the ideas and priorities of the Devolved Administrations in relation to driving long-term growth and recovery. 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.

Over the next 12 months BEIS will follow up the plan for growth with an Innovation Strategy, as well as strategies for net zero, hydrogen and space. We will also develop a vision for high-growth sectors and technologies, putting the UK at the forefront of opportunities and giving businesses the confidence to invest, boost productivity across the UK and enable our transition to net zero.

We are working across government and with our Innovation Expert Group to develop the Innovation Strategy. It will outline our ambitions in innovation and where we want to focus our efforts over the next decade; and the importance of research and innovation to levelling up and the Government's commitment to ensuring that R&D benefits the economy and society in nations, regions and local areas across the UK. Following the publication of the Strategy, the government will continue engaging in detail with businesses of all types to build our ambitious innovation agenda.

We are working to strengthen the Union to ensure that the institutions and the power of the United Kingdom are used in a way that benefits people in every part of our

country. Levelling up represents an important part of the government's ambitions for R&D and innovation, building on the approach set out in the R&D Roadmap.

■ **Local Restrictions Support Grant: Nottinghamshire**

Tom Randall: [23385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many applications have been received for Additional Restrictions Grants during each grant period in Nottinghamshire, by local authority.

Tom Randall: [23386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average time taken is to process a claim for Additional Restrictions Grants from application to payment for each grant period in Nottinghamshire, by local authority.

Tom Randall: [23387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which local authorities in Nottinghamshire are accepting applications for the latest round of grant funding for Additional Restrictions Grants.

Tom Randall: [23388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which local authorities in Nottinghamshire have applied for the latest round of grant funding for Additional Restrictions Grants.

Paul Scully:

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

The flexibility of the ARG allows Local Authorities to provide support that suits their local area, to determine how much funding to provide to businesses and exactly which businesses to target. The scheme aims to support businesses when most needed, and Local Authorities should use this funding as quickly as possible.

We are working closely with Local Authorities to ensure that grants are delivered swiftly to businesses in scope of this funding. In light of the delay to Step 4 of the Roadmap, we have extended our deadline for Local Authorities to access the top-up payment (part of the £425m) from 30 June to 30 July, 2021. We have also doubled the frequency of our payment rounds of ARG in order that funding can reach businesses as soon as possible.

■ **Mineworkers' Pension Scheme**

Owen Thompson: [25892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the outcome of the

meeting on 21 June 2021 between the mineworkers' pension scheme trustees and the Minister of State.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

My meeting with Mineworkers' Pension Scheme Trustees on 21 June was helpful in enabling me to understand their views of the future of the Scheme.

I responded to the Select Committee's report on 28 June and the Committee has now published that [response](#).

■ **Natural Gas**

Ruth Jones:

[\[24332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to phase out unabated natural gas from the power sector.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As we transition to net zero emissions by 2050, our record levels of investment in renewables will meet a large part of the energy demand. Unabated natural gas will continue to provide a reliable and flexible source of energy, ensuring security of supply whilst we develop and deploy low carbon alternatives that can replicate its role in the electricity system.

In order to meet our ambitious decarbonisation targets for the electricity system, we are taking steps to bring forward alternative low carbon technologies which will help us to reduce the reliance on unabated gas-powered electricity generation steadily. For example, in the Energy White Paper (published last year), government announced that it will support the deployment of at least one power plant with carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) to be operational by 2030, and that it will also consult in 2021 on its Carbon Capture and Readiness requirements to ensure that new thermal plants can convert to low-carbon alternatives. Government is developing business models to incentivise the deployment of CCUS in the UK.

Additionally, we are exploring policy frameworks to support the deployment of low carbon hydrogen, as well flexibility tools such as demand reduction, demand side response, and storage, which likewise have the potential to reduce reliance on unabated natural gas in the power sector.

■ **Nuclear Power Stations: Construction**

Mark Jenkinson:

[\[23340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the recent Nuclear Decommissioning Authority departmental review, what his plans are for the creation of a development agency for new nuclear build.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is committed to new nuclear after Hinkley Point C and is focused on bringing at least one more large-scale project to a Final Investment Decision this parliament, as well as progressing work on advanced nuclear technologies like Small

Modular Reactors. Separately, the Departmental Review of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, published in June 2021, makes recommendations for improvements to the form, function and governance of the organisation in relation to its mission under the Energy Act 2004.

■ Overseas Companies: China

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[\[25861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many British companies have approached his Department seeking supply chain advice in China since 2017; and how that guidance has changed since 2017.

Paul Scully:

The Government regularly engages with British companies on supply chain matters, including in China. We recommend that British businesses operating in China should make use of the Overseas Business Risk guidance that is published online. That guidance is regularly updated, with the guidance for China being most recently updated in March 2021.

■ Post Offices: Sustainable Development

Marion Fellows:

[\[902301\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the sustainability of the Post Office network.

Paul Scully:

The Post Office network has been incredibly resilient during the pandemic, with over 90% of branches remaining open throughout. The Government continues to work with Post Office to monitor the network closely.

■ Tax Avoidance

Rosie Cooper:

[\[23133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the regulations in place for umbrella companies.

Paul Scully:

The Government remains committed to tackling those who use umbrella company arrangements as part of abusive tax avoidance schemes. In the Finance Act 2021, the Government introduced a package of measures to strengthen existing anti-avoidance regimes and tighten the rules designed to tackle promoters and enablers of tax avoidance schemes. On 23 March 2021, the Government launched a consultation on a further package of measures to tackle promoters and the UK entities that support them. We will be publishing a summary of responses to this consultation and next steps in due course.

In addition to this, the Government has already taken steps to improve transparency for agency workers, including those employed by umbrella companies, by bringing in

the Key Information Document from 6 April 2020. The Government has also committed to expand state enforcement for agency workers to cover umbrella companies, which will enable inspectors to investigate relevant complaints involving umbrella companies and take enforcement action where required. This will require primary legislation which the Government will bring forward in due course.

■ Water Power: Finance

Alan Brown: [\[23248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 3949 on Water Power: Finance, when she plans to publish specific allocation round parameters.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We are currently developing parameters for Allocation Round 4 and will publish these well in advance of the next auction in December 2021.

■ Wind Power

Virginia Crosbie: [\[25981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to make transmission investments to increase electricity network capacity to accommodate the changing electricity generating mix as more renewables from onshore and offshore wind come online.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Electricity network companies are responsible for building, owning and operating the onshore electricity network, and are regulated by Ofgem, the independent energy regulator, in doing so. Ofgem sets a price control, called RIIO, which sets allowances and revenues for the networks during the price control period, incentivising networks to act efficiently in consumers' best interests. This ensures there is sufficient capacity on the network to meet demand, including connecting to new renewable generation.

The Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR) is reviewing how offshore transmission can be better coordinated to support the Government's target of 40GW of offshore wind by 2030, and net zero by 2050. This will support investment in transmission over the coming decades to accommodate the changing electricity generating mix.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Freedom of Information

Angela Rayner: [\[25833\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Freedom of Information requests were referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House on grounds of high political sensitivity during 2020.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer given to [PQ21237](#) on 28 June 2021.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[23371\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when his Department plans to publish the outcome of its review of the potential merits of covid-status certificates.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the [statement](#) made by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the 5 July 2021.

■ **Elections: Consultation Papers**

Cat Smith:

[\[25039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he is planning to publish a Green or White paper on the upcoming Elections Bill.

Cat Smith:

[\[25040\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government has taken to consult with the devolved Administrations on the introduction of voter ID.

Chloe Smith:

The Elections Bill will deliver this Government's manifesto commitments to strengthen the integrity of our elections and ensure that our democracy remains secure, fair, modern and transparent. It also delivers on Government commitments made in response to consultations and Select Committee recommendations.

The legislation has benefitted from extensive engagement with the Devolved Administrations as well as the input and expertise of those working in the electoral sector.

We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders, including charities and civil society organisations to make sure that voter identification works for all voters.

The proposal to introduce voter identification is for reserved elections only.

■ **Government Departments: Procurement**

Neil Coyle:

[\[23215\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many Ministers' connected parties have been granted Government contacts under the Government's procurement policy since the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic.

Julia Lopez:

This information is not held centrally. A list of [ministers' interests](#) is published periodically on GOV.UK.

Updated commercial guidance on the management of actual and perceived conflicts of interest has been published to provide commercial teams across government with further information on the roles and responsibilities of those involved in decision making, risk management and how provisions may be applied to suppliers.

The future legislative scheme, as set out in our proposals for procurement reform, will continue to place legal duties on authorities with respect to the prevention and remedy of conflicts of interest, with additional policy and guidance provided by the centre where the need arises.

■ Non-departmental Public Bodies: Disclosure of Information**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[23158\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that non-departmental public bodies performance reporting arrangements are accurate.

Julia Lopez:

The Cabinet Office does not capture non-departmental public body performance reporting centrally, this is the responsibility of the public body's sponsoring department.

A non-departmental public body is required to submit to their sponsoring department, on an annual basis, an annual report and audited accounts prepared in accordance with the relevant statutes and guidelines. The annual report and accounts provide the sponsoring department with the financial and non-financial performance of the non-departmental public body. In addition, they will state if the non-departmental public body has met key performance indicators as set out in their business and corporate plans. The report and accounts are laid in Parliament and, where commercially possible, made available on the non-departmental public body's website

■ Press Conferences: Sign Language**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[23273\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of challenging the Katherine Rowley vs the Cabinet Office judicial review, Claim No: CO/_4740/2020.

Julia Lopez:

We are unable to comment on ongoing legal proceedings.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Coronavirus****John Healey:**[\[23054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of Armed Forces personnel who (a) are deployed overseas, (b) have tested positive for covid-19 in the past 12 months and (c) have experienced symptoms and side effects typically associated with long-covid after testing negative for the virus.

James Heappey:

As at 22 June 2021 we estimate the number of Armed Forces personnel deployed or based overseas is approximately 11,200.

In the year to 11 June 2021, 8,796 Armed Forces personnel in the UK and overseas have had a positive COVID-19 test result entered on their medical record.

We are working with partners across Government to understand the long-term effects of COVID-19. Defence does not currently collect statistics on the criteria as specified

■ **Armed Forces: Uniforms****Emily Thornberry:**[\[23123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the new £11.4 million contract awarded by Leidos Supply Ltd on behalf of his Department to Try & Lilly Ltd for the supply of ceremonial and parade headwear over the next seven years will include the supply of bearskin caps or any other items of headwear featuring real fur.

Jeremy Quin:

The contract awarded to Try & Lilly Limited to supply Ceremonial and Parade Headwear does not include bearskin, but includes other real fur items as detailed in the following table:

CEREMONIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF FUR
Busby cap - Royal Horse Artillery Officer	Long Haired Black Fox Skin
Busby cap - Royal Engineers and Royal Scots	Rabbit
Hat - Police Constable (Female)	Mixed Fur Felt (Rabbit, Hare & Beaver)
Hat - Royal Navy Tricorne - Officers/Senior Ratings	Rabbit
Hat - Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service	Mixed Fur Felt (Rabbit, Hare & Beaver)
Hat - Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service - Officer & Warrant Officers	Rabbit
Hat - Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing	Rabbit

CEREMONIAL ITEM DESCRIPTION**TYPE OF FUR**

Service - Group Captain

The use of faux fur products for future requirements remains under review.

■ **Military Bases: Security**

Stephen Morgan: [\[25925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of security of surveillance systems at Ministry of Defence sites.

James Heappey:

The MOD takes the security of its personnel, systems and establishments very seriously and have robust measures in place, but we do not comment on specific security arrangements or procedures.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Dogs**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[24113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many dogs have been euthanised by (a) his Department and (b) agencies and public bodies of his Department since June 2020.

Jeremy Quin:

Collation and verification of Military Working Animal End of Service data, including information on deaths and euthanasia, is undertaken annually. For the 2020 calendar year 19 dogs were euthanised on veterinary grounds and five dogs were euthanised for safety reasons. All were carried out by qualified veterinary surgeons.

Our working animals provide an invaluable service to our troops, and every effort is made to rehome them at the end of their service life. Decisions are taken by the Military Working Animal rehoming board following an extensive assessment of the animals and any potential new home. Sadly, there are some occasions where it is not possible to rehome an animal safely. Service animals are only euthanised for one of two reasons; either because the animal poses an unacceptable risk to public safety or due to a veterinary condition causing unnecessary suffering.

■ **Ministry of Defence: EMCOR UK**

Stephen Morgan: [\[25924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to review Government contracts with Emcor for surveillance systems across his Department's sites.

Jeremy Quin:

I will write to the hon. Member with the requested information shortly.

■ Ministry of Defence: Energy

Ruth Jones:

[\[25140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of his Department's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

The cost, to the public purse, of the Ministry of Defence's energy usage by Financial Year (FY) is shown in the table below:

	OUTTURN	YEAR TO DATE (TO END OF MAY 2021)			TOTAL £MILLION
	FY2018-19	FY2019-20	FY2020-21	FY 2021-22	
Total £million	344.13	359.14	332.60	54.75	1, 090.6 2

These figures cover infrastructure utility costs for both UK and Overseas bases.

■ Ministry of Defence: Horses

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[24112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many horses have been euthanised by (a) his Department and (b) agencies and public bodies of his Department since June 2020.

Jeremy Quin:

Collation and verification of Military Working Animal End of Service data, including information on deaths and euthanasia, is undertaken annually. For the 2020 calendar year six horses were euthanised on veterinary grounds. All were carried out by qualified veterinary surgeons.

■ Pakistan: Military Exercises

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[25762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of whether Pakistan's PNS Zulfiqar frigate's scheduled exercise, Arabian Monsoon, with the Russian navy in the Baltic Sea after visiting St Petersburg on 22-27 July 2021 represents a potential challenge to NATO in that sea.

James Heappey:

The NATO Alliance remains the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic defence. This includes ensuring security and stability in the Baltic region. We are mindful of Russia's persistent hostile actions towards NATO and our Eastern Allies, and are confident in

the effectiveness of NATO's routine deterrence activity in the region, which includes air policing and enhanced Forward Presence deployments of personnel.

The UK continues to value the role that Pakistan has played as a NATO Partner. This includes training and cooperation with the Alliance on areas of mutual interest, including stability and counter extremism in Afghanistan, civil preparedness and disaster response and counter narcotics. The Royal Navy via HMS Montrose also participated in Exercise AMAN 21 (February 2021) in the port of Karachi and off the coast of Southern Pakistan.

PNS ZULFIQAR will visit Portsmouth next week. Baroness Goldie will attend a reception on board and it will then conduct Exercise WHITE STAR with HMS ARGYLL on 14 July.

■ Russia: Black Sea

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[25761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of whether Russia's actions in the Black Sea towards (a) HMS Defender on 23 June 2021 and (b) the Royal Netherlands naval vessel HNMLS Evertsen on 24 June 2021 represent a potential pattern of challenging NATO.

James Heappey:

HMS DEFENDER was conducting innocent passage through Ukrainian territorial waters in accordance with international law, taking the most direct route from Odesa to Batumi. En route, she interacted with a number of Russian military vessels and aircraft: at no point was she fired upon nor bombs dropped in her path. It remains essential that all conduct is safe, professional and in line with international law. HNMLS EVERTSON was also taking the most direct route from Odesa to her destination. The UK will continue to demonstrate our commitment to maintaining regional security and freedom of navigation by undertaking periodic deployments, including under NATO, to work with allies and partners in the Black Sea region. We continue to encourage Russia to work co-operatively to reduce the risk of miscalculation.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Battle of Adwalton Moor: Anniversaries

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[24285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department plans to take to commemorate the anniversary of the Battle of Adwalton Moor.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Battle of Adwalton Moor occurred on 30 June 1643 at Adwalton. It marked an important moment in the First English Civil War in the North of England, where the royalists, led by Earl of Newcastle defeated the Parliamentarians under Lord Fairfax.

The present site is included on Historic England's Battlefields Register

This country has a long and well-established tradition of commemorating historical events of national and local importance through memorials and celebratory events. It is not common practice however, for the Central Government to fund new memorials or events to mark significant events, instead we would urge the local community, both public sector and private individuals, to propose, fundraise, and develop commemorative events and monuments which best reflect the needs of their local community.

In terms of funding opportunities, I would urge the Hon Member to contact the National Lottery Heritage Fund. As the largest funder of heritage in the UK, The National Lottery Heritage Fund regularly supports projects focused on past people and events, and these are often timed to coincide with anniversaries.

Choirs: Coronavirus**Dame Diana Johnson:****[25756]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Government's Covid-19 guidance for Performing arts and non-professional activities updated on 18 May 2021, what the scientific basis is for six-person capacity limits on non-professional singing indoors.

Caroline Dinenage:

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

However, it is important that we take a cautious approach in easing restrictions. We are aware, through the [NERVTAG](#) and [PERFORM studies](#) that singing can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission through the spread of aerosol droplets. This was backed up by a [consensus statement from SAGE](#), resulting in the [suggested principles of safer singing](#) being published.

All of these studies highlight the key factors of physical distancing, ventilation and volume, which is why we have published the suggested principles of safer singing.

Since these studies and the work from SAGE, the COVID context has changed with the emergence of more transmissible strains. This would include the so-called Alpha variant B.1.1.7 which research suggests may be 70% more transmissible, and now the Delta variant B1.617.2 which looks to be even more transmissible. This means the risks associated with transmission have increased since these studies were undertaken.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[25757]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Government's Covid-19 guidance for Performing arts and non-professional activities updated on 18 May 2021, what assessment his Department has made of the financial impact of six-person capacity limits for non-professional singing indoors on music directors who facilitate those groups.

Caroline Dineneage:

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

Last year, the government announced the unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the culture sector which is now reaching organisations and individuals across the country. This funding is supporting the arts and culture sector to survive the pandemic and continue operating. To date, over £1.2 billion has now been allocated to over 5000 organisations and sites across the country. Many working in the sector also continue to benefit from the significant cross-economy package of support that has been made available throughout this pandemic, including the generous employment schemes, grants, loans, and business rates relief.

We will continue to keep guidance and restrictions under review, in line with the changing situation. Further detail on step 4 will be set out as soon as possible.

■ FINA

Chi Onwurah:

[25815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department makes any financial contribution (a) directly and (b) through supported organisations to FINA, Federation International de Natation; and what assessment he has

made of the implications for diversity of swimming in the UK of FINA's decision to bar swimming hats designed for afro hair in the Olympics.

Nigel Huddleston:

My department has made no such financial contributions. Decisions about international regulations are for Federation International de Natation (FINA), as the international federation for the sport.

Domestically, the Government is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in sport and physical activity, including swimming. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase levels of physical activity amongst under-represented groups, working closely with the sector to achieve this.

We welcome the recent partnership between Swim England and the Black Swimming Association which will continue the important work to address the inequalities in aquatic activities, and increase diversity and participation in swimming.

■ **Gambling: Licensing**

Philip Davies:

[R] [\[24141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the average time taken by the Gambling Commission to make a determination on an application for a gambling licence has been in each of the last five years.

Philip Davies:

[R] [\[24142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the longest time taken by the Gambling Commission to make a determination on an application for a gambling licence has been in each of the last five years.

Philip Davies:

[R] [\[24143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many gambling licence applications the Gambling Commission is considering; and for how long each of those applications has been under consideration.

Philip Davies:

[R] [\[24144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many gambling licences the Gambling Commission has (a) granted and (b) refused in each of the last five years.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The table below shows the average time taken by the Gambling Commission to make a determination on an application for a gambling licence. This is measured across all applicants, from the date their initial payment is received to the date a final decision is made and their case is closed.

AVERAGE TIME TAKEN BY THE GAMBLING COMMISSION TO MAKE A DETERMINATION ON AN APPLICATION FOR A GAMBLING LICENCE

Year	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Time (days)	99 days	66 days	75 days	123 days	85 days

The increase from 66 days to 99 between 2019/20 and 2020/21 was a product of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the Commission's delivery capacity.

The average time is influenced by exceptional cases. These are reflected below in the table showing the longest time taken to make a determination on an application in each of the last five years.

LONGEST TIME TAKEN BY THE GAMBLING COMMISSION TO MAKE A DETERMINATION ON AN APPLICATION FOR A GAMBLING LICENCE

Year	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Time (days)	945 days	370 days	254 days	2023 days	441 days

These are complex cases, some of which go to panel followed by appeals to the tribunal and court of appeal. Some cases resulted in the applicant withdrawing the application, or the applicant requesting additional time to provide the necessary information.

The table below shows the number of gambling licence applications that the Gambling Commission is currently considering, and the length of time that each of the applications has been under consideration.

NO. OF GAMBLING LICENCE APPLICATIONS THE GAMBLING COMMISSION IS CONSIDERING; AND HOW LONG EACH OF THOSE APPLICATIONS HAS BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION

Time (days)	0-30 days	21-60 days	61-90 days	over 90 days
No. of licence applications	6	23	16	38

The Gambling Commission has granted 1,117 licences in total over the last five years, and the table below shows the number of gambling licence applications that the Gambling Commission has granted and refused during this period.

NO. OF GAMBLING LICENCES THE GAMBLING COMMISSION HAS GRANTED / REFUSED IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
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NO. OF GAMBLING LICENCES THE GAMBLING COMMISSION HAS GRANTED / REFUSED IN EACH OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS

No. of licences granted	170	216	212	291	228
No. of licences refused	2	1	3	8	4

The Commission introduced an incomplete application process in 2017/18, in order to prevent applications being submitted which would be refused owing to lack of necessary information. This has contributed to the small number of refused licences over the last three years, with rejected applications now tending to relate to novel betting products or uncertainty over an applicant's source of funds.

■ **Mobile Phones: Fees and Charges**

Patrick Grady:

[\[25857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reintroduction of roaming charges on UK travellers to the EU.

Matt Warman:

Since the end of the Transition Period the UK is no longer part of Roam Like at Home so surcharge-free roaming for UK consumers in the EU is no longer guaranteed. Mobile operators are now able to impose a surcharge on UK consumers travelling abroad to the EU for their mobile phone usage.

The government will continue to promote a competitive marketplace that serves the interests of consumers.

Patrick Grady:

[\[25858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has with his counterparts in the EU on securing charge free roaming for UK travellers to the EU.

Matt Warman:

Since the end of the Transition Period the UK is no longer part of Roam Like at Home so surcharge-free roaming for UK consumers in the EU is no longer guaranteed.

During negotiations for the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, the UK proposed continuation of reciprocal agreements between the UK and EU for surcharge free roaming, or a review clause to consider the need for these should roaming surcharges return for consumers. The EU did not agree to either of these proposals. Therefore, mobile operators are now able to impose a surcharge on UK

consumers travelling abroad to the EU for their mobile phone usage. We advise that consumers check with their operators before travelling.

■ Music: Industry

Kevin Brennan:

[\[24911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what meetings he has had with representatives of the recorded music industry in 2021.

Caroline Dinenage:

In 2021 the Secretary of State has attended meetings with the following representatives of the recorded music industry including:

- Rob Stringer, Chairman of the Sony Music Group;
- A roundtable chaired by Sir Bernard Jenkin which included a number of music stakeholders, including Deborah Annetts (Chair of the Incorporated Society of Musicians), Mark Pemberton (Director of the Association of British Orchestras) and Dame Sarah Connolly;
- Sir Elton John and David Furnish;
- Lucian Grainge, Universal Music
- A roundtable that included representatives from the Featured Artists Coalition (FAC), Association of Independent Music (AIM), Music Managers Forum (MMF), Musicians Union (MU), UK Music, British Phonographic Industry (BPI) and the Music Producers Guild;
- Rebecca Ferguson.

■ TikTok: Children

Jo Stevens:

[\[24235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of children using live streaming services on TikTok to solicit in-app virtual gifts or donations in exchange for content.

Caroline Dinenage:

We recognise the serious risks that children face online, including through the use of functionalities such as live streaming. The draft Online Safety Bill, published in May 2021, will ensure companies design their platforms to be safer for users.

The strongest protections in the legislation are for children. Unless services in scope are able to prove that children are not accessing their service, they will need to conduct a child safety risk assessment and provide safety measures for child users, keeping these under regular review.. Companies will also need to assess how the design and operation of the service, including functionalities such as instream payments and live-streaming, may increase or reduce the risks identified.

In addition, the UK's regulatory regime for video sharing platforms requires UK-established video sharing platforms to take appropriate measures to protect under-18s from harmful material, TikTok is in scope of these requirements. Ofcom is working with UK-established video sharing platforms to help them understand their duties under this regime and will be able to take enforcement action against platforms that do not comply.

■ UK Youth Parliament

Tim Loughton: [25710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to announce the results of the tender for management of the UK Youth Parliament; and what budget has been allocated.

Matt Warman:

Following a grant competition in March 2021, the UK Youth Parliament grant for 2021/22 was awarded to the British Youth Council. This decision was communicated to the British Youth Council on 6 April 2021, and the total grant budget allocated by DCMS was £233,300.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption

Tim Loughton: [25708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many adoptions have taken place in each of the last 10 years.

Vicky Ford:

The department does not hold information on the number of all children in England who are adopted. However, we hold information on children who have been adopted from care.

The latest information on children looked after in England is contained in the 'Children looked after in England' statistical release, which is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions>.

Figures for the numbers of children looked after who were adopted are available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/bc87ab18-fc58-4c83-a12b-f65dbedbbba9b>.

■ British Students Abroad: Brexit

Owen Thompson: [25985]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the financial effect on UK students studying abroad of the UK leaving the EU.

Michelle Donelan:

The department, with colleagues from other government departments, continues to monitor the impact of the UK leaving the EU on UK students studying in the EU including those studying their whole course at an EU university, those on a “Year Abroad” as part of their UK course and those on the Erasmus+ scheme and, in the future, the Turing scheme.

Grants available through the Turing Scheme are comparable with those available through Erasmus+, but in the Turing Scheme additional support is available for disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs and disabilities.

■ Post-16 Qualifications At Level 3 and Below in England Review**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[23293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his timetable is for publishing his Department's (a) response to the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and (b) updated impact assessments for that review.

Gillian Keegan:

The department has consulted in two stages on proposals for the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3. The second stage of consultation ran from 23 October 2020 to 31 January 2021. It set out proposals for ensuring that all qualifications that are approved for funding alongside A levels and T Levels are high quality, necessary, and allow progression to good outcomes. We will publish our response and updated impact assessment shortly.

■ Pupils: Mental Health Services**Rachael Maskell:**[\[23263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional mental health support will be made available to school age children over the summer 2021 holidays in response to the mental effects of the covid-19 outbreak and lost schooling.

Vicky Ford:

We know that the mental health and wellbeing of young people has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, and that being back in school and college plays a central role in promoting wellbeing for pupils. That is why we worked so hard to ensure that schools were first to reopen in March 2021.

The education recovery package and additional funding supports schools to provide pastoral care and extracurricular activities. This includes the £200 million we have put into summer schools, which will give secondary pupils access to enrichment activities, such as games, music, drama and sports that they have missed out on over the COVID-19 outbreak. The department published guidance to schools on summer schools on 30 March 2021; when planning a summer school, schools are encouraged to create an environment that supports pupils' mental health and wellbeing, and to be particularly aware and supportive of the greater mental health and wellbeing needs of vulnerable children.

We are also investing up to £220 million in our Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has now been expanded across England. The programme provides children with opportunities to be active, eat healthily and enjoy engaging activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment.

Furthermore, the Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 support guide to support schools, which includes further information about interventions to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

The Department's Mental Health in Education Action Group, led by myself and my hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Universities, has been looking further at what more can be done to help education settings support mental wellbeing as part of recovery. The department has recently brought together all its sources of advice for schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff, school leaders and children and young people: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>.

In addition, Public Health England has provided advice and guidance for parents and professionals on looking after children and young people's mental wellbeing, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

It has adapted its Every Mind Matters and Rise Above platforms in the context of the outbreak, and launched new e-learning to help parents and carers, front line workers and volunteers support children and young people in emergency or crisis situations.

We are also investing around an additional £500 million into mental health support in 2021/22, with £79 million additional funding that will be used to significantly expand children's and young people's mental health services including accelerating the coverage of mental health support teams providing early support in schools and colleges. £15 million is to be invested in local authority areas in the most deprived parts of the country to help stimulate and boost prevention and early intervention services to support those hardest hit by the COVID-19 outbreak, including families, children and young people, and ethnic minority groups.

For all those in need of immediate or specialist support, NHS mental health services remain open and have deployed digital tools to enable them to connect with people and provide ongoing support throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. All NHS Mental Health Trusts continue to provide 24/7 open access telephone lines to support people of all ages.

The government has also provided over £10 million funding to mental health charities – including Mind, the Samaritans, Young Minds, and Bipolar UK to help them adapt, expand, and reach those who are most vulnerable.

Rachael Maskell:

[23264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he will provide to school students receiving GCSE and A Level results in summer 2021 to support their (a) mental wellbeing and (b) appeals should they not receive their hoped for grades.

Nick Gibb:

Teachers have received detailed support and guidance on assessment, whilst students have had multiple chances to show what they know, and grades have been subject to robust internal and external quality assurance checks. The Department recognises that there will be some students who feel that their grade does not reflect their ability.

An appeals system will be in place, but only as a safety net to correct any genuine errors that were not identified earlier on. Students should only appeal if they believe an error has been made. A student's grade can go up, stay the same or go down on appeal. Students should therefore consider carefully if appealing is the right course of action for them. The Department encourages students to talk to their school, college or prospective university to discuss available options, and the National Careers Service will also be running an exam results helpline. If a student wants to improve their GCSE or A level grade, they might alternatively wish to consider entering for the autumn exam series.

The Department has made children's wellbeing and mental health a central part of our response to the COVID-19 outbreak. We have recently announced more than £17 million to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £7 million additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on Wellbeing for Education Return which has supported over 15,000 schools and colleges since its launch in summer 2020, to provide free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from COVID-19. The training materials also include examples of supporting students through loss and disappointment, including over exam results.

■ Schools: Discipline

Richard Fuller:

[23144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 25 January 2021 to Question 138427 on Schools: Discipline, what progress his Department has made on establishing the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the behaviour hubs programme; and if he will publish (a) those criteria and (b) the advice his Department received from the independent evaluator it procured to assess the effectiveness of that behaviour hubs programme.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has procured an independent evaluator to assess the effectiveness of the behaviour hubs programme. The evaluator is in the process of developing an evaluation framework and set of indicators that will underpin the study. Key measures

of success are likely to include improved school behaviour cultures and fewer incidents of disruption, truancy, and bullying. In the longer term, key measures of success are likely to include improved pupil attainment and outcomes, pupil and staff wellbeing, staff recruitment and retention.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Reviews**

Cat Smith: [\[23236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish the outcome of the SEND Review; and if he will make a statement.

Cat Smith: [\[23237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to maintain all existing legal entitlements for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities when the SEND Review is published.

Vicky Ford:

The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Review has been making good progress, but the COVID-19 outbreak has frustrated the pace of this important review and materially altered the context for reform. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, will ensure that the house is kept appropriately updated.

The SEND Review continues to work with system experts to make sure we are designing a system fit for the future. We are drawing on the best evidence available to review the system, including the consideration of existing legal entitlements, before publishing proposals for public consultation.

Cat Smith: [\[23238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to make local areas more accountable for fulfilling their statutory obligations to children and young people with SEND; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

We are committed to ensuring greater stability of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services as we enter the recovery phase following the COVID-19 outbreak. We aim to have clear oversight of local areas' performance in delivering SEND services, including those that had weaknesses before the COVID-19 outbreak and those that are struggling to respond to the challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak has brought. With this in mind, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) re-started their revisit programme of areas where SEND services need to improve that received a Written Statement of Action in April, and full inspections in June.

We are working closely with Ofsted, CQC, our professional advisory service and our delivery support partners to identify, support and intervene effectively and early in underperforming areas.

We recognise the need to strengthen accountability in the SEND system and, therefore, the department, with the support of the Department of Health and Social Care, has commissioned Ofsted and the CQC to develop a new area SEND inspection framework to launch after the existing inspection cycle has finished. Learning from the published assessment of the current approach, this will include a greater focus on the experience of children and young people with SEND, and their families, and give more prominence to the quality integration and commissioning of education, health and care services. The new framework will take into account the COVID-19 outbreak's impact on services and on children, young people and families.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[23344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with universities on the resumption of face-to-face lectures in September 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

We have regularly discussed a range of COVID-19 related issues with representatives from the higher education (HE) sector, through the Higher Education Taskforce, which was established in August 2020, and through meetings with representatives of the HE sector, including University Vice Chancellors, the National Union of Students, the Union for Colleges and Universities and the devolved administrations. This has included discussions on the approach to planning for the new academic year in September 2021.

From step 4 of the roadmap, we can confirm there will no longer be restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in HE settings as a result of COVID-19. There will be no requirement for social distancing or other measures. Providers are, therefore, able to shape their courses without restrictions to face-to-face provision.

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

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

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

We have updated our HE guidance to support the return of students for the new academic year, which is available [here](#):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>.

We will continue to keep these measures under review, informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice.

■ Vocational Education: Qualifications

Sarah Owen:

[25948]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has carried out an impact assessment of the removal of funding for Applied General Qualifications.

Gillian Keegan:

The department has consulted in two stages on proposals for the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3, which includes Applied General Qualifications (AGQs). The review aims to ensure that students and employers have confidence that every qualification on offer is high quality and can lead to skilled employment or further study. The second stage consultation proposed that there should be a range of qualifications alongside A levels and T Levels in areas where those qualifications can demonstrate their necessity and meet new quality criteria.

The impact assessment published alongside the second stage of consultation stated that the changes will generally be positive because students will have access to higher quality qualifications in future, including new T Levels. This will put them in a stronger position to progress to further study or skilled employment. AGQs were included in the impact assessment, but the impact assessment did not separate out the impact of removing these qualifications from wider changes to the qualification offer.

We are considering the feedback to the consultation carefully and will shortly publish a full response, including an updated impact assessment.

■ Young People: Health

Marco Longhi:

[23365]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a long-term strategy to improve physical activity and wellbeing in young people in (a) the UK and (b) Dudley North constituency.

Marco Longhi:

[23366]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that children with disabilities can participate in appropriate physical activity at school in (a) the UK and (b) Dudley North constituency.

Marco Longhi:

[23367]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of using targeted interventions in relation to physical activity in his recovery plan for education.

Nick Gibb:

The Government published its cross-government School Sport and Activity Action Plan in July 2019, which aims to increase levels of physical activity for all children in England through providing them with greater opportunities to do 60 minutes of physical activity every day inside and outside school. The Government has confirmed its intention to publish an update to this action plan later in 2021 and is working closely with sport organisations through the School Sport and Activity Sector Forum to discuss the Government's long term approach to physical activity in schools.

Since 2013, the Department has funded a series of grant programmes to increase and improve access to physical education, school sport and physical activity for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Department has provided £10.1 million to open school sport facilities outside of the school day and continues to support the Holiday Activities and Food Fund and Summer Schools programme, which are targeted towards children from lower socio-economic groups and can help to maintain activity over the summer holidays. The Department has confirmed £320 million funding for the physical education and sport premium into the next academic year. Schools are provided with the flexibility to use this funding to meet the needs of their pupils.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Air Pollution: Health Hazards****Ms Lyn Brown:****[23141]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take in response to (a) air pollution, (b) resident objections, (c) physical health impacts and (d) mental health impacts linked to gasworks redevelopment sites.

Rebecca Pow:

Local Planning Authorities are responsible for issuing planning consents for the redevelopment of brownfield land. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that development sites should be suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land contamination. This includes risks arising from former activities such as gasworks. The Framework is also clear that new development should be appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment.

Certain remediation activities on former gasworks sites (such as treatment of contaminated soils and groundwater) require a mobile treatment permit under the Environmental Permitting Regime. These permits are issued by the Environment Agency (EA), which regulates emissions from the treatment activities (e.g. air pollution, odour, noise).

Before treatment commences, the operator must submit an application to the EA to deploy the mobile plant to site. This application must include site specific information to show how the operator will:

- control pollution from the treatment process and
- control and manage emissions to avoid pollution to the environment and harm to human health.

■ **Animal Products: Imports**

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[25745\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of the 2016 CITES resolution that well managed and sustainable trophy hunting is consistent with and contributes to species conservation; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

This Government takes the conservation of endangered species very seriously, which is why we will be banning the import of hunting trophies from endangered species. Our approach will be comprehensive, robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide. We held a consultation on this issue between 2 November 2019 and 25 February 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the publication of the Government response. We will be setting out our plans soon.

■ **Consumer Goods**

Ben Lake:

[\[23303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will bring forward measures to prevent companies from destroying new and unused stock of electrical and other non-perishable goods.

Rebecca Pow:

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

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

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

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

■ Deer: Conservation

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[25744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to ensure that trophy hunting does not limit the ability of (a) private and (b) public landowners to engage in the culling of domestic deer stocks; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

Deer management in England and Wales is covered by the Deer Act (1991) which sets out, for example, close seasons and prohibited methods of control. This legislation aims to manage wild deer to achieve the best combination of benefits for the economy, environment, people and communities for now and for future generations. In addition, as set out in the recent English Tree Action Plan, we will develop a national deer management strategy for England.

This Government has also committed to ban the import of hunting trophies from endangered species. Our approach will be comprehensive, robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide. This action will not prevent landowners from culling deer in the UK. We will be setting out plans soon

■ Flood Control: Shrewsbury

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[25760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the risk of flooding in Shrewsbury from the River Severn.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) owns and operates 13 flood defence assets in the Shrewsbury area, which provide flood protection to business and communities from the River Severn and its tributaries. These existing flood risk management assets are maintained to ensure they remain operational, protecting the communities they are designed for, with dedicated teams in place to operate them 24 hours a day.

After the 2019/2020 winter floods, £605,000 was allocated to repair flood defence assets, covering both the Frankwell and Coleham flood risk management schemes which together provide protection to around 250 properties. All work has been completed and these schemes are fully operational. The EA is currently planning further maintenance work on these defences following the winter 2020/2021 floods.

Last year, the Government announced that up to £170 million would be spent to accelerate work on 22 shovel-ready flood defence schemes, to begin construction before the end of 2021/2022. This included up to £30 million for the Severn Valley Water Management Scheme located in Shrewsbury, and up to £5.4 million for a scheme combining natural flood risk management, tree planting and habitat creation to reduce flood risk and capture carbon throughout the Severn Valley.

Across the wider Severn catchment, the EA continues to progress a pilot for the government funded long term investment pathways/Adaptation Pathways, with £1.5 million secured from April 2021, for six years. This project will look ahead at least 50 years, to work out what flood defences are necessary in the long term and when they should be built to avoid unnecessary investment costs in future and missed opportunities.

The EA, along with other members of the River Severn Partnership, is currently investigating what further measures may be implemented to reduce flood risk in Shrewsbury. As well as the potential for new proposals, on which the EA is working with local partners, the role and lifespan of existing flood risk management assets with regard to climate change, is also being considered.

■ Lakes and Rivers: Environment Protection

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[23372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ensure that all of England's rivers and lakes achieve a good ecological status.

Rebecca Pow:

We are committed to delivering clean and plentiful water, using a range of approaches to tackle the many pressures the water environment faces. We will be setting at least one new, legally binding target on water quality through the Environment Bill.

Working closely with the Environment Agency (EA), we are tackling river and lake pollution from poor farming practices with regulation, financial incentives and educational schemes for farmers. Our Catchment Sensitive Farming programme is giving important advice and support to farmers, operating across England, in the areas of highest risk of water pollution from agriculture, directing effort where it is needed most and maximising value for money for the taxpayer. Our new Environmental Land Management scheme, which we are rolling out over the course of this Parliament, will also reward farmers for sustainable farming practices that protect and enhance water quality.

Water company investment in environmental improvements has been scaled up to £7.1 billion over the period 2020-25. The storm overflow task force and new measures through the Environment Bill will focus effort on sewage discharge from storm overflows and our new chemicals strategy will build on an already robust statutory regime to ensure chemicals are managed and handled safely. To improve river levels and flows, the EA made changes to over 300 abstraction licences since 2008, which has returned 47 billion litres of water a year to the environment. We know that there is a lot of work to do in order to meet our goals for clean and plentiful water, set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan. We will take considered, focused and informed action to drive real progress.

■ Livestock: Animal Feed

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[25982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the change in EU rules to allow the use of (a) processed animal protein from mammals in the feed for poultry and pigs and (b) gelatine and collagen from sheep and cattle being fed to other farm animals; and whether he plans to ban those products from entering the food chain in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The current EU rules for the production of animal feed are more stringent than those of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

The EU's forthcoming changes are in line with the OIE and with the EU TSE Roadmaps. The Roadmaps are a programme of stepwise relaxations in line with the latest scientific advice which the UK, an EU Member State at the time, supported. They would permit the feeding of porcine Processed Animal Protein (PAP) to poultry and poultry PAP to pigs, and ruminant gelatine and collagen and protein derived from insects to pigs and poultry.

Now that we have left the EU, the restrictions on feeding of livestock in the UK will not be altered by EU legislation and they apply whether the feed is imported or produced here.

The UK does not ban the imports of animals or products of animal origin from countries where the feed rules comply with the OIE requirements. This means that imports of animals or products of animal origin from the EU or Northern Ireland will continue to be accepted into Great Britain.

The Government is in the process of assessing the implications of these changes for the UK and will use the latest scientific evidence to decide if any policy changes should be made in England.

■ Peat Bogs: Conservation

Caroline Lucas:

[\[23151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to set obligations for water companies and peatland owners in SSSI's to restore peatland on land they own, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee in their Policies for the Sixth Carbon Budget and Net Zero.

Rebecca Pow:

The England Peat Action Plan was published in May and provides an ambitious framework to improve the management and protection of peatlands, to ensure they are functioning healthily for the needs of wildlife, people and planet. We will work to ensure all our peatlands, not just deep or protected peat, are responsibly managed, or under restoration management.

In April we launched the Nature for Climate Peatland Grant Scheme which intends to invest over £50 million by 2025 to fund the restoration of at least 35,000 hectares of

degraded peatlands across England, including in Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The scheme is open to a range of groups and organisations, such as Non-Governmental Organisations, national parks and water companies. In Sites of Special Scientific Interest, landowners are required to manage the land effectively and appropriately to conserve the special features of the site.

In the England Peat Action Plan, we committed to continue to work with water companies to encourage their investment in peat restoration as a solution to water quality issues, and to meet the industry's net zero goals.

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

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Afghanistan: Overseas Aid**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[25771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is planning to spend more than £38.3 million on aid to Afghanistan as set out on his Department's Development Tracker in the 2022-23 financial year.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO's 21/22 planned country allocations (budgets) will be published in our Annual Report later this year alongside our audited 20/21 accounts. HMG's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022. We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

■ **Africa: Water Supply**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps is he taking to help ensure that every person living in the African continent can have access to clean water.

James Duddridge:

Between 2015 and 2020 the UK supported 62.6 million people to gain access to basic water supply or sanitation services. Africa has been the region with the largest share of our water supply, sanitation and hygiene programmes, with 26.3 million beneficiaries reached. Our support to the region will continue to help governments deliver reliable and climate resilient water and sanitation services that reach the poorest households.

■ Armed Conflict and Violence: Children

Alicia Kearns:

[\[24364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the annual report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict, published on 21 June 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of that report; and what assessment his department has made of how the new conflict centre outlined in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy can tackle violence against children.

Alicia Kearns:

[\[24365\]](#)

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

James Cleverly:

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

The FCDO has established a new Conflict Centre, which will focus on developing a more integrated UK approach to conflict and instability, harnessing conflict expertise from across FCDO, HMG, and beyond, and applying these where the UK can make the most difference. It will identify and develop capabilities where the UK has a comparative advantage, and work bilaterally and with international partners to increase our impact in preventing, managing and resolving conflict. The Conflict Centre will continue to ensure that the children and armed conflict agenda is reflected in this work.

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[25841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the (a) Answer of 8 June 2021 to Question 7836, and (b) visit by the Rt Hon. Member for Braintree to Bahrain in March 2021, what human rights issues were discussed during that visit; and which cases were specifically raised.

James Cleverly:

The discussions on human rights covered a range of themes and cases. The UK continues to engage with the Government of Bahrain to support its reform agenda, and to deliver on its international and domestic human rights commitments.

■ Bahrain: Torture

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[25843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the letter to the Rt hon. Member for Braintree and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon of 7 June 2021 from Human Rights Watch, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness and (b) independence from the executive of Bahraini oversight bodies in tackling torture; what steps he is taking to improve those aspects of Bahraini oversight bodies; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government unreservedly condemns the use of torture. The UK does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture for any purpose.

We believe that consistent, positive steps are being made on security and justice reform in Bahrain. Continued progress is in the interest of Bahrain, the UK and the international community. While we recognise that challenges remain, we are clear that stepping back from our engagement would not help to achieve this. Working in cooperation with the UNDP in Bahrain, we plan to continue our support through the Gulf Strategy Fund to strengthen Bahrain's human rights oversight institutions.

■ Bahraini Ministry of Interior Ombudsman

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[25842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the investigation published on 7 June 2021 by the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy and Human Rights Watch on abuses of children in detention and the adequacy of the Bahraini Ministry of Interior Ombudsman, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of the Bahraini Ministry of Interior Ombudsman; and whether the Government plans to continue allocating financial support to that Ombudsman through the Gulf Strategy Fund.

James Cleverly:

We believe that consistent, positive steps are being made on security and justice reform in Bahrain. Continued progress is in the interest of Bahrain, the UK and the international community. While we recognise that challenges remain, we are clear that stepping back from our engagement would not help to achieve this. Working in cooperation with the UNDP in Bahrain, we plan to continue our support through the Gulf Strategy Fund to strengthen Bahrain's human rights oversight institutions, including the Ombudsman.

■ Bangladesh: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[25769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is planning to spend more than £67 million on aid to Bangladesh as set out on his Department's Development Tracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO's 21/22 planned country allocations (budgets) will be published in our Annual Report later this year alongside our audited 20/21 accounts. The UK Government's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022. We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

■ **Brazil: Overseas Aid****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[25910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £709,000 million of aid in Brazil as set out on devtracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO's 21/22 planned country allocations will be published in our Annual Report later this year, alongside our audited 20/21 accounts. HMG's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data, will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022.

We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker, which is updated monthly.

■ **British Council: Loans****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[25837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will release the details of the commercial loan terms given to the British Council in 2020.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government provided the British Council access to a loan facility of £60 million in 2020, which was increased to £145 million in 2021, to enable the organisation to remain solvent and meet its minimum financial obligations in response to the impact of Covid on its exams and teaching business. The terms of this loan facility are commercially sensitive, however, the loan facility was made in line with the Market Economy Operator Principle with assessments conducted on the British Council's financial data and credit worthiness to ensure the terms are in line with those which a private operator would provide.

■ **British Council: Staff****Stephen Kinnock:**[\[25838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many jobs he expects to be lost at the British Council due to the recent announcements of reduced staffing levels; and if he will publish the (a) roles and (b) locations of those jobs.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government remains committed to the British Council. As the Integrated Review made clear, the Council is one of the vital instruments of our influence overseas. It will continue to operate in over 100 countries promoting the English language, UK arts and culture and education, and continue to promote Global Britain. Questions about staffing levels are operational matters for the British Council.

Stephen Kinnock:[\[25839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of reductions in staffing levels at the British Council on the UK's reputation overseas in respect of (a) delivering education and training and (b) securing trade deals following the UK's departure from the EU.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government remains committed to the British Council. As the Integrated Review made clear, the Council is one of the vital instruments of our influence overseas. It will continue to operate in over 100 countries promoting the English language, UK arts and culture and education, and continue to promote Global Britain. Questions about staffing levels are operational matters for the British Council.

■ British Indian Ocean Territory**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[25763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to the High Commissioner for Mauritius on the statements made by the Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth in October 2020 that the British are hypocrites and champions of double talk in respect of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

James Duddridge:

The UK has repeatedly made it clear to the Government of Mauritius that the UK has no doubt about its sovereignty over the territory of BIOT, which has been under continuous British sovereignty since 1814. Mauritius has never held sovereignty over the territory and we do not recognise its claim. However, we have a long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to cede sovereignty of the territory to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes. We stand by that commitment. We are disappointed with the comments made by Prime Minister Jugnauth in October 2020 in relation to the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).

■ Cameroon: Armed Conflict**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[24361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the predominant cause of the conflict in anglophone Cameroon; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the crisis in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon, including the disturbing reports of human rights abuses by both armed separatists and security forces. 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.

We regularly raise our concerns with the Government of Cameroon. In March I travelled to Cameroon and met President Biya, Prime Minister Ngute and Foreign Minister Mbella Mbella to push for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. 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. We have shared our experiences of conflict resolution with the Government of Cameroon, and we urge all sides to remain engaged with the Swiss-led process to facilitate talks.

■ Cyprus: Politics and Government**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[23142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to support a negotiated resolution to the conflict on the island of Cyprus.

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.

■ Developing Countries: Females

Feryal Clark:

[\[23383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to support girls' education and gender equality in the global south.

Wendy Morton:

Advancing gender equality and women and girls' rights is a core part of this Government's mission, including 12 years of quality education for girls, empowering women socially, economically and politically and ending violence against women and girls. Meeting under the UK Presidency, G7 Foreign and Development Ministers endorsed two new global targets on girls' education in low-income and lower-middle income countries, which we are calling on the world to help deliver by 2026. Ministers also endorsed a girls' education declaration, which states that the G7 will work in collaboration with developing country partners, multilateral institutions, civil society, girl-led groups and youth leaders, to remove the obstacles to education that stand in the way of girls. This includes addressing the social, environmental and institutional barriers to education such as reducing violence, reducing harmful cultural practices like FGM and amending restrictive policies or legislation that prevents girls from thriving in school.

We know women and girls are amongst the hardest hit by the indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is why we donated an additional £10 million to the UN Population Fund's COVID-19 response and an additional £1 million to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women for the COVID-19 Crisis Response Window.

■ Developing Countries: International Assistance

Ms Nusrat Ghani:

[\[25862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Minister will be responsible for overseeing the UK's role in the Build Back Better World initiative.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign and Development Minister will have lead responsibility for overseeing the UK's role in the B3W initiative launched by G7 leaders.

■ Education and Family Planning

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[25732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the letter to the President of COP26 of 30 June 2021 from 66 organisations in the human and environmental health sector, if the Government will take steps to adapt UK Government supported climate funding mechanisms to encourage climate adaptation and resilience building programmes that remove barriers to family planning and girls' education.

Wendy Morton:

Voluntary family planning and girls' education have wide-ranging benefits for individuals and societies, including supporting their adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change. The UK is fulfilling our pledge to provide £5.8 billion in international climate finance (ICF) to developing countries, and we are committed to doubling our ICF to £11.6 billion over the next five years. Our recently published COP Presidency paper 'Priorities for Public Climate Finance' sets out gender-responsive climate finance as a UK priority, which we are championing as COP26 Presidency and through the G7.

Ethiopia: Humanitarian Situation**Feryal Clark:**[\[23380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the (a) African Union and (b) United Nations on humanitarian access, food insecurity and allegations of serious human rights abuses and atrocities in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

I have discussed the situation in Tigray with the African Union's Peace and Security Commissioner Bankole on several occasions. I also expressed my concerns about Tigray to the speaker of the Ethiopian House of Peoples Representatives when we met in Zambia last week. We are supporting the African Union Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights Inquiry into Tigray and are calling on the Government of Ethiopia to allow the Inquiry's access to the Tigray region.

The UK has made clear at the UN Security Council our concerns over the continued lack of progress with humanitarian access, and ongoing human rights abuses and violations. We are seeking a full discussion of Tigray at the Security Council. We are supporting a joint investigation of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) into human rights violations and abuses in Tigray to ensure the investigation is independent, transparent and impartial. The UK is also working with partners to raise the situation in Tigray at the Human Rights Council. The Government of Ethiopia has announced a unilateral humanitarian ceasefire in Tigray. We welcome this and continue to call for all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prevent their forces from doing anything to hinder the critical work of the UN and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Mobile Phones**Lisa Nandy:**[\[25804\]](#)

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 official government business.

Lisa Nandy: [\[25805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what advice he has received from officials and the security services on the type of government communications it is appropriate or secure to conduct on his private mobile phone and on the necessary requirements for appropriate record keeping of those communications.

Lisa Nandy: [\[25806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what advice he received from his officials and the security services in response the discovery that his personal information, including a private mobile phone number, had been available publicly online for the last 11 years.

Lisa Nandy: [\[25807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he was issued with a government mobile phone on his appointment; and whether he uses that phone as his primary communication device for official government business.

Lisa Nandy: [\[25808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has at all times followed the (a) Cabinet Office's official guidance on electronic communications and (b) Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records.

Nigel Adams:

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

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Private Education

Emily Thornberry: [\[23124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund school places (a) overseas and (b) in the UK in 2020-21; and how many children were covered by that funding.

Nigel Adams:

CEA is a long-standing policy run under previous administrations and there have been no recent changes. In Financial Year 2020/21 legacy FCO allocated funding of £12,076,369 to Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for 529 children in boarding schools in the UK.

In Financial Year 2020/21 legacy FCO allocated funding of £22,496,920 to 949 legacy FCO children in education overseas.

Emily Thornberry:[\[23126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, 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.

Nigel Adams:

The ceilings for the 2020/21 school year are (per term, 3-term school year):

SENIOR BOARDER	£11,405
Senior Day	£ 7,984
Junior Boarder	£10,025
Junior Day	£ 7,018

Emily Thornberry:[\[23129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department allocated to the Continuity of Education Allowance to fund places (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.

Nigel Adams:

CEA is a long-standing policy run under previous administrations and there have been no recent changes. The FCDO allocated £1,386,900 for 50 children of FCDO staff on legacy FCO terms and conditions at these schools in 2020/2021. The details are in the table below.

FCDO staff on legacy DFID terms and conditions are not eligible for Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) although in some circumstances education is funded for children in the UK and overseas.

SCHOOL	TOTAL FOR 20/2021	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
STOWE	£205,774.00	6
WINCHESTER	£136,293.00	4
RUGBY	£148,718.00	5
ETON	£342,182.00	10
AMPLEFORTH	£146,773.00	5
MILLFIELD	£147,557.00	5
CHARTERHOUSE	£33,783.00	1
GORDONSTOUN	£91,460.00	3

SCHOOL	TOTAL FOR 20/2021	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
JUNIOR KING'S CANTERBURY	£54,333.00	3
THE KINGS SCHOOL CANTERBURY	£227,584.00	8
HARROW	£0	0
TOTAL	£1,386,900	50

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Scotland

Chris Law:

[\[23224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many civil service jobs his Department and its agencies had located in Scotland in (a) March 2011 and (b) the most recent period for which figures are available.

Nigel Adams:

Headcount information prior to 2014 is not held centrally. The figures shown below are based on the headcount as at 31 March in each financial year.

DATE	NUMBER OF STAFF BASED IN SCOTLAND
2014	570 - 579
2021	960 - 969

The 2014 figure relates only to former DFID. The former FCO did not have an office in Scotland.

■ International Assistance

Theresa Villiers:

[\[23099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that recipients of aid from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency are evaluated on criteria based on need.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a longstanding supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). We recognise UNRWA's unique mandate from the UN General Assembly (UNGA), to protect and provide protection and core services to Palestinian refugees across Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Officials are in regular contact with UNRWA to ensure high quality aid delivery and judge that UNRWA is effective in allocating resources on the basis of need.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Mr David Jones: [\[23102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he is making to his Israeli counterpart on the displacement of Palestinian children and their families under its policy of home demolitions and forced evictions.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions and forced evictions of Palestinian families from their homes with the Government of Israel. The Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law.

■ Members and Peers: Correspondence

Brendan O'Hara: [\[25844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will respond to the letter to the Rt hon. Member for Braintree and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon of 7 June 2021 from Human Rights Watch on cases of Bahraini children abused in detention.

James Cleverly:

A reply will be sent. We continue to encourage the Government of Bahrain to meet its international and domestic human rights commitments, including in the case of juveniles in the criminal justice system.

■ Middle East: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[25909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £917,516 of aid in the Middle East Region as set out on devtracker in the 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.

■ Overseas Aid: Culture

Alicia Kearns: [\[23373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) financial and (b) other support the Government provides to cultural industries around the world.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO provides project and programme funding to the British Council, BBC World Service and the GREAT Challenge Fund (GCF) to support UK soft power. As the Integrated Review states, our soft power is central to our international identity as an open, trustworthy and innovative country, and helps to build positive perceptions of the UK, create strong people-to-people links and familiarity with our values. The FCDO is providing the British Council with £189 million of funding for 2021-22. We will be providing £94.4 million to the World Service for 2021-22, through our BBC World2020 programme, including an £8 million uplift to expand programming to tackle disinformation and develop digital platforms. Through the GCF, our Overseas Network is able to deliver projects which promote the UK's cultural credentials in their local markets. This year the GCF will be dedicated to a range of projects which support cultural and soft power activities.

■ Overseas Aid: Marine Environment**Helen Hayes:**[\[25897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in official development assistance spending on the UK's role in tackling global marine plastic pollution.

Helen Hayes:[\[25899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction of (a) official development assistance and (b) subsequent funding to projects tackling (i) marine plastic pollution and (ii) other environmental issues, on the UK's role as a global environmental leader ahead of COP26.

James Duddridge:

The huge impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid to 0.5% of GNI. We will remain a world-leading development donor and are on track to spend more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty, tackle climate change and improve global health.

The UK is a global leader in tackling plastic pollution. We are co-chair of the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance with Vanuatu, working with 34 Commonwealth governments to tackle plastic pollution. We are supporting the Global Plastic Action Partnership to deliver National Plastic Action Partnerships in Indonesia, Ghana, and Vietnam. We support starting negotiations on a new global agreement to accelerate global efforts to tackle marine plastic litter and microplastics.

Helen Hayes:[\[25898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in official development assistance spending on the UK's role in protecting the (a) global marine environment and (b) livelihoods which depend on it.

James Duddridge:

The huge impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid to 0.5% of GNI. We will remain a world-leading development donor and are on track to spend more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty, tackle climate change and improve global health.

The UK has committed to doubling its International Climate Finance (ICF) to £11.6 billion over 5 years from 2021/22 to 2025/26. Following a thorough review, the Foreign Secretary has allocated FCDO's ODA in accordance with UK strategic priorities, focusing our investment and expertise where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. We are scaling up our support for the global marine environment, including establishing a new £500 million Blue Planet Fund to help countries protect and restore the marine environment and reduce poverty. We are leading efforts to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030. Under our G7 Presidency, all G7 members have agreed to support this global "30 by 30" target.

■ Rainforests: International Cooperation**Jim Shannon:**[\[21909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to prioritise taking diplomatic steps with his international counterparts to tackle depletion of rainforests.

James Duddridge:

The UK government works through diplomacy, partnerships and programmes to drive international efforts to stop deforestation. Through diplomacy, we work to encourage forest nations to take action to strengthen protections for forests. This is complemented by long-term partnerships and programmes, funded through the UK's International Climate Finance, which provide the technical support and resources required to take action.

For example, a long-standing partnership with the Government of Indonesia has had a significant impact on illegal logging, an important factor in the depletion of rainforests. With UK support, Indonesia has taken action to curb illegal logging. As a result, Indonesian timber exports have gone from a point where an estimated 80% were from illegal sources, to one where all exports are now from audited legal sources.

■ Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment**Hilary Benn:**[\[23059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether following the execution in Saudi Arabia of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish who was sentenced to death for protest-related crimes committed as a child, he will make

representations to the Saudi authorities on behalf of nine other young men facing execution for childhood crimes, including Abdullah al-Howaiti.

James Cleverly:

The United Kingdom strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. The Saudi authorities are aware of the UK Government's strong position on such cases. We reiterated our opposition to the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September 2020. On 24 May 2021, during my [Mr Cleverly] visit to Saudi Arabia, I discussed the death penalty, including those charged with conducting crimes as minors, with the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, Dr Awwad Alawwad. Our Embassy in Riyadh has raised our concern over the cases of Mustafa al Darwish and Abdullah al Howaiti.

■ **Sub-Saharan Africa: Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[25908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £25 million of aid in South of Sahara Region 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.

■ **Tigray: Homicide**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[24125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of reports of extrajudicial killings in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned at human rights violations and abuses in Ethiopia's Tigray region, including those of extrajudicial killings. The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, visited Tigray in May. Our Ambassador in Addis Ababa also visited in the week of 14 June. During these visits we have heard many harrowing reports of atrocities committed by all parties to the conflict.

We welcome the joint Inquiry of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) into human rights violations and abuses in Tigray, and continue to press for unfettered access to the region and victims. The UK will support the UNOHCHR to ensure that their joint investigation into atrocities in Tigray with the EHRC is independent, transparent and impartial. The UK further welcomes the proposed African Union Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights Inquiry into Tigray and calls for the

Government of Ethiopia to allow access to the region. We are in touch with the African Union on how we might support this effort.

■ Tigray: Refugees

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[24126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with its counterpart in Sudan on support for refugees from the conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

The conflict in Tigray has had significant consequences and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, over 60,000 moving into Sudan, as well as impacting those that were already in need of humanitarian assistance. We speak regularly with Sudan about the situation in Ethiopia. The Foreign Secretary has discussed the issue with both Prime Minister Abiy of Ethiopia and Prime Minister Hamdok of Sudan, and our Embassies in Addis Ababa and Khartoum have raised with host governments.

On 14 June, I announced the UK will allocate £16.7 million to the crisis in Tigray. This will support civil-military coordination to help aid get to those in need and address famine risk through the provision of healthcare, sanitation, and nutrition. This allocation is on top of the existing £27 million in 2020-21 already directed to the response which includes £5m provided for Ethiopian refugees in Sudan, over 60,000 that have fled the conflict from Tigray.

■ Turkey: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[25907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £24.6 million of aid in Turkey set out on devtracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO's 21/22 planned country allocations (budgets) will be published in our Annual Report later this year alongside our audited 20/21 accounts. HMG's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022. We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

■ Venezuela: Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[25906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £10.5 million of aid in Venezuela set out on devtracker in the 2021-22 financial year.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO's 21/22 planned country allocations will be published in our Annual Report later this year alongside our audited 20/21 accounts. HMG's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data, will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022.

We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker, which is updated monthly.

■ Water Supply: Finance**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many water pumps and wells overseas has the Government funded in each of the last 5 years.

Wendy Morton:

UK Aid funded programmes in the water supply sector report the number of people reached with improved water supply or sanitation and provide financial reports, they do not report on the number of wells or pumps needed to provide those water services. Between 2015 and 2020 the UK supported 62.6 million people to gain access to basic water supply or sanitation services. The table below shows the total UK bilateral ODA spend on Water Supply and Sanitation between 2015 and 2019, as presented in respective annual Statistics on International Development publications:

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
£183 million	£170 million	£177 million	£207 million	£176 million

(Total UK Bilateral ODA Spend on Water Supply and Sanitation, as presented in annual Statistics on International Development publications)

■ Zimbabwe: Politics and Government**Feryal Clark:**[\[23382\]](#)

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

James Duddridge:

The UK remains concerned about the current political situation in Zimbabwe, particularly human rights violations and the pattern of arrests of prominent opposition, civil society figures and journalists. We remain clear that the Government of Zimbabwe must meet its international and domestic obligations by respecting the rule of law, safeguarding human rights and committing to genuine political and economic reform for the benefit of all Zimbabweans.

We regularly engage with the Government of Zimbabwe to urge them to adhere to their international human rights obligations and respect the freedoms and rights enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution. On 9 June, I spoke with Foreign Minister Shava and emphasised our human rights concerns and the need for reform. In addition, we coordinate closely with our international partners, including the G7, to ensure we are bringing coordinated pressure to bear. We will continue to speak out, both privately and in public, where we have concerns, and, work alongside the international community to support a better future for all Zimbabweans.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Abortion

Carla Lockhart: [\[23395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to review the accuracy and objectivity of the Abortion and Abortion Care Factsheet produced by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists' Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare in 2019; and what comparative assessment his Department has made of the information in that leaflet that current evidence suggests that the fetus is unable to feel pain under 24 weeks and the Government confirmation in February 2019 that pain relief for unborn babies would be delivered intra-operatively for those undergoing spinal surgery for spina bifida between 20 and 26 weeks of gestation.

Helen Whately:

The Abortion and Abortion Care Fact Sheet for schools was produced and published by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, therefore no assessment has been made.

■ Abortion: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart: [\[23393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the comments made in the Government consultation on a new legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland from November 2019 that it could be possible that a fetus having reached a gestation of 22 weeks is viable and thus capable of being born alive depending on the individual circumstances of the woman and the fetus; and what steps his Department takes to ensure that other Government Departments are informed on developments in perinatal medicine.

Helen Whately:

The Government's consultation response published in March 2020 'A new legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland. Implementation of the legal duty under section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019' set out that the intention that the regulatory framework would allow access to abortion services up to 24 weeks gestation in cases where the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or

girl, greater than the risk of terminating the pregnancy in line with the position in England and Wales. This followed consideration and assessment of all the consultation responses received. Parliament voted to enact this legislation in a free vote in June 2020.

The Department works with the devolved administrations and other Government departments, ensuring that information is shared amongst the relevant bodies as appropriate.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Miscarriage

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[24996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of (a) care, (b) support and (c) advice offered to women experiencing miscarriages who attend A&E departments.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: We have not made an assessment. However, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage set out that all women with early pregnancy complications should be treated with dignity and respect. We expect healthcare professional to follow NICE's guidance when caring for women, including providing information and support in a sensitive manner, taking into account their individual circumstances and emotional response. Throughout their care, women should be provided with specific evidence-based information including where to access support and counselling services.

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Coronavirus

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[23072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in (a) opioid and (b) alcohol use during covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England is monitoring intelligence on drug use from stakeholder and service user networks since the start of the pandemic. However, there is no official data on trends in opioid use over this period.

■ Autism: Coronavirus

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[23075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of covid-19 lockdowns on diagnosing autism in (a) toddlers and (b) school age children.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made.

In 2021/2022 we are investing £7 million to help local systems improve their diagnostic pathways and address any backlogs. In addition, we are providing £3.5 million to support children while they await diagnostic assessments.

■ Cancer: Drugs

Alex Norris: [\[25915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to a target for improving access to cancer medicines to support the ambition in the NHS Long Term Plan of improving cancer survival by 2028.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans to introduce a specific target for improving access to cancer medicines. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is responsible for making evidence-based recommendations on whether new medicines represent an effective use of National Health Service resources. NICE is also now able to recommend cancer medicines for use through the Cancer Drugs Fund which has helped over 64,000 patients to benefit from the most promising cancer medicines where there is uncertainty about their effectiveness. NICE now appraises all new medicines and significant licence extensions and it has recommended 92% of cancer medicines it appraised in 2020-21.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[23035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the data his Department holds on the number of covid-19 infections in care homes that have been contracted as a result of an infection from (a) care home staff, (b) visitors coming into care homes and (c) care home residents making visits out of care homes comprising (i) a day-time only visit and (ii) an overnight stay.

Helen Whately:

This information is not held in the format requested.

■ Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Learning Disability

Sir David Amess: [\[23033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress is being made on providing indicative discharge dates or an action plan to people with learning disabilities detained under the Mental Health Act.

Helen Whately:

Discharge planning should start as soon as possible after admission to a mental health inpatient setting through a Care and Treatment Review. Health commissioners are required to report whether there is a planned date of discharge or transfer via the

Assuring Transformation dataset published by NHS Digital. As of May 2021, 43% of current inpatients had a date for discharge or transfer.

We set out our proposed reforms in the Mental Health Act White Paper published on 13 January 2021. A Government response to the consultation will be published in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Justin Madders:

[\[21930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason Innova lateral flow tests had their authorisation extended by the Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency only until 28 August 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 June 2021]: An Exceptional Use Authorisation (EUA) is only needed if the lateral flow test is not UKCA, CE, or CE UKNI marked. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) provides EUAs where there are no UKCA, CE, UKNI products available and where there is a clinical and/or public health need. The MHRA has determined this is the case for the re-purposed Innova lateral flow tests. The duration of an EUA can differ for a number of reasons and a shorter extension was considered appropriate for the re-purposed Innova tests. This does not preclude further extensions if requested by NHS Test and Trace.

Dr James Davies:

[\[24269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the performance of lateral flow devices available in the UK; and what comparative assessment he has made of the performance of those devices that are available in the UK and overseas.

Jo Churchill:

Since August 2020, Public Health England has evaluated over 150 lateral flow antigen devices (LFDs) produced by United Kingdom and international manufacturers. To date, 31 of these have displayed performance characteristics desirable for mass testing, with a very high specificity and sensitivity against viral loads associated with infectiousness. Devices are also tested for robustness, usability and evidence of cross-reactivity with seasonal coronaviruses.

The Department monitors the evaluation of LFDs that are performed in other countries to shortlist LFDs for validation that meet criteria designed to identify the most likely future requirements and use cases in the United Kingdom.

Dr James Davies:

[\[24270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of whether the Innova Lateral Flow Device Test is fit-for-purpose.

Jo Churchill:

Evaluation from Public Health England and the University of Oxford have shown that Innova lateral flow tests were shown to detect over 95% of individuals with high viral

load or the most infectious cases. Results of the Innova evaluation in 2020 showed that the tests were effective in picking up viral antigens in both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals. The Department continues to monitor the performance of the Innova lateral flow test.

■ **Coronavirus: Social Distancing**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[23308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the covid-19 guidance is on social distancing for (a) couples in an established relationship, (b) couples in the early stages of a relationship and (c) a person planning to have close contact with someone they are not in an established relationship with.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested. The Government does not make a distinction based on the established nature of a relationship.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Caroline Lucas: [\[12106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase covid-19 vaccination rates in areas where those rates are consistently lower than average; what assessment he has made of the reasons for lower take-up rates of that vaccination in those areas; if he will make it his policy to tailor plans to tackle covid-19 vaccination take-up so that those plans accurately reflect the reasons for lower than average vaccination take-up in specific areas; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Assessment of local vaccination rates is led by National Health Service teams. This data is shared daily with local authority Directors of Public Health to identify emerging trends and prevent any developing inequalities locally. Qualitative information about the reasons for vaccine refusal is also collected.

We are working across Government to consider how best to maximise vaccine uptake. A range of information and advice via TV, radio, and social media is targeted in areas with lower vaccination rates.

On 10 June 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement announced £20 million for vaccination sites across the country to increase staffing, boost uptake and ensure equal access.

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[20312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he first received information on the study by Public Health England that found that AstraZenica and Pfizer covid-19 vaccines are more effective in preventing hospitalisation from the delta variant than from other covid-19 variants; and what steps he took prior to that information being published on 14 June 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: We received Public Health England's full report on 12 June. The report was shared with all with all relevant Government departments and discussed with senior advisors.

Further work is underway to establish the level of protection COVID-19 vaccines provide against mortality from the Delta variant.

Andrea Leadsom:[\[21901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 vaccination programme, whether GPs may invite adults for their second vaccination from six weeks after the first vaccination once all other adults in a local area have been offered their first vaccination in the event that GPs have a local surplus of vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 29 June 2021]: All adults are now eligible for their first dose. Currently, all adults aged 40 years old and over and those in phase one priority groups are offered a second dose within eight weeks of the first. Adults aged 18 to 39 years old not in a phase one priority group are offered a dose within 12 weeks of the first. Where a general practitioner has no patients available on their reserve list eligible for their first or second dose within the recommended timeframe and the doses would be wasted, they are able to administer a second dose ahead of the eight week interval.

Sir Alan Campbell:[\[23081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of levels of immunity from covid-19 after two doses of vaccine among people who are immunosuppressed.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccine responses in individuals in clinical risk groups after one and two doses is being monitored by Public Health England in collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners' Research and Surveillance Centre and data will be published in due course.

Virus Watch, supported by NHS Test and Trace, provides information regarding patients' antibodies, including immunocompromised patients as part of their cohort. The data suggests some protection against COVID-19 but is only one measure of protection and does not look at cellular immunity which may be more important in terms of long-term immunity.

Greg Smith:[\[23351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens who have received their second dose of a covid-19 vaccination overseas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Data on the number of vaccinations administered to British nationals through overseas programmes is not held centrally.

Greg Smith:[\[23352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if (a) his Department and (b) Public Health England will formally recognise second doses of covid-19 vaccinations delivered overseas, where the initial dose was administered within the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Work is ongoing to determine which non-United Kingdom vaccines could be recognised in this country. However no final decisions have been taken.

Greg Smith:[\[23353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of UK citizens who have received three doses of a covid-19 vaccination as a result of the non-recognition of second doses administered overseas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have made no specific estimate as the Government does not hold data on the number of vaccinations administered to British nationals through overseas programmes.

■ Defibrillators**Jim Shannon:**[\[24970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the awareness of the importance of CPR skills and accessibility of Automated External Defibrillators across Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with St John Ambulance to increase the awareness of the importance of CPR in England, as this is a devolved matter. Face to face and virtual training is being provided to develop the skills required in the use of Automated External Defibrillators by individuals in community settings.

■ Dementia**Rachael Maskell:**[\[23257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on drafting the Government's new dementia strategy.

Helen Whately:

We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: CCTV**

Michael Fabricant:

[\[23045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who (a) installed and (b) gave the authority for the installation of a surveillance camera in the office of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; and whether the Secretary of State was made aware of that camera.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: The closed circuit television camera was installed by the Department as part of the office fit prior to moving into the building in 2017. The camera was authorised as part of an approval for the installation of cameras by the Department's internal governance. The previous Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (the Rt hon. Matt Hancock MP) was not made aware of the camera.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Security**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[23199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how security in his Department's estate is monitored.

Edward Argar:

Security monitoring is undertaken by a range of different methods, including closed circuit television cameras, security officers and alarm systems.

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[23405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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 each of those Ministerial private offices within his Departmental estate.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: EMCOR UK are contracted to provide security services to the Department's buildings. Closed circuit television cameras are not installed in each of the Ministers' offices.

■ **Dermatology: Vacancies**

Tim Loughton:

[\[25707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the vacancy rate is for dermatologists within the NHS.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

■ Disability: Children and Young People

Marsha De Cordova: [\[24316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the (a) mental and (b) physical health of mothers of disabled children and young people.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no specific assessment.

■ Drugs: UK Trade With EU

Stephen Farry: [\[23392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to seek a mutual recognition agreement with the EU on medicines.

Edward Argar:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement agreed in December 2020 includes important facilitations in respect to medicines, including an agreement to recognise Good Manufacturing Practice inspections and a medical product working group.

We are focused on implementing this deal and will continue to work with industry to develop an ambitious regulatory regime for medicines in the United Kingdom.

■ Eating Disorders: Children and Young People

Sir George Howarth: [\[24901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the impact of social media on children and young people developing eating disorders.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This Department, through the National Institute for Health Research, has funded a systematic review to explore the relationship between social networking sites and other online content, and body image and disordered eating in children and young people. The review is being led by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre and we will report on findings in due course. We are also working with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the Online Safety Bill to fully consider pro-eating disorder content online.

■ Eating Disorders: Coronavirus

Catherine West: [\[23283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on people with a pre-existing eating disorder.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no specific assessment, as it is not possible to differentiate between people with pre-existing conditions and those who are newly presenting.

Catherine West:

[\[23284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has been made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on trends in the number of (a) children and young people and (b) adults being diagnosed with an eating disorder.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no specific assessment.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[23066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning vaping in (a) public and (b) indoor spaces.

Jo Churchill:

The ban on smoking in enclosed public places is based on strong evidence of harm from exposure to second-hand smoke, and the health benefits of preventing that exposure. No evidence of comparable harm from exposure or benefit from protection exists in relation to exposure to electronic cigarette aerosol in public or indoor spaces.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[23067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of classifying vaping under the same rules and regulations as smoking.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is currently carrying out a consultation to review the effectiveness of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, which regulates tobacco and e-cigarettes in the United Kingdom. We are analysing the feedback to the consultation and will publish a response in due course.

■ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[25845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to negotiate full membership of the (a) European Centre for Disease Control and (b) Early Warning Response System of the European Union.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[25846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government is seeking to negotiate a bilateral arrangement with (a) the European Centre for Disease Control and (b) the Early Warning Response System, individually or as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy Agreements.

Jo Churchill:

As part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), the United Kingdom may request access to the European Union's Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) in respect of a serious cross-border health threat. The UK was given access to the EWRS for COVID-19 from 1 January 2021.

The TCA also provides for continued cooperation on scientific and technical matters between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the UK body responsible for surveillance, epidemic intelligence and scientific advice on infectious disease. We are currently developing a Memorandum of Understanding with ECDC to formalise future cooperation.

Eyesight: Testing**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) recent trends in waiting times for optician appointments and (b) the impact of those waiting times on people's eyesight.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: No assessment has been made as this information is not collected centrally.

General Practitioners**Derek Twigg:**[\[24898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of patients' ability to book face-to-face GP appointments as covid-19 lockdown measures are eased.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: In April, there were an estimated 31.5 million general practitioner appointments an increase of 28.3% from April 2019 and over half of all appointments were face to face.

On 20 May, NHS England and NHS Improvement published an updated standard operating procedure for general practice as COVID-19 restrictions are eased. Face to face and remote appointments should be available to patients and their preferences for care be respected.

Health Services: Males**Henry Smith:**[\[23152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department is developing to tackle specific health issues affecting men and boys.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not have a specific men's health strategy. Relevant issues are identified and policy developed on a condition specific basis.

■ Health Services: Shrewsbury

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[25758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timetable is for releasing funds for enabling works on the Future Fit programme in Shrewsbury.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Department wrote to the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust on the 19 November 2020 approving the request in principle for £6 million of early funding to continue to develop the scheme. NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing to work with the Trust to ensure they maximise the impact of funding available. Any further early funding requests will be subject to the usual approval processes.

■ Health Services: Weather

Paul Blomfield: [\[24168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much winter funding has been allocated to the NHS in real terms in each year since 2010-11.

Edward Argar:

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

■ Health Visitors

Tim Loughton: [\[25709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many full time equivalent health visitors have been employed in each of the last 10 years, by local authority and health authority area.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Hip Replacements: Devon

Luke Pollard: [\[24324\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Hip Replacements: Plymouth

Luke Pollard: [\[24325\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ **Hospital Beds**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) general and (b) acute beds available in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

The latest general and acute bed data available is for Quarter 4 2020/21. This shows the average daily number of general and acute beds open overnight was 96,313 with an average occupancy rate of 83.0%. It also shows there were 11,259 general and acute, day only beds with an occupancy rate of 69.3%.

■ **Hospitals: Consultants**

Jim Shannon:

[\[24177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that NHS consultant appointments are readily available for patients.

Edward Argar:

We have created a £1 billion elective recovery fund, in addition to £6.6 billion to recover services. We are supporting the National Health Service to deliver consultant appointments virtually as a more efficient and safer service for patients.

■ **Knee Replacements: Devon**

Luke Pollard:

[\[24322\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ **Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum**

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[24965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum has made any recommendations to his Department.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: The Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum has not made any specific recommendations to the Department to date.

■ Medical Records: Data Protection

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[16171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS Digital's plans for personal medical histories to be shared with academic and commercial third parties, what steps his Department is taking to ensure there is greater transparency on (a) which aspects of patient data will be made available, (b) which third-party organisations will have access to patient data, (c) how the use of patient data is limited, (d) what patients' rights and the mechanisms to opt-out are and (e) the safeguards in place to protect confidential patient data.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 21 June 2021]: NHS Digital has set out which structured and coded data will be collected on its website. Data shared by NHS Digital is subject to robust rules on privacy, security and confidentiality. Access will only be granted to the minimum amount of data necessary to achieve the relevant health and social care purpose. All requests to access patient data from this collection will be assessed by NHS Digital's Data Access Request Service, to ensure organisations have a legal basis to use the data and that it will be used safely, securely and appropriately. These requests for access will also be subject to scrutiny and oversight by the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data.

NHS Digital publishes the details of the data they allow access to on their data release register, with audits of those organisations who have been granted access. NHS Digital also provides information to patients about their ability to opt-out of their data being used for purposes beyond their own care, such as through the National Data Opt-Out.

Zarah Sultana:

[\[16964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to inform the general public about the option to opt out of the General Practice Data for Planning and Research service for NHS Digital.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 21 June 2021]: NHS Digital is promoting this new data collection through their website, engagement with media, stakeholder and patient groups and on social media channels. They have sought to raise awareness of the collection and its importance to the health and care system, but also how to opt out.

The data collection has now been paused until 1 September 2021 and we will undertake further engagement with the public.

Zarah Sultana:

[\[16965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to help ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place for the data collected as part of the General Practice Data for Planning and Research service for NHS Digital.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 21 June 2021]: Data collected for General Practice Data for Planning and Research will be de-identified before it leaves practices and through a Trusted Research Environment.

Applications must be made through NHS Digital's Data Access Request Service, with access strictly controlled. All applications are scrutinised and requests approved by the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data. Organisations using this data must have a clear legal basis to do so for health and care purposes and only the minimum amount of data needed to meet the specific purpose will be made available.

Dan Jarvis:[\[17743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to make the process of opting out of NHS Digital preference data sharing more accessible for the digitally excluded.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 June 2021]: The national data opt-out provides digital, phone assisted and paper methods for patients to opt out.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[19505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that third parties will not be able to access patient data through the creation of the NHS Digital database.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Through the new General Practice Data for Planning and Research data collection, applications must be made through NHS Digital's Data Access Request Service. Access is strictly controlled and all applications are scrutinised and approved by the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data before access is granted. Organisations using this data must have a clear legal basis to do so for health and care purposes and only the minimum amount of data needed to meet the specific purpose will be made available.

■ Medical Treatments**Alex Norris:**[\[25914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that the outcomes of the (a) Innovative Medicines Fund and (b) NICE Methods Review will align as their consultation processes are due to complete at similar times.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England and NHS Improvement are working together to develop proposals for the Innovative Medicines Fund (IMF). A public engagement exercise on the IMF is expected later this year and a detailed timescale for this will be confirmed in due course.

NICE also expects to consult on proposed changes to its programme manual in the summer as part of its ongoing methods and process review. NICE and NHS England and NHS Improvement will ensure the resulting approach to managed access, as part of a NICE appraisal, supports early patient access to the most promising new treatments.

■ **Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review**

Huw Merriman:

[\[25044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report entitled First Do No Harm and published in July 2020, what recent steps he has taken to progress implementation of recommendation five of that report on the rollout of specialist centres.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: There are now eight specialist centres in operation across England to provide services for women with complications of mesh inserted for urinary incontinence and vaginal prolapse. NHS England and NHS Improvement will announce the location of a provider in the south west in due course.

The recommendation of the establishment of specialist centres for those impacted by medication taken during pregnancy remains under careful consideration. We will respond to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review report in full this year.

■ **Mental Health Services: Hospital Wards**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[23195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many mental health dormitory wards were operational and providing patient care in the NHS at the end of May 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

At the end of May 2021 there were 1,135 beds in dormitory settings, in shared rooms within otherwise single-bedded wards and wholly dormitory-based wards. We are investing over £400 million to improve mental health facilities by eradicating dormitories and giving patients the privacy of their own bedroom and an en-suite bathroom.

■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

Hilary Benn:

[\[24086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to review the guidance issued by his Department on face mask standards for NHS workers in the context of research recently published by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust which found that wearing a FFP3 mask can significantly improve protection against covid-19 infection.

Justin Madders: [\[25022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the research published by Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on 29 June 2021 entitled FFP3 respirators protect healthcare workers against infection with SARS-CoV-2, whether the Government plans to revise the guidance on the use of FFP3 masks by health and care staff on covid-19 wards.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: The United Kingdom Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Cell continually monitors and reviews emerging evidence and data. The Cell has considered the findings of this research and concluded that, as there are some limitations in the scientific methods that were implemented, the study does not change the overall evidence base supporting the current IPC guidelines.

■ **NHS: Subsidiary Companies**

Justin Madders: [\[24223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts have engaged with NHS Improvement on transactions involving (a) the creation of subsidiaries and (b) material changes to existing subsidiaries in the last 12 months.

Justin Madders: [\[24225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for publication of the review by NHS Improvement of the approach to considering transactions involving the creation of subsidiaries or material changes to existing subsidiaries.

Justin Madders: [\[24226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many reviews of transactions involving (a) the creation of subsidiaries and (b) material changes to existing subsidiaries are being undertaken by NHS Improvement where the proposal is considered to be significant as at 29 June 2021.

Justin Madders: [\[24227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many reviews of transactions involving (a) the creation of subsidiaries and (b) material changes to existing subsidiaries are being undertaken by NHS Improvement where the proposal is considered to be material as at 29 June 2021.

Justin Madders: [\[24228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of NHS Improvement on the proposals for a review of the guidance covering transactions involving the creation of subsidiaries or material changes to existing subsidiaries.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service has had a long-standing ability to create subsidiary companies under the National Health Service Act 2006. NHS foundation trusts can establish subsidiaries with approval undertaken through the statutory powers and duties of NHS England and NHS Improvement. NHS trusts may only establish subsidiaries with approval of the Secretary of State. The review of proposals under the existing Addendum to the transactions guidance for trusts forming or changing a subsidiary involving the creation of subsidiaries and material changes, including those that are considered significant to existing subsidiaries, has been paused to allow both NHS England and NHS Improvement and the sector to focus on supporting the recovery of services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement made a small number of exemptions to this principle, where there were exceptional circumstances. Over the last 12 months, NHS trusts and foundation trusts have reported four proposals to create new subsidiaries and six proposals to make material changes to existing subsidiaries. Updated guidance is due to be published later in 2021/22.

There have been a number of recent discussions involving Departmental officials and NHS England and NHS Improvement on the proposals for a review of the guidance covering the creation of subsidiaries or material changes to existing subsidiaries.

■ Pharmacy**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is planning to take to utilise community pharmacies to reduce the backlog of cases in primary care.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: Under the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 five-year deal, community pharmacy will be more integrated into the National Health Service and deliver more clinical services. Since 2019, NHS111 can refer patients to a community pharmacist for minor illness or the urgent supply of a prescribed medicine. In 2020, we extended this service to general practitioner practices, who can now also formally refer patients to community pharmacy for consultation. We expect to introduce more clinical services in community pharmacy that will relieve pressures on the NHS during the recovery from the pandemic.

■ Pregnancy: Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[23070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to (a) mothers and (b) babies with withdrawal symptoms attributed to a mother's (i) opioid and (ii) alcohol use while pregnant.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[23071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what long term plans he has to support (a) babies and (b) children with behaviour issues or mental disabilities as a result of (i) opioid and (ii) alcohol withdrawal symptoms after being born.

Jo Churchill:

The Department published guidelines on clinical management on drug misuse and dependence in 2017. The guidelines provide recommendations and best practice for social care and health professionals to treat pregnant women misusing illicit drugs, including opioids. The guidelines are available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/673978/clinical_guidelines_2017.pdf

To improve diagnosis and care of those affected by foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, we have asked the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to produce a Quality Standard in England, which is expected to be published later this year.

■ Primary Health Care

Sir George Howarth:

[23076]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's White Paper, Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all, whether he has made an assessment of who will be responsible for the continuum of self care for self-treatable conditions.

Edward Argar:

Integrated care systems will have a key role in considering how best to support self-care, working with their partners across acute care, primary care and local authorities. The National Health Service promotes self-care when appropriate and has commissioned a range of information, advice and support to help people do so.

■ Schools: Contact Tracing

Justin Madders:

[25023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the results of the pilots for daily contact testing in schools.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: A summary of the early trial findings will be published at the end of July. Further analysis will be carried out and a full report will be published in due course.

■ Thalassaemia

Catherine West:

[24296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve patient outcomes for people affected by transfusion dependent beta thalassaemia.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: We published the new United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework in January 2021, outlining the key priorities for rare diseases including coordination of care and improved access to specialist care, treatments and drugs.

In 2019, NHS England concluded a review of haemoglobinopathy services; resulting in the development of services which will provide the opportunity to capture patient experience at a local level. NHS England has worked closely with the haemoglobinopathy coordinating centres (HCCs) across the country to provide an expert clinical panel to understand, assess and inform on the effect of COVID-19 for patients with beta-thalassemia, sickle cell disease and other inherited red cell anaemias.

Travel: Coronavirus**Sir Christopher Chope:****[24891]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence his Department holds on the extent of the risk to public health of people who have been fully vaccinated against covid-19 travelling together in an aircraft with high efficiency particulate air filters in use; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: Public Health England (PHE) holds no specific evidence. However, PHE assessed the risk of COVID-19 on flights prior to the introduction of vaccinations, which is available at the following link:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/irv.12846>

Sir Christopher Chope:**[25718]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answers of 17 June 2021 to Question 13841 and 24 June 2021 to Question 18559 on travel: coronavirus, for what reason it is his policy not to provide the advice and evidence which informs decisions relating to the on-going development of Government policy.

Jo Churchill:

The advice and evidence informing the decisions to designate countries as either 'red', 'amber' or 'green' on the 'international traffic light' system, have been deemed to be important to the formulation of ongoing border policy and the release of this information could prejudice decision making.

Sir Christopher Chope:**[25720]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 17 June 2021 to Question 13841 and 24 June 2021 to Question 18559 on travel: coronavirus, if he will publish the regulatory impact assessment of his policy on which countries are placed on the (a) red, (b) amber and (c) green international covid-19 travel restriction lists.

Jo Churchill:

The Department monitors the impact and costs of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021. Due to the temporary nature of these Regulations, a regulatory impact assessment is not required and would be disproportionate. We regularly monitor the impact of these regulations as part of a statutory review cycle which takes place every 28 days.

■ **Travel: Quarantine****Justin Madders:**[\[13987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of travellers returning to the UK from red list countries that have been exempt from hotel quarantine measures.

Jo Churchill:

The information requested is not currently available as it is being collated and centrally validated.

Julian Sturdy:[\[24170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing alternative quarantine arrangements for British citizens who have been stranded abroad in red list countries since before the current covid-19 lockdown and cannot return to the UK until that list is updated without incurring the cost of that accommodation.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no such assessment.

Gill Furniss:[\[24298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people who have booked covid-19 quarantine hotel rooms have requested accommodation for a large family since February 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: As of 30 June, there have been 10,300 bookings for accommodation for family rooms or 12.7%.

Munira Wilson:[\[24356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that mandatory covid-19 quarantine hotels meet effective sanitation standards.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: Cleaning and disinfection of all common areas has increased to at least three times a day, especially in frequently used areas such as reception areas, shared bathroom facilities and all frequently touched surfaces.

Hywel Williams:

[\[24908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the process is by which contracts are awarded for quarantine accommodation for arrivals from red-list countries.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: We have contracted with Corporate Travel Management (CTM) as the Department's travel services delivery partner. CTM are responsible for identifying and contracting with the individual hotels to support the Managed Quarantine Service (MQS). CTM liaise with the main hotel chains to source any properties in the area that meet our specification and are willing to become MQS hotels. A site visit is conducted to ensure the hotel meets the requirements including sufficient space for exercise away from the public and for coaches to relay guests to and from the hotel. The transit time by coach from the airport is also considered.

Hywel Williams:

[\[24910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what demand forecasts for covid-19 quarantine accommodation for people from red-list countries his Department has conducted for the period until October 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: We have thousands of hotel rooms available to meet any further demand from 'red list' country arrivals and we have ongoing agreements with a number of hotels moving into the summer. We closely monitor the data and increase capacity if required.

■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[24130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, what the distinguishing criteria are between the categories of (a) the Government delegation and (b) observers accredited by the UK Government ahead of the Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP9).

Sir Charles Walker:

[\[24132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeline is for selecting the UK Government accredited observers for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP9); and how his Department will notify interested parties of that process.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: The United Kingdom delegation for Conference of the Parties (COP9) will be comprised of officials from the Department of Health and Social Care and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, as has been the case for previous COPs. No registration details, agenda or papers for the November COP ninth session are available at present.

The process for the accreditation of other interested parties such as international inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations for the COP is

set out by the Secretariat of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which is available at the following link:

<https://fctc.who.int/who-fctc/governance/observers>

HOME OFFICE

■ Asylum: Employment

David Simmonds: [24388]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has made on the review on lifting the ban on asylum seekers working.

David Simmonds: [24390]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of ending the ban on asylum seekers working.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue. A review of the policy is ongoing. The findings will be announced in due course.

David Simmonds: [24392]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the potential effect on the public purse of granting asylum seekers the right to work.

Chris Philp:

Asylum seeker right to work is a complex issue. A review of the policy is ongoing. The findings will be announced in due course.

■ Criminal Records

Sarah Olney: [25905]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent the loss of serious crime records.

Kit Malthouse:

Following the deletion of a number of No Further Action Cases the Home Secretary and I commissioned an independent review, led by an external panel chaired by Lord Hogan-Howe, to investigate how this happened and to ensure the necessary lessons are learned to avoid similar incidents in the future.

The review sets out a wide range of recommendations for both the Home Office as well as the Police to address the underlying factors that led to this unacceptable incident. Both the Home Office and the Police have accepted all the recommendations in full and work is already underway to take the necessary steps to respond to them.

A summary of the review was published in the House on 24 May

■ Drugs: Misuse

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[25704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2020 to Question 11461, whether her Department has received written legal opinion on the provisions in law that would be engaged by the operation of medically supervised Drug Consumption Clinics.

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[25705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 11 June 2020 to Question 11461 on Drugs: Misuse, for what reason the crimes referred to in that Answer that would be associated with a medically supervised drug consumption clinic do not apply to (a) needle and syringe programmes for injecting drug users and (b) other programmes and services that engage those users.

Kit Malthouse:

Needle and syringe programmes and other programmes and services that engage drug users do not involve the organiser condoning and facilitating consumption of controlled drugs on the premises, nor do they create spaces where police enforcement of the law in relation to drug possession and supply is compromised.

Drug Consumption Rooms would not be lawful in the UK due to the offences which would be committed in the course of running such a facility.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [\[24876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 14126 and with reference to the findings of the Dame Carol Black review of drugs: phase one report, what assessment has been made of the effect of county line closures and drugs seized on (a) drug availability or rates of drug use, (b) potency, (c) price and (d) new trends including local recruitment of children and children being missing for longer periods in adaption to police activity and covid-19; what Government national leadership and oversight on the implementation of a public health approaches to youth violence has taken place; how the Department for Education is involved with that oversight; what assessment she has made of the ethical implications of state use of children to be used as a covert human intelligence source as detailed in The Covert Human Intelligence Sources Bill; and whether a Child Rights impact assessment has been undertaken in relation to that proposed policy.

Kit Malthouse:

In May 2021, the National County Lines Coordination Centre published the latest County Lines strategic assessment. The assessment found that county lines continue to be at the forefront of drug supply nationally and have evolved in response to environmental changes.

The county lines business model remains heavily weighted towards the supply of heroin and crack cocaine. NCLCC's latest assessment indicates that there has been

a reduction in the total number of potentially active deal lines, with numbers reported to have fallen from between 800-1,100 in 2019/20 to 600 in 2020/21.

We continue to work with partners to address the underlying drivers of exploitation and ensure support and protection is in place for children exploited through county lines criminality. We have funded specialist support for victims of county lines exploitation to deliver one-to-one support to under 25s and their families in the three largest county lines exporting force areas

This Government is also delivering a range of initiatives to tackle youth violence including investing over £105.5 million from 2019 to 2022, (VRUs). The Home Office also works closely with the Department for Education to tackle youth violence.

We will continue to use data on rates of drug use to monitor trends and inform the Government's approach to addressing drugs and drug harms'.

The Government acknowledges the strength of feeling on juvenile CHIS, however, we must recognise that some juveniles are involved in serious crimes, as perpetrators and victims. In some circumstances a young person may have unique access to information or intelligence that could play a vital part in preventing or detecting serious offences.

Young people are only authorised as CHIS in rare circumstances. Between January 2015 and December 2018, there were only 17 instances where law enforcement bodies deployed those under 18 years old as CHIS, and their participation in criminal conduct is rarer still.

The Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Act 2021 includes a commitment on the face of the legislation that young people will only be authorised to undertake criminal conduct in exceptional circumstances.

■ Fraud

Daisy Cooper: [\[23349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to alert the public to common scams using media advertisements; and what resources are committed by her Department to tackle that matter each year.

Daisy Cooper: [\[23350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to compel (a) banks, (b) utility providers, (c) large retailers and (d) public bodies, that are commonly impersonated by scammers for the purposes of defrauding the public, to publish warnings of known scams in the media and alert their customers.

Kevin Foster:

The Government recognises the serious risk around fraudsters using advertising to commit some of the most harmful frauds. We are working with law enforcement and the private sector to help keep the public safe from these crimes and ensure these fraudsters have no space to operate.

We know the best way to tackle these scams is to ensure the public have all the advice and support they need to detect these frauds and avoid them. This is why we have published guidance on GOV.UK containing easy-to-follow steps and useful resources. This can be accessed here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime

As well as this, Action Fraud, the national reporting service for all victims of fraud and cybercrime, also regularly provide fraud alerts via their website including on common and newly seen fraud schemes:

www.actionfraud.police.uk/news.

However, we continue to explore all opportunities to tackle these terrible crimes. This includes through the DCMS-led Online Advertising Programme which will be considering the role of online advertising in perpetuating some of the highest harm fraud types. This is due to be consulted on before the end of this year.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Liz Saville Roberts: [25902]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of pending applications to the EU Settlement Scheme are from applicants in Wales.

Liz Saville Roberts: [25903]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number and proportion of eligible people in Wales who did not apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Liz Saville Roberts: [25904]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions her Department has had with the Welsh Government to identify and encourage applications from eligible individuals in Wales to the EU Settlement Scheme who did not apply by 30 June 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The latest published information of applications and concluded applications by UK country to 31 March 2021 are published in Tables EUSS_01 and EUSS_03_WAL of the quarterly EUSS statistics tables ([EU Settlement Scheme quarterly statistics, March 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/eu-settlement-scheme-quarterly-statistics-march-2021)).

The Home Office has so far invested nearly £8 million in marketing campaigns to encourage eligible EEA nationals and their family members to apply to the EUSS, and provided grant funding of £22 million through to 30 September 2021 to a network of now 72 organisations across the UK working to help vulnerable groups to apply.

Plans have been shared with communication colleagues in the Devolved Administrations throughout to align and support respective efforts; and core assets have consistently been produced in Welsh translation and shared widely. We will continue to work with the Devolved Administrations, local authorities, community

organisations and others to encourage remaining EEA nationals and their family members eligible for the EUSS to apply and secure their rights in the UK.

We have made clear we will take a pragmatic and flexible approach to dealing with late applications and have already published non-exhaustive guidance on what will be considered reasonable grounds for making one.

■ Migrant Workers: Horticulture

Steve Double: [\[24240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the UK ornamental horticulture sector on the need for additional migrant workers in that sector.

Steve Double: [\[24241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the UK edible horticulture sector on the need for additional migrant workers in that sector.

Steve Double: [\[24242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when (a) she or (b) a Minister in her Department last met a representative from the ornamental horticulture sector to discuss the labour needs of the sector.

Steve Double: [\[24243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how regularly she is provided with updates on the labour needs of the UK ornamental horticulture sector.

Kevin Foster:

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs assess the labour needs of the whole of horticulture sector and works closely with the Home Office.

We have already expanded the Seasonal Workers Pilot from 10,000 to 30,000 places for 2021 to allow us to further test how it operates, whilst helping farmers and growers edible horticulture sector adjust to changes to the labour market.

More generally, the government wants employers to focus on training and investing in our domestic work force, especially those needing to find new employment as a result of the impact of the measures necessary to tackle Covid-19, rather than relying on labour from abroad. Employers should engage with the Department for Work and Pensions in the first instance, as they are best placed to help companies with recruitment issues.

■ Migrants

David Simmonds: [\[24386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in the UK are subject to no recourse to public funds conditions.

David Simmonds:

[24387]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people subject to no recourse to public funds conditions (a) are in work and (b) have previously been in work.

Chris Philp:

The no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition applies to millions of people, the vast majority of whom are visitors or other temporary migrants who have no need for public funds during their stay. It also applies to those without status, many of whom may not be in touch with the Home Office. We are therefore not able to accurately measure all those subject to NRPF at any one time.

The Home Office's Chief Statistician wrote to the Office for Statistics Regulation last July to explain why the Home Office is not able to provide a figure for the total number of people currently in the UK to whom the NRPF condition applies. His letter can be found at: <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/response-from-daniel-shaw-to-ed-humpherson-parliamentary-question-response/>.

We do, however, publish quarterly immigration statistics on the number of entry clearance visas granted outside the UK, most of which will have had the NRPF condition applied. The latest figures for the year ending March 2021 can be found here: [Entry clearance visa applications and outcomes \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/statistics/entry-clearance-visa-applications-and-outcomes).

The immigration statistics data for in-country extensions from 2010 to year ending March 2021 can be found here: [Extensions \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-extensions).

Stephen Timms:

[25711]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the principal reasons are for which Destitution Change of Conditions applications have been rejected since March 2020; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

We cannot provide the data that you have requested because this information is not readily available and would require a manual examination of all Change of Conditions cases within the range to establish whether the data requested is held and would meet the quality requirements for release.

■ Migrants: Free School Meals

Stephen Timms:

[25712]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 2 November 2020 to Question 106891 on Windrush Lessons Learned Review, with reference to the review of how immigration status and no recourse to public funds interact with free school meals and other educational entitlements, which was planned to conclude by the end of 2020, what (a) recent steps she has taken to progress that review, (b) reason that review did not conclude in accordance with that timeframe, and (c) her revised timetable is for completing that review; and if she will make a statement.

Priti Patel:

The Department for Education is finalising its review of access to free school meals and other educational entitlements for families with no recourse to public funds. Home Office officials are supporting that work and I understand you met my Rt hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, earlier this year to discuss progress on the review. In the meantime, the temporary extension of eligibility to free school meals will continue until a long-term policy position has been agreed.

Current guidance regarding the extension to free school meals can be viewed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/guidance-for-the-temporary-extension-of-free-school-meals-eligibility-to-nrpf-groups>(opens in a new tab).

■ **Police Stations: Amersham**

Sarah Green: [25984]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish an impact assessment on the closure of the police counter in Amersham.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not publish impact assessments relating to police office closures.

Decisions on how to use funding and resources are an operational matter for Chief Constables. Police and Crime Commissioners are best placed to make resourcing decisions within their communities based on their local knowledge and experience, including the management of the police estate.

■ **Refugees: Children**

Jim Shannon: [24178]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to protect child refugees who are brought into the UK.

Chris Philp:

Since 2015, the UK has resettled over 25,000 refugees, around half of whom have been children.

The Government continues to welcome refugees through the global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS).

The majority of child refugees are resettled with their family members, although some unaccompanied child refugees are resettled where the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees judges it to be in the best interests of the child.

Local authorities and community sponsor groups provide support to resettled refugees on arrival, including safeguarding for child refugees. The Government provides a support package to local authorities to enable that support and the integration of all refugees resettled through our schemes.

■ Refugees: Resettlement

David Simmonds:

[24383]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the timeline is for the announcement of the new resettlement scheme.

Chris Philp:

Parliament was informed by Written Ministerial Statement on 18 March that the new global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) commenced on completion of the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes.

(<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-03-18/hcws855>)

Since 2015 we have resettled over 25,000 refugees, more than any other European country - through our resettlement schemes and we are committed to welcoming vulnerable refugees through resettlement in the months and years to come. As set out in the New Plan for Immigration, the Government is committed to strengthening its resettlement offer as a safe and legal route to the UK for refugees in need of protection.

■ Retail Trade: Crimes of Violence

Sarah Atherton:

[25980]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of collecting data on the number of assaults on retail workers in England and Wales by local authority area, separate to the Commercial Victimisation Survey.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government conducted a call for evidence on violence and abuse toward shop staff to understand the extent of the issue and how we can work with retailers and police to improve the response to these crimes. The Government's formal response was published 7 July 2020 and is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/violence-and-abuse-toward-shop-staff-call-for-evidence>

■ Visas: Migrant Workers

Ben Bradley:

[23310]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans the Government has to introduce a visa scheme to allow employers to recruit overseas workers to customer-facing roles.

Kevin Foster:

The Department for Work and Pensions should be the first port of call for employers seeking to fill vacancies, rather than the Home Office.

On advice from the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), the Government broadened the eligibility of Skilled Worker visas from graduate jobs only to include jobs skilled to RQF level 3 (roughly equivalent to A-levels) and lowered the salary threshold to £25,600 enabling employers to recruit in more customer facing roles than was possible under the previous immigration system.

Yet where a job needs only a short period of training or time to acquire the qualifications necessary the focus should be on recruiting from the domestic labour market, especially given the economic impact of the global pandemic means many may be looking for new employment or to change careers.

Immigration policy cannot be seen as an alternative to improving training and career pathways or tackling issues such as unattractive pay and working conditions for those undertaking customer-facing roles. Given this we will not be introducing a general migration route allowing employers to recruit at or near the minimum wage, with no work-based training requirements, including to such roles.

More broadly, the Government's Plan for Jobs is helping people across the country retrain, build new skills and getting back into work as part of the UK's recovery from COVID-19, with the Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Education and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy leading work on the overall UK labour market and skills.

■ Windrush Generation: Compensation

Yvette Cooper: [\[25727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many offers of compensation have been (a) increased, (b) decreased and (c) upheld as a result of Tier 1 and Tier 2 reviews under the Windrush Compensation Scheme in the period up to 31 May 2021.

Yvette Cooper: [\[25730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her written evidence provided to the Home Affairs Select Committee's inquiry into the Windrush Compensation Scheme, what the total number of (a) full payments and (b) interim payments was for each of the categories of claim under the Windrush Compensation Scheme in the period (a) up to 31 March 2021 and (b) 1 April to 31 May 2021.

Yvette Cooper: [\[25731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in reference to correspondence from the Home Secretary to the Home Affairs Select Committee, dated 16 February 2021, on changes to the Windrush Compensation Scheme, how many awards of compensation have been (a) reduced or (b) declined because the claimant (i) failed to take reasonable steps to resolve their lawful status, (ii) otherwise failed to take reasonable steps to mitigate losses or impacts, (iii) took unreasonable steps that have resulted in increased losses, and (iv) wilfully defaulted or lack of co-operation in the period up to 31 May 2021.

Priti Patel:

The Home Office has no published data to answer these questions. The information is not readily available in a reportable format nor held centrally and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Yvette Cooper:[\[25728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the update provided to the Home Affairs Committee on 28 April 2020, how many applications for urgent and exceptional payments have been (a) received, (b) approved and (c) declined during the period 1 February 2021 to 31 May 2021.

Priti Patel:

Details regarding the amount of applications for urgent and exceptional support made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme; can be accessed at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5386/documents/54029/default/>. The data requested for the specific time period of 01 February 2021 to 31 May 2021 has not been published.

Information about exceptional payments is due to be released as part of transparency data.

Yvette Cooper:[\[25729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have received support from the Windrush Compensation Scheme's Vulnerable Persons Team during the period 1 February 2021 to 31 May 2021; and what form of support was provided.

Priti Patel:

Details regarding how many people received support from the Windrush Compensation Scheme's Vulnerable Persons Team, and the support provided; can be accessed at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5386/documents/54029/default/>. The data requested for the specific time period of 01 February 2021 to 31 May 2021 has not been published.

Information about the number of people supported by the Vulnerable Persons Team is due to be released as part of our commitment to publishing transparency information.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ House of Commons: Energy****Ruth Jones:**[\[25152\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the Commission has made of the cost to the public purse of the House of Commons energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Sir Charles Walker:

The cost of energy usage for the House of Commons in 2019, 2020 and 2021 is as follows:

2019 was £5,021,736 – which comprised

Electricity £3,779,328 Gas £896,753 Water £345,655

2020 was £4,564,901 – which comprised

Electricity £3,925,822 Gas £419,870 Water £199,209

2021 estimate is £5,278,854 – comprising

Electricity £4,315,496 Gas £553,674 Water £409,684

Estimate was based on full occupation and Energy price increases.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[20305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that unoccupied properties do not fall into disrepair.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my answer of 29 June 2021 to Question UIN 21845.

■ All Party Park Homes Parliamentary Group

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[25721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Minister responsible plans to respond to the invitation to attend a meeting of the Park Homes APPG which was sent to him by the Chair of the APPG on 26 April 2021; and if he will attend a meeting of the APPG in place of the junior Minister responsible as an alternative.

Eddie Hughes:

The invitation is under consideration and a response will be issued shortly.

■ Local Government

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[23220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure that (a) environmental health and (b) other local regulatory services are operating effectively with sufficient resources.

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[23221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to make additional resources available to increase the number of apprentices in environmental health training within local authorities.

Luke Hall:

To ensure the effective operation of regulatory services teams, the Department convened the Regulatory Services Task and Finish Group in December 2020. The purpose of this group is to help coordinate central government's expectations of local regulatory services and to propose short and long-term options to support the sector. The Group has already taken action to help local authorities (LAs) manage the capacity of their regulatory services teams. In January 2021 the Group issued LAs with a letter setting out government's perspective on priority regulatory activities to help LAs to prioritise their resources during the pressures of the winter period. In March 2021, the Group produced a forward look of upcoming regulatory activities coming into effect in the next year to assist LAs with their forward planning.

The Group is now focussed on developing a suite of recommendations to address the immediate and systemic issues faced by local authority regulatory services teams. These recommendations will consider areas including the availability and number of apprentices in regulatory services teams.

■ Local Government: Reorganisation

Steve Reed:

[\[25829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to announce his decision on any proposed local government reorganisation in (a) North Yorkshire, (b) Somerset and (c) Cumbria.

Luke Hall:

The Secretary of State expects to announce his decisions on the unitary proposals before the summer along with a summary of consultation responses.

Steve Reed:

[\[25830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to bring forward proposals for wide scale local government reorganisation in the current Parliament.

Luke Hall:

The Government remains committed to devolving power to people and places across the UK. We will set out our plans for strengthening local accountable leadership in the Levelling Up White Paper. We are clear that any reform of an area's local government is most effectively achieved through locally led proposals which are put forward by those who best know the area and which have a good deal of local support. This is the very essence of localism to which the Government remains committed

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Freedom of Information**Steve Reed:** **[25831]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 19598, on Freedom of Information, what proportion of freedom of information requests received by his Department were referred to the central Cabinet Office Clearing House on Freedom of Information requests for advice on handling in 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has referred requests to the Cabinet Office Clearing House where appropriate and in line with the published criteria which is available on gov.uk here:

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

■ Non-domestic Rates**Daisy Cooper:** **[23343]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he made an assessment of the potential (a) merits and (b) effect on affected businesses of excluding new business premises from the business rates holiday when producing the Expanded Retail Discount 2020/21: Coronavirus Response Local Authority Guidance; and if will make an assessment of the potential merits of revising that guidance to include new business premises.

Luke Hall:

Decisions on the award of business rates relief are for local authorities to make having regard to the guidance published by my department. The Expanded Retail Discount guidance provides that relief is applied to properties based on each day they are eligible for support. A new business occupying a qualifying property may be eligible for support, if the local authority considers it meets the criteria as set out in the guidance. The Government currently has no plans to review the guidance.

■ Soho House**John Nicolson:** **[R] [23225]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether any officials in his Department have (a) been offered and (b) accepted membership to Soho House from January 2021 to date.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department has policies in place for the declaration of conflicts of interests and gifts in line with the Civil Service Management Code. It is the responsibility of officials to declare potential conflicts of interest, offers of gifts and hospitality, and do so using the Department's systems. No offers or acceptance of Soho House membership have been recorded in these systems during the period in question.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Balance of Payments: Republic of Ireland

Hywel Williams:

[23085]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to improve the balance of payments between the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade actively seeks out business opportunities in Ireland for firms across the United Kingdom to help increase market share. The Government continuously identifies supply lines in Ireland that match UK expertise in key sectors like Offshore Wind, Construction and Infrastructure, Life Sciences and Maritime/Aviation Services. The Government works closely with existing and new exporters, provides market access support and helps companies win contracts, which in turn generates new revenue for the United Kingdom.

■ Department for International Trade: Directors

Cat Smith:

[24237]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what declarations of interests have been made by her Department's non-executive directors; and where is that information published.

Greg Hands:

Non-Executive Board Members 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 Departmental annual report and accounts, which are available on gov.uk.

Cat Smith:

[25036]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when her Department's 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.

Greg Hands:

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

The Department's current Non-Executive Board Members are as follows:

Dominic Johnson, Interim Lead Non-Executive Board Member (joined November 2020)

Douglas Carswell (joined November 2020)

Noel Harwerth (joined January 2017)

Dambisa Moyo (joined November 2020)

Sir Stephen O'Brien (joined June 2019)

The announcements of these Non-Executives' appointments can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/liz-truss-announces-four-new-non-executive-board-members>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sir-stephen-obrien-named-as-new-dit-board-member>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-export-finance-appoints-new-board-chair-and-non-executive-director>

■ **Department for International Trade: Email**

Emily Thornberry: [23130]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether any departmental business has been conducted from private email addresses since 2016; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of all official business conducted from private email addresses.

Greg Hands:

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

■ **Environment Protection: Import Duties**

Emily Thornberry: [24927]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has made an assessment of the extent to which tariff lines under the UK Global Tariff present barriers to the liberalisation of environmental goods.

Greg Hands:

The UK Global Tariff (UKGT) liberalised 104 environmental products as part of the 'Green 100' initiative, thereby making the UKGT greener than the EU Common External Tariff. Tariffs can also play an important role in protecting sensitive domestic industries and supporting trade negotiations. Any decisions made on altering tariff lines must be balanced across a variety of considerations, as laid out in the five principles established in section 8(5) of the Taxation (Cross-Border Trade) Act 2018.

JUSTICE**■ Coroners: Reform**

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[23270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government plans to consult on the proposed reforms to the coronial system as set out in the 2021 Queen's Speech.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[23271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the report by the Justice Committee, The Coroner Service, HC 68, published on 27 May 2021, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the reforms to the coronial system proposed in the 2021 Queen's Speech will enable bereaved families to participate fully in proceedings.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[23272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendation by the Justice Committee in its report entitled The Coroner Service, HC 68, published on 27 May 2021, whether his Department plans to take steps to ensure that by 1 October 2021 bereaved families have access to (a) non-means tested legal aid or (b) other public funding for legal representation at inquests where public authorities are legally represented.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice does not plan to consult on the proposed reforms to the coronial system but the measures will be contained in a forthcoming Bill which will be available to all members of the House. Additionally, three of the proposed reforms have been included in successive Chief Coroner's Annual Reports to the Lord Chancellor which have been laid in Parliament advising that these changes will improve coroner processes; the fourth reform around virtual courts would bring coroner's courts in line with mainstream courts and tribunals. Each of these proposed measures would simplify processes in coroner's courts and therefore help bereaved families to engage with inquest processes in an easier way.

The Government continues to consider its approach towards the means-testing of legal representation for bereaved families attending inquests as part of the Legal Aid Means Test Review, which is due to be published in Autumn 2021.

■ Courts: Opening Hours

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[23157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the sitting time of courts to reflect the working day of eight hours.

Chris Philp:

Across the Crown Court in England and Wales, social distancing has restricted physical capacity, meaning judges have not been able to sit at maximum levels, and the outstanding national caseload has grown. However, our action led to us being among the first of comparable international jurisdictions to re-start jury trials, and in

recent weeks the outstanding caseload in the Crown Court has begun to reduce. To achieve this, we have pushed our estate to the limits within the confines of social distancing and scrutinised every possible option to maximise court productivity. We simultaneously enabled remote hearings, made the estate safe, acquired new spaces, and legislated to ensure justice could continue.

To further increase capacity within our existing estate, we are also exploring the number of hours courts can sit as a time-restricted measure to recover from the pandemic. Last year we piloted COVID Operating Hours at seven Crown Court sites and undertook a full assessment.

It remains under consideration whether some form of this model could be a useful measure in hearing more cases within Crown courts where judges want to do so.

■ Detention Centres and Prisons: Crime

Jim Shannon:

[\[23190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has made a recent assessment of the trends in the levels of crimes that take place inside prisons and detention centres; and what steps he plans to take to eradicate those crimes.

Alex Chalk:

The 'Crime in Prison Tracker' method of recording crime in the prison estate, launched shortly before the pandemic, was temporarily suspended in 2020. Whilst prisons have not been required to upload all data using the dedicated tool, they were asked to keep a record of the number of referrals made to the Police and whether the referrals were accepted or referred back to the prison to be dealt with internally by way of adjudication. Prisons will be asked to upload the data collected during the pandemic retrospectively once the 'Tracker' tool is re-launched.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service continues to review and engage with prisons on crime committed. This enables national and local trends, and areas of concern to be identified – allowing work on reduction to take place.

The Crime in Prison Board, chaired by HMPPS, with attendance from the National Police Chief's Council and Crown Prosecution service, sits quarterly to progress delivery objectives and resolve cross-agency challenges. This ensures all criminal justice partners are working towards the same goals and that justice is being pursued for our staff and other victims of crime.

■ Marriage: Humanism

Jeff Smith:

[\[23239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of granting interim, time-limited legal recognition to humanist marriages on the same basis as has been given for outdoor civil marriages.

Jeff Smith:

[\[23240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of granting legal recognition of (a) outdoor civil marriages and (b) humanist marriages to help tackle the backlog in demand for officiants who can conduct legally recognised marriages.

Jeff Smith:

[\[23241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the additional covid-19 risks faced by humanist couples as a result of being required to hold both a humanist wedding in line with their beliefs and a marriage ceremony conferring legal recognition.

Alex Chalk:

A Law Commission report due later this year is expected to present options for wholesale reform to the law governing marriage ceremonies, which the Government will consider carefully. Options being explored by the Law Commission include offering couples greater flexibility to form their own ceremonies, allowing the ceremony to take place in a much broader range of locations, and powers to hold weddings remotely in a national emergency. The Government will decide on provision for non-religious belief marriage on the basis of the Law Commission's recommendations.

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

The Government has published guidance on gov.uk to assist couples in planning for their marriage or civil partnership formation in England, and for venues that host ceremonies and receptions to enable them to prepare for these events. The guidance sets out how this can be done in a manner that is safe and complies with legal requirements and social distancing guidelines. The Welsh Government has published similar guidance in respect of Wales.

■ Prisons: Self-harm and Suicide

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[23140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what plans he has to monitor the reintroduction of key worker schemes in prisons in England and Wales during the recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

Alex Chalk:

Monitoring of delivery of key work during Covid-19 recovery is undertaken by Prison Governors, Prison Group Directors and Prison Executive Directors and through internal audit functions. Independent scrutiny visits are also carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons, which then publishes its findings.

We are committed to ensuring that key work is reinstated fully across the male closed estate when safe to do so, and as part of recovery work.

■ Probation: Finance**Ruth Jones:** [\[23333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for the probation service in England and Wales.

Alex Chalk:

We understand that investment in the probation service is vital to reduce caseloads for our staff, ensure more consistent management and delivery of sentence plans and deliver effective behaviour change interventions and services to reduce reoffending and protect the public. This is why in 2021/22, we are investing an additional £155 million to strengthen the workforce, which includes supporting our target of recruiting 1,500 probation officers this year. Furthermore, we have also awarded contracts worth nearly £200 million to charities and companies delivering specialist rehabilitative and reintegrative services such as accommodation, training for employment and support for women. This significant investment will bolster the robust management of offenders in the community, helping to cut crime, reduce reoffending and protect the public.

■ Probation: Standards**Ruth Jones:** [\[23332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the probation service in England and Wales.

Alex Chalk:

We have demonstrated our commitment to deliver an effective probation service despite significant challenges over the past years. Throughout the pandemic, the Probation Service has prioritised public protection and risk management, as well as delivery of advice to courts, whilst ensuring staff, people on probation and victims remain safe.

Exceptional Delivery Models, which set out how we operate during the pandemic and ensured services could be continued, were implemented across England and Wales. Guided by public health advice, we took immediate, decisive action to implement a suite of measures, moving to a mixture of face to face and remote methods of supervision. Our staff have worked tirelessly to fulfil their public protection duties by adapting their ways of working to continue to deliver key services. In-person, socially distanced, offender reporting continued to be the default for those people on probation who posed a higher risk, for example Terrorism Act offenders. HM Inspectorate of Probation thematic reviews of our recovery and these Exceptional Delivery Model arrangements both praised our response to the pandemic.

In the longer term, we recognised the need to transform aspects of our probation service. On 26th June, we took a key step forward with the launch of a new unified probation service for England and Wales. The additional investment of an extra £155 million both last year and this year has been key to making these changes happen.

Having completed the transition to the new organisation, my priority is now to deliver improvements in the services probation delivers. There are now twelve probation regions across England and Wales, each overseen by a Regional Probation Director who will closely monitor the effectiveness of their service, enabling more local accountability, partnership working and services that more closely meet individuals' diverse needs. We have recruited a record 1,000 new trainees last year and a further 1,500 officers this financial year to supervise offenders. This will reduce the average case load size for probation officers so that the public can be better protected. As we move forward with the new probation service and away from the difficulties caused by the pandemic, we are committed to evidence-informed practice. In addition to a robust performance framework for the unified probation service, we will be evaluating these reforms to probation to ensure we are delivering the best possible service.

■ **Probation: Wales**

Ruth Jones:

[\[23334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the performance of the probation service in (a) Newport West constituency and (b) Wales.

Alex Chalk:

I, and my officials, have regular discussions with the Welsh Government on all areas of MoJ business. Officials in HMPPS Wales have a close working relationship with their counterparts in the Welsh Government and work with them through a mixture of regular and ad hoc meetings on operational and policy issues.

During the pandemic normal performance metrics have been suspended as the Probation Service has been working under Exceptional Delivery Models, however, we continue to use them as part of our internal management information to ensure continued effective delivery of service.

Both Wales and the Gwent Probation Delivery Unit are operating well during the Exceptional Delivery Model period and against the normal performance metrics.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

■ **House of Commons: Hybrid Proceedings**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[24318\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if his office will undertake an equalities assessment on the effect of ending hybrid virtual proceedings in the House.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

The House should return to physical proceedings as soon as it is safe to do so, as the Government firmly believes constituents are best served by parliamentarians conducting extensive in-person scrutiny. The Government has always been clear that our approach should be in line with the wider road map. The measures, agreed by

the House, will take us through to 22 July when the House rises for the Summer recess.

Hybrid measures were agreed by consensus on the basis that they were temporary. The pandemic should not be used as an opportunity to make long term changes to our proceedings. Changes to procedure are ultimately a matter for the House and, once we return to normal, the House may wish to take time to reflect on the last year and review the impact on our proceedings. Should any changes be considered desirable, the House may wish to undertake an equalities assessment as part of its consideration.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Government

Ruth Jones:

[\[23337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment he has made of the work required to deliver effectively the full New Decade, New Approach agreement of 2020?.

Mr Robin Walker:

The New Decade, New Approach agreement was a historic achievement that restored the devolved institutions to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland. Its full implementation is crucial.

We have made good progress toward the implementation of our commitments, including appointing a new Veterans Commissioner; providing financial support for NI Screen's Irish Language and Ulster Scots broadcasting funds; and launching an ambitious £3 million programme of activity to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland. Over £700 million of the £2 billion funding has also already been allocated by the Government to support the implementation of the New Decade, New Approach Agreement.

Additionally, the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill was introduced on Wednesday 12 May in Parliament and is currently progressing through Committee Stage. The Bill introduces reforms, agreed in NDNA, to improve the sustainability of the Northern Ireland institutions.

We have also changed the Immigration Rules to enable family members of the people of Northern Ireland to apply for immigration status in the UK on broadly the same terms as family members of Irish citizens.

The Government will continue to work with the Northern Ireland parties and Irish Government toward full implementation to ensure that the institutions continue to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland.

PRIME MINISTER■ **Matt Hancock**

Mr Mark Harper: [R] [[25746](#)]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he (a) directly or (b) indirectly commissioned the Director General, Propriety & Ethics, Cabinet Office to investigate and report on the matters which led to the resignation of the former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 26 June 2021.

Mr Mark Harper: [R] [[25747](#)]

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he (a) directly or (b) indirectly commissioned the Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests to investigate and report on the matters which led to the resignation of the former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 26 June 2021.

Mr Mark Harper: [R] [[25748](#)]

To ask the Prime Minister, what steps he (a) took on 25 June 2021 and (b) has taken subsequently to establish the facts on the matters which led to the resignation of the former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 26 June 2021.

Boris Johnson:

My Rt Hon Friend the Member for West Suffolk wrote to me on 26 June 2021, offering his resignation as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. I replied the same day accepting his resignation. These letters are a matter of public record.

SCOTLAND■ **Scotland Office: Energy**

Ruth Jones: [[25155](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of his Department's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland incurred the following actual costs for the financial years listed:

FINANCIAL YEAR	COST
2018-19	£17,432
2019-20	£27,220
2020-21	£15,765

These costs relate to our Edinburgh office. The energy charges for Dover House, our London office, are not separately identifiable and are part of the service charge. In

2021, our Edinburgh office relocated to the new UK Government hub in Edinburgh. Energy charges are now similarly part of the service charge.

■ **Scotland Office: Recycling**

Ruth Jones:

[25945]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what his policy is on his Department's rates of recycling of plastic, paper, metal and other products; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (OSSS) is committed to minimising the impact we have on our environment and supporting the UK Government's Net-Zero commitment.

The OSSS does not own and is not the sole occupant of either of its buildings in London or Edinburgh. Dover House in London is leased from the Government Property Agency and Queen Elizabeth House in Edinburgh is leased from HMRC. The OSSS does promote and adhere to the recycling policies in both buildings.

TRANSPORT

■ **Biometric Residence Permits: Students**

Rachael Maskell:

[23258]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he takes to ensure that permanent residents are consulted on the implementation of residents' permit schemes in areas with a high number of houses of multiple occupancy used by students.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities are responsible for the traffic management decisions on the roads under their care. A Traffic Regulation Order is required to implement parking controls, such as a residential parking permit scheme. The Council must publish a notice of the proposals in a local newspaper and allow potential objectors 21 days for permanent orders and 7 days for temporary ones, to make representations. As well as taking other steps considered appropriate for ensuring adequate publicity is given to persons likely to be affected, which may include roadside notices and delivery of letter to premises

Local authorities should ensure that their parking strategy takes account of transport and planning policies, so that the needs of the various road users are considered. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published statutory guidance to local authorities to specifically ensure that local businesses, the residential community and other road users have a recognised voice, in the exercise of the Network Management Duty in relation to parking. That guidance is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-challenge-parking-policies.

■ Department for Transport: Energy

Ruth Jones:

[\[25151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of his Department's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Information on the total energy expenditure for the Department for Transport is available in the Annual Report and Accounts here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936346/DfT-Annual-Report-and-Accounts-2019-20-web-accessible.pdf

(a) The Department's Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21 will be published in mid-September.

■ Department for Transport: Recycling

Ruth Jones:

[\[25943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on his Department's rates of recycling of plastic, paper, metal and other products; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport (DfT) has made a formal commitment to increase its rates of recycling through the Greening Government Commitments (GGCs).

The GGCs for 2016-2020, which have been extended to 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic, ask departments to "continue to improve our waste management by reducing the overall amount of waste generated and increasing the proportion which is recycled."

Between 2016 and 2021 DfT has delivered on these targets, reducing the total waste generated and increasing the percentage of waste recycled year-on-year, as outlined in the table below:

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total Waste (tonnes)	4,522	4,403	3,955	3,010	2,110
% Recycled	46%	48%	50%	64%	65%

A new phase of GGCs for 2021-2025 is due to be published by Defra, which will set out updated recycling targets, which the Department for Transport will commit to deliver.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards**Holly Lynch:** [\[25065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the DVLA is taking to improve response times for renewing driving licences when there is a medical consideration.

Rachel Maclean:

The DVLA has reconfigured its accommodation to safely maximise the number of staff on site and is working hard to process applications as quickly as possible.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has been working with fewer operational staff on site to allow for social distancing, in line with Welsh Government requirements. This, along with ongoing industrial action by the Public and Commercial Services union and an increased demand for DVLA services, has caused delays. Drivers with a medical condition may experience further delays as the DVLA is often reliant on receiving information from medical professionals to ensure drivers can meet the required medical standards.

■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[24929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of e-scooter trials on (a) blind and partially sighted and (b) deaf and hard of hearing pedestrians.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[24930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the (a) the blind and partially sighted and (b) deaf and hard of hearing community on trials of e-scooters.

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. A final report will be published in spring 2022. Any future rules for e-scooters may not be exactly the same as the rules in trials, but they will be based on the evidence gathered.

I have met with the Inclusive Transport Stakeholder Group last year, to discuss e-scooters and our local trials. Membership of this group includes representatives from: Age UK, Scope, Alzheimer's Society, National Autistic Society, Disability Rights UK, DPTAC, Guide Dogs and Leonard Cheshire. Since then I have hosted four e-scooter roundtable discussions - the most recent on 7 June - attended by several groups that represent the interests of disabled people and older people to update them on the progress of the trials and listen to their concerns.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[25074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of electric vehicle charging points in (a) Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) England.

Rachel Maclean:

Government and industry have supported the installation of almost 25,000 publicly available charging devices and in the next few weeks expect to hit the important milestone of rapid chargers being available in 3,000 different locations across the UK – one of the largest networks in Europe.

We are 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.

Leeds City Council have participated in our On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme which is available to all UK local authorities to provide public chargepoints for their residents without access to private parking. They have received £97,500 to install 15 chargepoints across the city, including in the Morley area.

As of 1 April 2021, Morley and Outwood:

- have 29 public charging devices, of which 12 are rapid;
- a total of 316 domestic charging devices have been installed funded by the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme and the preceding Domestic Recharge Scheme;
- a total of 52 Workplace Charging Scheme funded sockets installed in workplace carparks.

The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles is working extensively with local authorities to support them in delivering charging infrastructure.

The upcoming EV chargepoint Infrastructure Strategy will set out our vision and action plan for charging infrastructure rollout needed to achieve the 2030/35 phase out of petrol and diesel cars and vans successfully and to accelerate the transition to a zero emission fleet. The strategy will also set expected roles for different stakeholders and how government will intervene to address the gaps between the current market status and our vision.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Construction

Philip Davies:

[\[24147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people are employed by the HS2 project; and what the average salary is.

Andrew Stephenson:

Staff numbers and average salaries (as at 31 March) are disclosed annually in the Company's Annual Report and Accounts. However, as of 28 June 2021, HS2 Ltd directly employs 1,597 staff with an average salary of £60,198.44. The salaries are full-time equivalent Basic Pay (annual entitlement at point of reporting). This figure does not include Non-Executive Directors, Independent Panel Members, Project Representatives and non HS2 Ltd staff (secondees, Engineering Delivery Partners, agency staff, etc).

High Speed Two: Offices**Philip Davies:**[\[24146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list the office spaces occupied by HS2 in the UK.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd headquarters is at 2 Snowhill, Snowhill, Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6GA. In addition, it occupies space at 1 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 2DN and Albany House, Petty France, London, SW1 9EA. The Company also rents one room in Barlow House, Minshull Street, Manchester, M1 3DZ.

This list does not include site offices that are leased and occupied by suppliers working on behalf of HS2 Ltd.

Merchant Shipping Act 1995**Hywel Williams:**[\[25734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timeframe is for bringing forward legislative proposals to bring personal watercraft within the safe use and conduct provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.

Robert Courts:

We are continuing to develop the necessary proposals to bring personal watercraft within the safe use and conduct provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. A public consultation seeking comments on the draft legislation will be published once this process has been completed.

Local and harbour authorities already have significant powers to introduce measures to deal with any issues in the waters they manage through byelaws and harbour directions.

Road Traffic**Stuart Anderson:**[\[25946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle neighbourhood (a) speeding and (b) traffic issues.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government believes that any form of dangerous or inconsiderate driving behaviour is a serious road safety issue. All available research shows a link between excessive speed and the risk of collisions.

We expect all drivers to observe the speed limit, and enforcement is a matter for the police. Policing of our roads, and how available resources are deployed, is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local issues.

Last July, the Department for Transport launched a Call for Evidence as part of a wider Roads Policing Review: a thorough examination of roads policing in England and Wales and its relevance to road safety. Responses to the Call for Evidence have been analysed and the Government response is currently being prepared for publication this summer. The response will address the key points raised by respondents, including feedback on speed enforcement.

Tackling neighbourhood traffic issues is the responsibility of local councils, and the Department for Transport publishes guidance to help them. Local Transport Notes summarise the latest and most important ideas about traffic management issues and can be viewed at www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-transport-notes.

Councils, as traffic authorities, have a statutory duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to manage their networks with the aim of 'securing the expeditious movement of traffic'. They are free to make their own decisions about the streets under their care and are responsible for ensuring that their actions are within the law. Councils are accountable to their electorate for their decisions and their performance and councillors are responsible for ensuring that local decisions about street infrastructure take account of the needs and opinions of local people.

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[25743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his timeframe is for the publication of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan; and if he will make an oral statement to Parliament when that Plan is published.

Rachel Maclean:

Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan will set an ambitious pathway to end UK transport's carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest and we intend to publish it shortly.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Government has plans to compensate people who have booked holidays but are no longer able to travel due to the financial implications of the covid-19 travel status of their destination changing.

Robert Courts:

If a passenger's flight or holiday is cancelled by the operator, they are entitled to a full refund. Not all consumers will have the right to a refund if the guidance and restrictions relating to their destination change. The Passenger COVID-19 Charter published in May, sets out the rights and responsibilities for consumers whilst travel is affected by COVID-19 restrictions. The industry has responded with increased flexibility and offering alternative dates and/or destinations for bookings for affected consumers.

■ **Travel: USA****David Mundell:**[\[24922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with representatives of the US Administration on the basis on which people who have received the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine would be admitted to the US for as long as that vaccine has not been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

Robert Courts:

The Prime Minister and President Biden have made clear the importance of bringing about the return of safe trans-Atlantic travel as soon as possible. Department for Transport Ministers are in regular contact with US partners on driving forward this goal.

The newly formed joint UK-US Experts' Working Group is now underway, and we are working closely with our US partners on delivering the practical solutions to effectively restoring travel.

We are hopeful that vaccines will play an important role in normalising travel between the UK and US and confident that the AstraZeneca vaccine will underpin this for UK citizens.

TREASURY■ **Bankruptcy: Tax Avoidance****Owen Thompson:**[\[24276\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people who will declare bankruptcy as a result of the Loan Charge in 2021.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 23 June 2021 to UIN 16066.

Owen Thompson:[\[24277\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to ensure that HMRC does not enforce payment of the Charge or settlement sums by people facing bankruptcy as a result of the Loan Charge.

Jesse Norman:

There are many reasons why someone might be facing bankruptcy, including as a result of a non-HMRC debt. Some individuals may choose to enter insolvency themselves based on their overall financial position. HMRC are therefore unable to determine if an individual is facing bankruptcy as a result of the Loan Charge specifically. However, HMRC only ever consider enforcement action as a last resort and will always attempt to engage in discussion with a taxpayer regarding payment, and where appropriate, agree a manageable payment arrangement based on individual circumstances. In addition, HMRC will only ever consider pursuing bankruptcy as a last resort, for example where the taxpayer is refusing to pay but has the ability to do so.

Energy: Conservation**Christian Wakeford:**[\[24378\]](#)

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.

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 to improve their energy efficiency 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.

Regional Planning and Development**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25056\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's Levelling Up agenda on the creation of jobs to date.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government's levelling up agenda aims to spread opportunity and investment across every region and nation of the UK. We are delivering this pledge by boosting jobs, wages and prospects for all communities.

We are supporting jobs, businesses and public services across the whole of the UK through Covid support schemes: so far, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has protected 11.6 million jobs across the UK, including over 890,000 in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Furthermore, the Plan for Jobs has provided unprecedented employment support for people that need it the most, including the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme that will create hundreds of thousands of new, 6 month subsidised jobs for young people across the UK. To date, over 36,000 Kickstart jobs have been started by young people.

■ Roads: Freight

Drew Hendry:

[\[24245\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress he has made on implementation of the Goods Vehicle Movement Service.

Jesse Norman:

The GVMS Check-in and Embarkation functionality was deployed successfully on 31 December 2020 at 18:00 (GMT) and is working as expected. This was following deployment of the GVMS Registration Service on 8 December 2020, and the "Get a Goods Movement Reference" (GMR) Service on 23 December 2020.

Further GVMS releases will be deployed over a series of dates up to full border controls in January 2022 and remain on track. This has included functionality supporting NI-GB Exports which was successfully deployed on 28 February 2021 and enhancements to improve customer journeys, such as driver messaging which took place on 4 July 2021.

To date there have been 6,655 successful GVMS haulier registrations and 431,417 GMRs created (data obtained 1 July 2021).

Port, carrier and haulier engagement is continuing to support the take up of GVMS, and HMRC are working with them to support their readiness for January 2022.

HMRC will continue to work with all industry actors to ensure they understand the steps they need to take to move goods through border locations using the different customs models.

■ Tax Avoidance

Esther McVey:

[\[24172\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to HMRC's Freedom of Information Team's response to FOI request (FOI2021/00393) and the email of 31 January 2019 from HMRC's First Permanent Secretary and Chief Executive within that FOI response, what recent discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the effectiveness of the legislative framework governing HMRC's enforcement of the Loan Charge against (a) employees and (b) employers.

Esther McVey:

[\[24173\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the legislative framework governing HMRC's enforcement of the Loan Charge against (a) employees and (b) employers.

Jesse Norman:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has not had any recent discussions nor made any recent assessment as referenced in these questions.

The charge on disguised remuneration loans (the Loan Charge) was legislated in Finance (No.2) Act 2017. Changes to the Loan Charge were enacted in Finance Act 2020 in line with the accepted recommendations made in Lord Morse's Independent Loan Charge Review.

HMRC published their report to Parliament on GOV.UK in December 2020. This covers the implementation of changes to the Loan Charge and next steps for affected taxpayers, including individuals and employers.

At Budget 2021, the Government committed to invest further in HMRC to fund compliance work on the Loan Charge, historic disguised remuneration cases and early intervention to encourage individuals to exit tax avoidance schemes. HMRC will continue to monitor compliance with the Loan Charge.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Julian Sturdy:

[\[23176\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has conducted an impact assessment for the ongoing covid-19 restrictions on international travel and the economic impact of those restrictions on the economy.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government's priority remains to protect public health, and we have to take a cautious approach to opening up international travel, given the risk posed by variants remains significant. The traffic light system commenced on 17 May and the list is reviewed every 3 weeks; decisions are taken by Ministers based on the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) risk assessments and wider factors. The Government has also announced the intention to remove isolation rules for those travelling from amber list countries who are fully vaccinated, which will support the safe return of international travel.

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing sectors, including the travel industry, that are dependent on international travel as a result of Covid-19. The Government will continue to support the travel industry, businesses and individuals during this period - including through various government-backed loans, new grants and the extended furlough and self-employed support schemes. The aerospace sector and its aviation customers are being supported with over £11 billion made available through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of

England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and grants for research and development.

As set out last November in the Government's published analysis of the health, economic and social effects of Covid-19, we cannot forecast with confidence the precise impact of specific changes to specific restrictions, as this will depend on a broad range of factors which are, in many cases, difficult to estimate. This includes the economic impact of restrictions on international travel.

The Treasury does not prepare forecasts for the UK economy and public finances, these are the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). The OBR's latest forecast (March 3) highlighted that the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the unprecedented fiscal support has caused significant but necessary increase in borrowing and debt.

■ Treasury: Recycling

Ruth Jones:

[\[25929\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his policy is on his Department's rates of recycling of plastic, paper, metal and other products; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury's policy is to commit to achieving the Greening Government Commitments.

■ Urban Areas: Finance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25057\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is a fair redistribution of funding to towns and cities.

Steve Barclay:

The government is committed to levelling up opportunity and investing in local priorities across the UK, including in York. We have so far announced over £2 billion funding to 86 towns through the Towns Fund. Furthermore, at the Budget, the government confirmed the next stage of its levelling up agenda and launched three new investment programmes to support communities across the country, including, the UK Community Renewal Fund, the Levelling Up Fund, and the Community Ownership Fund.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Children: Day Care

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[24293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of current levels of subsidised childcare on the ability of mothers to return to work.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: No assessment has been made and it would require disproportionate costs to do so.

The Government recognises that high childcare costs can affect parents' decisions to take up paid work or increase their working hours. Working families claiming Universal Credit (UC) can therefore reclaim up to 85 per cent of their eligible childcare costs each month, up to £646.35 for one child and £1,108.04 for two or more children, compared to 70% in legacy benefits.

Eligible claimants can also get help from the Flexible Support Fund with initial upfront fees and costs as they move into work. Alternatively, help with upfront costs may also be available through Budgeting Advances.

UC childcare aligns with the wider government childcare offer. This includes the free childcare offer which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare in England for all 3 and 4 year olds and disadvantaged 2 year olds, doubling for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours a week. The UC childcare cost element can be used to top up a claimant's eligible free childcare hours if more hours are worked and childcare is required. This means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work.

■ Children: Poverty**Ms Lyn Brown:****[23143]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the report, *Falling Through the Net*, by the Child Poverty Action Group, published on 22 June 2021.

Will Quince:

The Department is committed to providing the best possible support for all Universal Credit (UC) claimants to meet their individual circumstances. Jobcentre and Service Centre staff undergo a comprehensive learning journey designed to equip them with the tools, skills and behaviours required to provide a high quality service to all claimants. Staff receive on-going learning in their roles and have access to guidance which is refreshed at regular intervals.

Every care is taken to prevent incorrect payments being made and to ensure that benefits are paid to the correct recipient; we are focused on paying people their correct entitlement from the outset of a claim. The vast majority of benefit expenditure is paid correctly, with front line staff working hard to prevent overpayments from occurring. We are constantly improving our processes and continue to invest in the use of data and analytics to identify fraud and error.

Following the introduction of the 2012 Welfare Reform Act, all overpayments of UC and new style benefits paid in excess of entitlement are recoverable. The Department seeks to recover benefit overpayments without creating undue financial hardship, and

any person who does experience such hardship is encouraged to contact the Department's Debt Management unit. Where a person cannot afford the proposed rate of repayment it may be possible to negotiate a lower repayment rate.

It is Government policy that individuals granted pre-settled status have the same access to benefits as they did prior to the introduction of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). They will satisfy the right to reside element of the Habitual Residence Test and can access benefits if they are exercising a qualifying right to reside, such as a worker or self-employed person, and are habitually resident in the UK. As the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is appealing the case mentioned in the report, it would be inappropriate to comment any further

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[24089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department plans to take to tackle child poverty in (a) England, (b) the North West, (c) Lancashire and (d) Preston constituency.

Will Quince:

This Government is wholly committed to tackling child poverty. Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to protect the most vulnerable including spending an additional £7.4 billion last year to strengthen the welfare system for those most in need, taking our total expenditure on welfare support for people of working age to around £111bn in 2020/21.

Our Covid Local Support Grant is ensuring that families across England get help with food and essential utility bills. We have now extended this temporary scheme for a final time with an additional £160 million in funding between 21 June and 30 September, taking total funding under the scheme to £429 million. This funding recognises that while restrictions are planned to end in July, families might need additional help to get back on their feet as the vaccine rollout continues and our economy recovers. For Lancashire County Council this means total funding of £9,896,582.81.

This Government has long championed the principle of work as the best route out of poverty and towards financial independence. In 2019/20, there was only a 3% chance of children being in poverty (absolute, before housing costs) where both parents worked full-time compared with 42% where one or more parents in a couple was in part-time work. As the economy recovers and through investing over £30 billion in our ambitious Plan for Jobs, our ambition is to help parents move into and progress in work as quickly as possible, substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[24222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of children living in poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the levels of child poverty in those areas;

and what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the welfare system in helping to alleviate levels of child poverty in those areas.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: National Statistics on the number and percentage of children in low income are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication. Data for Coventry North East constituency and Coventry is unavailable due to insufficient sample size.

Latest statistics for the number of children who are in low income in the West Midlands and England, covering 2019/20, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020> in children-hbai-timeseries-1994-95-2019-20-tables data table 4.17ts (relative low income, before and after housing costs) and in data table 4.23ts (absolute low income, before and after housing costs).

In the three years to 2019/20, the number of children in absolute child poverty, before housing costs, in the West Midlands was 300,000.

In the three years to 2019/20, the number of children in absolute child poverty, before housing costs, in England was 2,100,000, down by 200,000 since the three years to 2009/10.

The Department now publishes supplementary official statistics on the number of children in low income families at constituency level and at local authority level. Children in Low Income Families data is published annually. The latest figures on the number of children who are in low income in Coventry North East constituency and Coventry, covering 2019/20, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-2014-to-2020/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-fye-2015-to-fye-2020> .

Due to methodological differences, the figures in these two publications are not comparable.

No assessment has been made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on child poverty in those areas, nor the adequacy of the welfare system in helping alleviate child poverty in those areas.

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Energy**

Ruth Jones:

[25142]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of her Department's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Guy Opperman:

The Information requested is available for financial years (April-March) only.

2019/20 – £23,473,955 (£27,822,378 incl. VAT)

2020/21 – £22,821,828 (£27,332,777 incl. VAT)

■ **Department for Work and Pensions: Recycling**

Ruth Jones:

[\[25939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her policy is on her Department's rates of recycling of plastic, paper, metal and other products; and if he will make a statement.

Guy Opperman:

As mandated by Cabinet Office, the Department support the Greening Government Commitments and report publicly on waste management targets. Significant efforts have been afforded to reducing and recycling waste across the Department Estate, to reduce the overall amount of waste generated.

One initiative is the phased installation of new recycling bins to the largest waste producing sites and associated signage/awareness campaigns. The bins provide an opportunity to separate out Dry Mixed Recyclables, which includes paper and plastic waste.

■ **Discretionary Housing Payments: Wales**

Hywel Williams:

[\[25736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect of the reduction of discretionary housing payment funding on levels of rent arrears in Wales.

Will Quince:

We consider the allocation of Discretionary Housing Payments to individual local authorities each year and monitor evolving demand and trends.

For 2020-21 the Government provided an additional £40 million to help tackle affordability pressures in the private rented sector taking the total allocation for local authorities in England and Wales up from £140m to £180 million.

This year in recognition of the significant investment in April 2020 of nearly £1billion in Local Housing Allowance, Discretionary Housing Payments funding to help support vulnerable people with housing costs is set at £140m for local authorities in England and Wales. In addition to the central government contribution, English and Welsh local authorities are able to top up Discretionary Housing Payment funding up to a maximum of two and a half times this figure using their own funds.

The investment in LHA rates provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support last year than they would otherwise receive. We have maintained LHA rates at the same cash level for 2021/22, rather than reverting back to previous rates.

■ Employment: Poverty

Colleen Fletcher:

[24993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of people in employment that are living in poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the levels of in-work poverty in those areas; and what assessment she has made of the adequacy of the welfare system in helping to alleviate levels of in-work poverty in those areas.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: National Statistics on the number and percentage of individuals in low income are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication. Data for Coventry North East constituency and Coventry is unavailable due to insufficient sample size.

HBAI does not publish estimates of low income by an individual’s work status but estimates of low income for working age adults by the employment status of all working age adults in the household are available on Stat-Xplore (<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>). Guidance in the use of Stat-Xplore is available here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

In the three years to 2019/20, the number of working age adults in a working household in absolute poverty, before housing costs, in the West Midlands was 400,000.

In the three years to 2019/20, the number of working age adults in a working household in absolute poverty, before housing costs, in England was 2,800,000.

No assessment has been made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on in-work poverty in those areas, nor the adequacy of the welfare system in helping alleviate in-work poverty in those areas.

■ Food Poverty

Colleen Fletcher:

[24994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the numbers of people living in food poverty in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the levels of food poverty in those areas; and what steps her Department is taking to alleviate food poverty levels in those areas of England during the covid-19 outbreak.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:

National and regional statistics on the number of food insecure households are published annually in the “Family Resources Survey” publication.

Statistics on levels of food insecure households in England and the West Midlands, covering 2019/20, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020>

Data for Coventry and the Coventry North East constituency is unavailable due to insufficient sample size.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

In addition to these measures, our Covid Local Support Grant is ensuring that families across England get help with food and essential utility bills. We have now extended this temporary scheme for a final time with an additional £160 million in funding between 21 June and 30 September, taking total funding under the scheme to £429 million. This funding recognises that while restrictions are planned to end in July, families might need additional help to get back on their feet as the vaccine rollout continues and our economy recovers. This year, we are also investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme which has been expanded to every local authority across England and we have increased the value of Healthy Start Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 in April.

■ Industrial Health and Safety

Beth Winter:

[902259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent steps she has taken to improve the enforcement of workplace health and safety legislation.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) takes enforcement action which is in line with their [Enforcement Policy Statement](#) and the [Enforcement Management Model](#). There have been no recent changes in their approach to how they take enforcement action.

HSE continues to use a range of enforcement tools to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation from advice through to enforcement notices and prosecution.

HSE adopts different intervention techniques when regulating workplace health and safety legislation to ensure that they target those workplaces most likely to give rise to the greatest risk.

To reduce transmission of COVID-19 arising in workplaces during the pandemic, HSE has received additional Government funding. They used this to set up a COVID-19 spot check programme with a blended approach of telephone interviews and site visits to check employers had taken the right action at workplaces to protect workers. This has resulted in more than 270,000 spot checks of HSE and Local Authority enforced workplaces being carried out since the start of the pandemic.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Cat Smith: [25859]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 23230, what her timeframe is for the publication of the equality impact assessment on the Kickstart Scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Equality Impact Assessment for the Kickstart Scheme has now been published online, and can be accessed [here](#).

■ Local Housing Allowance: Wales

Hywel Williams: [25737]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the rate of Local Housing Allowance on levels of rent arrears in Wales.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

■ Members: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan: [25740]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many items of written correspondence from hon. Members sent to Ministers in her Department have been (a) received and (b) replied to since 1 April 2020; and how many of those responses were responded to by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials.

Guy Opperman:

The Cabinet Office is currently compiling data on the timeliness of responses to Hon. and Rt Hon. members from Government Departments and Agencies. This data will be released, and made available to Members, in due course.

■ Natural Gas: Hydrogen

Alan Brown: [25045]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 21959 on Natural Gas: Hydrogen, when the Health and Safety Executive's review of the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 is due to be completed.

Mims Davies:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is currently assessing safety evidence provided by industry to inform its review of the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 (GSMR). HSE expects to put forward proposals for change and associated policy options by the end of 2021, at which time I will consider how any changes to GSMR can support the government's objectives for safe gas composition standards, decarbonisation and hydrogen blending into the existing gas network.

■ Poverty: Females

Colleen Fletcher:

[24995]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of women and girls living below the poverty line in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; and what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the levels of female poverty in those areas.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: National Statistics on the number and percentage of individuals in low income are published annually in the “Households Below Average Income” publication. Data for Coventry North East constituency and Coventry is unavailable due to insufficient sample size.

HBAI does not publish estimates of low income by an individual’s gender but estimates of low income for women and girls are available on Stat-Xplore (<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>). Guidance in the use of Stat-Xplore is available here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

In the three years to 2019/20, the number of women and girls in absolute poverty, before housing costs, in the West Midlands was 500,000, down 100,000 from the three years to 2009/10.

In the three years to 2019/20, the number of women and girls in absolute poverty, before housing costs, in England was 4,100,000, down 400,000 from the three years to 2009/10.

The Department now publishes supplementary official statistics on the number of children in low income families at constituency level and at local authority level. Children in Low Income Families data is published annually. The published table does not include an estimate based on the child’s gender, but it is available on Stat-Xplore.

Due to methodological differences, the figures in these two publications are not comparable.

No assessment has been made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on female poverty in those areas, nor the adequacy of the welfare system in helping alleviate female poverty in those areas.

■ Social Security Benefits

Vicky Foxcroft:

[23274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the costs her Department has incurred as a result of the judicial review proceedings on its decision not to extend the £20 uplift to legacy benefit claimants.

Will Quince:

We do not comment on specific legal matters including costs of litigation.

■ Unemployment: Coronavirus

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[23074]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to tackle the jobless rates for (a) recent education-leavers and (b) young black people as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Mims Davies:

This Government's Plan for Jobs is delivering a comprehensive package of support for all young people – including education leavers and those from an ethnic minority – which DWP is providing in collaboration with the Department for Education, schools and other partners.

For young people from all backgrounds, 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. The Youth Offer includes Youth Hubs, which are co-located and co-delivered with our network of external partners to offer a range of skills and work-related services to help young people access the labour market.

The Government has also 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.

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. In addition, the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) programme provides targeted local and regional support on NEET prevention to raise young people's aspirations and support their post-education progression.

DWP recognises the need for targeted support to help ethnic minority job seekers into work. We work with a range of partners and employers in this area, including on a national programme of mentoring circles.

■ Universal Credit

Kate Osamor:

[25108]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of universal credit claimants who did not receive a £20 uplift as a result of the benefit cap.

Mims Davies:

The information is not available. This is because Universal Credit is a unitary concept. Whilst there are different elements in the determination of the gross entitlement, Universal Credit is paid as one single payment. As such it is not possible to describe the benefit cap deduction as a deduction from a particular increase to an element of the Universal Credit award, such as the £20 uplift or the increase in Local Allowance Rates for example.

■ Universal Credit: Wales**Hywel Williams:**[\[25735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the potential effect of ending the £20 universal credit uplift on levels of poverty in Wales.

Will Quince:

No such assessment has been made.

It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the £20 uplift on child poverty. This is particularly the case at the moment given the uncertainty around the speed of the economic recovery, and how this will be distributed across the population.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help people move into and progress in work as quickly as possible based on clear evidence around the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty. Our ambitious Plan for Jobs is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country and includes new schemes such as the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, the £2.9bn Restart Scheme and our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme.”

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business Update

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Kwasi Kwarteng):

[\[HCWS150\]](#)

I am delighted to welcome the confirmation by Stellantis of a transformational investment at its Vauxhall plant in Ellesmere Port, which will see the site become the first mass volume, fully battery electric vehicle plant in the UK and Europe. Stellantis have committed to investing more than £100 million to transition the plant to produce a new generation of electric vehicles, safeguarding the future of the site and its supply chain for the next decade.

This announcement demonstrates that our net zero ambitions are being welcomed and matched by business, as we work towards increasing the manufacture of electric vehicles in the UK. The Government is committed to ensuring we continue to be one of the best locations in the world for automotive manufacturing and are working closely with the sector to make sure it remains competitive, attracts investment, and protects and creates jobs.

Just over six months ago we presented the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, setting an ambitious roadmap for transforming our economy, unlocking investment and levelling up the regions. The Plan included a commitment to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030. The decision by Stellantis to invest in electrification in the UK, alongside recent announcements by Nissan and Envision in Sunderland, are excellent illustrations of business and Government working together to achieve decarbonisation within the sector.

I was pleased to inform the House in June of the strong consumer growth over the past year, which our strategy is helping to drive. As of March 2021, battery electric vehicle sales stood at 7.7% of the market, up 88% on a year earlier, while plug-in hybrid vehicles sales were 6.1%, an increase of 152%. Changing consumer habits such as the way we shop have also driven a strong increase in demand for light commercial vehicles, and this announcement will help transition the fleet with a new vehicle produced here in the UK. This investment will grow domestic production of electric commercial vehicles, help reduce our reliance on imports and play an important part in reducing emissions in towns and cities across the country.

I am sure Members will agree that this is an important announcement for Cheshire, Merseyside and the North West of England, which secures the continued presence of a key anchor for the local and regional economy. This significant investment has been secured thanks to a strong partnership approach between Stellantis and the Government, alongside Cheshire West and Chester Council, and the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership to maximise the benefits of the transformation of the plant to the wider local economy.

This news will be welcomed by the workforce at Ellesmere Port and is a testament to their skills and hard work. The Ellesmere Port plant has been a crucial part of automotive manufacturing in the UK since it first opened nearly 60 years ago. This announcement means that that milestone will be marked next year with the production of its first all electric vehicle – building a sound future on Vauxhall's proud legacy.

Today's announcement is further proof that there is a bright future for automotive manufacturing in this country. The Government is committed to supporting this transition including £500 million to support the electrification of UK vehicles and their supply chains, as part of a wider commitment of up to £1 billion. As Secretary of State I will continue to champion the sector, ensuring that we make the most of the opportunities of the transition to zero emission vehicles and attract further investment, boost innovation and sustain tens of thousands of jobs in manufacturing and the supply chain.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadcasting Policy Update

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Oliver Dowden):

[\[HCWS153\]](#)

Today, we are launching a consultation on the future ownership of Channel 4 Television Corporation.

Since its creation almost 40 years ago by a Conservative government, Channel 4 has delivered on its remit, aims and objectives. But, in that time, the broadcasting landscape has changed beyond recognition, and continues to change apace.

Increased global competition, changing audience habits, the decline of linear advertising revenue and a wave of consolidation in the sector all pose challenges.

The consultation therefore asks for views and evidence on what ownership model and remit will best support Channel 4 to thrive for another forty years and beyond.

It is the government's current view, to be tested through the consultation, that a new ownership model would give Channel 4 the broadest range of tools to continue to thrive in the face of these new challenges.

There are constraints that come with public ownership, and a new owner could bring access and benefits, including access to capital, new strategic partnerships and to the international markets.

As we have set out before, we believe that the need for public service broadcasting in the UK is as strong as ever. We want to see Channel 4 keep its place at the heart of British broadcasting and continue to support the great creative economy in this country. We want to put it on a footing to flourish for decades to come. Now is therefore the time to test whether an alternative ownership model may be better for the broadcaster and better for the country.

This consultation forms a key part of the government's wider strategic review of public service broadcasting, alongside Ofcom's own reflection exercise. Together, our work will ensure that our public service broadcasters and the wider broadcasting framework are fit for the 21st century.

The consultation can be accessed from today on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and will run for 10 weeks, closing on 14th September 2021 at 23:45. A copy of the consultation will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Digital Regulation: Driving Growth and Unlocking Innovation

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Oliver Dowden):
[\[HCWS149\]](#)

The Government has today published a [Plan for Digital Regulation](#) which sets out the next chapter of our approach for how we will regulate digital technologies in order to drive growth and innovation. It brings together all the work we are doing across government in this area under a single coherent vision.

Innovation is at the heart of this plan. We want to encourage it wherever we can, so that we can use tech as an engine for growth and create thriving markets that will cement our position as the tech capital of Europe. We want to do so while also protecting businesses and citizens and upholding their fundamental rights.

Where it is necessary for government to intervene, we will do so in a way that gets this balance right. We will therefore ensure that regulation promotes competition and innovation in digital technologies, while keeping the UK safe and secure online. We will also promote a flourishing democratic society, and protect our fundamental rights.

The Digital Regulation Plan sets out how we will achieve that balance, setting out new principles for how we design and implement regulation so we actively promote innovation, achieve forward-looking and coherent outcomes; and exploit opportunities and address challenges in the international arena. It also sets out some practical steps the government is taking right now to seize the opportunities of the digital revolution.

The Plan is pro-tech and pro-innovation, and builds on the government's Ten Tech Priorities to fuel a new era of startups and scaleups, keep the UK safe and secure online, and ensure that the UK continues to lead the global conversation on tech.

This is intended as the start of the conversation on how we design and implement the right rules for the next chapter in governing digital technologies. To ensure the success of the Plan, I want to work with interested parties with a broad range of views on the future of digital regulation, from Parliament, to civil society, to industry, to academia.

A copy of the plan will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOME OFFICE**■ Nationality and Borders Bill**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS151\]](#)

In March I published the New Plan for Immigration (NPI), setting out the overwhelming case for change to fix the broken asylum system, and deliver a system that is fair but firm. The Nationality and Borders Bill, introduced today, will deliver the most comprehensive reform of the asylum system in decades. The principle behind the Bill is simple: access to the United Kingdom's asylum system should be based on need, not on the ability to pay people smugglers.

The Bill – and the wider NPI – has three key objectives:

1. Make the system fairer and more effective so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.
1. Deter illegal entry into the UK breaking the business model of criminal trafficking networks and saving lives.
1. Removing from the UK those with no right to be here.

The introduction of the Bill was preceded by a consultation on the NPI which the Government will provide a response to in due course.

To support the parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill, we are publishing a gov.uk page. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-nationality-and-borders-bill>

TRANSPORT**■ Bus Update**

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps): [\[HCWS154\]](#)

During the pandemic, the government has provided unprecedented levels of financial assistance to the bus sector through the Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG), supporting bus operators and Local Transport Authorities in England outside of London, with up to £1.4bn in funding since March 2020. With patronage falling and social distancing limiting passengers onboard, CBSSG has funded up to 100% of pre-Covid service levels, ensuring key workers have continued to be able to travel easily and safely. Critically, as restrictions are lifted and passengers return, the bus sector is important in helping the economic recovery.

I appreciate that this presents bus operators with a fundamental financial challenge. To encourage passengers back, local bus services should be as available as they were prior to the pandemic. Without support, however, it may not be possible for operators to maintain the services they have provided up until now.

I can therefore announce that a further £226.5m in financial support in the form of recovery funding has been made available for the bus sector. Funding operators and

local authorities from 1 September until the end of the current financial year, this will succeed CBSSG which ends on 31 August. In addition to helping maintain services, recovery funding will support the key aims of the National Bus Strategy of encouraging local authorities and operators to work together to deliver better bus services. In return for receiving funding, operators will be asked to commit to co-operating with the process for establishing Enhanced Partnerships or franchising.

With the publication of the National Bus Strategy in March, the government set out bold ambitions to address the long-term challenge of providing quick, reliable, simple and affordable bus travel. Local authorities have been asked to develop ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans by this October, outlining what will be done at a local level to make travelling by bus as attractive as possible. The Prime Minister has announced £5bn for buses and cycling to deliver the strategy and provide vital investment for the sector.

TREASURY

■ Fiscal Risks Report 2021

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak):

[\[HCWS152\]](#)

In accordance with the Charter for Budget Responsibility, the OBR has today published its third Fiscal Risks Report (FRR). FRR 2021 provides an update on the risks identified in previous reports, alongside focussed coverage of three areas of fiscal risk: the coronavirus pandemic, climate change, and the cost of government debt. I am grateful to the Budget Responsibility Committee, and staff of the OBR, for their work in preparing this report, which ensures that the UK continues to be at the forefront of fiscal transparency and management during these unprecedented times. The report was laid before Parliament earlier today and copies are available in the Vote Office. The government will respond formally to FRR 2021 within the next year.

The UK has experienced two 'once-in-a-generation' economic shocks in just over a decade, and the challenges faced by the UK since the start of the pandemic have been substantial. Action taken over the last decade to restore the public finances to health enabled the government to fund a comprehensive package of support for the economy when most needed. The report notes that our direct support to businesses helped keep many of our employers afloat, kept insolvencies in check and avoided the kind of credit-crunch that occurred during the financial crisis. The government has acted on a scale unmatched in recent history to protect people's jobs and livelihoods and to support businesses and public services across the UK. Taking into account the significant support confirmed at Spending Review 2020 and Budget 2021, total announced support for the economy in response to Covid-19 is £352 billion across 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The report highlights the range of spending choices and risks we face, particularly relating to pandemic spending. These will be considered at the Spending Review. As the report notes, spending is increasing in cash terms, real terms, and as share of GDP overall. Total managed expenditure is forecast to rise by 2.1 per cent of GDP between 2019-20 and 2024-25. Core departmental spending is set to grow at an average of over 3

per cent in real terms over this Parliament. Our plans will deliver the largest real terms increase in departmental spending for any full Parliament this century.

It is clear that unmitigated climate change is another significant fiscal risk and decarbonisation is essential for sustainable long-term growth and therefore also for the health of the public finances. The fiscal consequences of transition to net zero will need to be managed in line with the government's broader fiscal strategy. The government will publish our Net Zero Strategy later this year, which will set out more detail on how we will meet our net zero target.

The pandemic and the government's necessary policy response has led to an unprecedented increase in government borrowing and debt; FRR 2021 illustrates how this has made the public finances more sensitive to changes in interest rates. While borrowing costs are affordable now, interest rates and inflation may not stay low forever. The OBR's latest forecast recognises that the government's current fiscal plans deliver a stable medium-term outlook for public sector net debt, but as I set out at that Budget, we need to pay close attention to the affordability of that debt.

The risks discussed by the OBR in this report underline the importance of returning our public finances to a more sustainable path. The report finds that, in the face of many potential fiscal risks, "fiscal space may be the single most valuable risk management tool". That is why the government set out at Budget 2021 a plan for returning the public finances to a more sustainable path. It is vital that we rebuild fiscal space to ensure that the government can maintain fiscal resilience to respond as future risks materialise, continue to invest in excellent public services and give businesses and citizens across the UK the certainty that comes with knowing we can and will support them.