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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ BGI: National Security

**Janet Daby:**

[\[24327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential implications for national security of (a) Amazon and (b) other companies based in the UK using technology from the Chinese-state linked company, Beijing Genomics Institute, to test their workforces; and whether the Government has had discussions with representatives of (i) Amazon and (ii) other companies on the potential risks of DNA harvesting by state-linked companies associated with such testing.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government takes the importance of public trust and security in the handling on genomic data seriously.

When an individual is swabbed for a Covid-19 test that specimen will contain human DNA. Any analysis of that DNA without consent from the individual would contravene the provisions of the Human Tissue Act 2004 and the individuals and companies, or agencies would be liable to criminal prosecution.

We are not aware of any discussions with Amazon or other companies on the potential risks of DNA harvesting by state linked companies.

#### ■ Business: Coronavirus

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[24261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the (a) Chancellor of the Exchequer and (b) Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on supporting local authorities to provide discretionary grants to struggling businesses.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has regular discussions with Ministerial Colleagues on a number of issues.

We continue to work closely with all local authorities to deliver funding to businesses that are in scope of these schemes as quickly as possible, while safeguarding public funds. As part of this, we have provided detailed guidance and FAQs to local authorities, as well as regular briefings and one-to-one support from ministers and officials.

**■ Post Offices: Pay Settlements****Anneliese Dodds:** [\[26157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the extent to which the interests of sub-postmasters are being effectively represented by the National Federation of Subpostmasters in the current pay consultation.

**Paul Scully:**

The National Federation of SubPostmasters (NFSP) provides an important forum through which postmasters can engage with and challenge the Post Office and the Government.

Following the new Mails Distribution Agreement (MDA2), Post Office proposed some changes in postmaster remuneration and the NFSP has raised concerns about these proposed changes with the Post Office and BEIS.

The Government understands that Post Office is considering postmasters' concerns and is committed to communicating final changes in September. Progress in this and other areas will continue to be discussed at the regular working group meeting between the NFSP, Post Office and the Government.

**■ Retail Trade: Urban Areas****Rachael Maskell:** [\[24257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what criteria he uses to measure high street activity.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State is informed by a range of data on retail and hospitality sales, [restaurant bookings](#), [retail footfall](#) and [community mobility](#), as well as intelligence from businesses and business representative organisations, to understand how high street activity is recovering relative to pre-pandemic baselines.

**■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:** [\[24258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to continue to support SMEs experiencing a slow recovery as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

**Paul Scully:**

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods in businesses across the UK.

The Government put in place an economic package of support totalling £352 billion through the furlough and self-employed income support schemes, support for businesses through grants and loans, business rates and VAT relief.

At the Budget, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a generous extension of economic support to reflect the easing of restrictions and enable the private sector to bounce back as quickly as possible. Most of our schemes do not end until September or after, in order to provide continuity and certainty for businesses.

The Recovery Loan scheme which launched on 6 April 2021 will ensure UK businesses of any size, including small businesses can continue to access loans and other kinds of finance up to £10million per business as they grow and recover from the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. The scheme is open until 31 December 2021, subject to review.

At Budget, it was also announced that Local Authorities in England will receive a top-up worth a total of £425m to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund. This, combined with the £1.6 billion previously allocated, means that Local Authorities will have received over £2bn in discretionary grant funding, to support businesses which are experiencing severe impact due to public health restrictions.

In order to aid businesses and employees through the next stage of the pandemic, at the Budget the Government extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for a further five months from May until the end of September 2021, when the CJRS will close. Furloughed workers in the UK will continue to receive generous support as the CJRS ensures employees receive 80 per cent of their current salary for hours not worked, up to £2,500 per month. From November 2020 to the end of June 2021, employers were only required to pay NICs and pension contributions. As the economy reopens and demand returns, the Government is asking employers to make a small additional contribution, of 10 per cent towards the cost of paying for unworked hours, from July. As the economy reopens further, this employer contribution will increase to 20 per cent in August and September.

In line with the extension to the CJRS, the Government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth grant. This provides certainty to business as the economy reopens and means the SEISS will continue to be one of the most generous schemes for the self-employed in the world.

In order to further support small businesses to prosper after Covid, and improve their growth, productivity and resilience, the Government is introducing the £520m Help to Grow programme. Announced at Spring Budget, the Help to Grow programmes will support UK small businesses scale and grow as they recover from the pandemic. Help to Grow: Management will provide intensive leadership and management skills support to 30,000 small businesses. Help to Grow: Digital could support 100,000 small businesses with online advice and a voucher for software costs.

**DEFENCE****■ Ammunition: Beaufort's Dyke****Drew Hendry:**[\[24246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the safety of munitions and weapons at Beaufort's Dyke.

**Jeremy Quin:**

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 2 July 2020 to the hon. Member for Ayr, Carrock and Cumnock in response to Question number 65014.

Following surveys conducted by the Scottish Government in 1995 and 1996 there is better knowledge of the munitions at Beaufort's Dyke. The overwhelming view to be found in the scientific literature is that munitions dump-sites on the sea-bed should remain undisturbed.

**■ Armed Forces Day****Stephen Morgan:**[\[25917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to help promote public celebrations of Armed Forces Day in June 2022 and future years.

**James Heapey:**

Every year, the Ministry of Defence encourages members of the public to either organise or attend Armed Forces Day celebrations in their area. We also support the hosts of the Armed Forces Day national event to promote their event and use media opportunities to bring the celebrations to a wide public audience. This includes a range of promotional and ceremonial activity on social media, with broadcasters and in print and online.

The Armed Forces Day website allows members of the public to search for events in their area and see the options on a map. While the scale of community events on Armed Forces Day in 2020 and 2021 was limited due to ongoing coronavirus restrictions, we will continue to encourage Armed Forces Day celebrations across the country in the future.

We have worked closely with Scarborough Borough Council on their plans throughout the pandemic and look forward to them hosting the Armed Forces Day national event in 2022.

**■ Low Flying: Compensation****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[24114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much compensation his Department has paid out to landowners in response to the effects of low-flying aircraft, by case, since June 2020.



**James Heappey:**

The total of compensation paid for all low flying claims since June 2020 is £268,379.71. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is unable to verify whether claimants are landowners or hold other occupations.

The MOD takes the issue of safe low flying extremely seriously and understands that military low flying can be noisy and unpopular but it is an essential part of operational training. The MOD is constantly striving to ensure that such disturbance is kept to an absolute minimum and that the burden of noise pollution is as evenly distributed as possible throughout the UK Low Flying System as a whole. In order to ensure that military low flying is as accountable to the public as possible the MOD provides the Low Flying Complaints Enquiry Unit, located at RAF Wittering, which allows the public to report low flying incidents which have raised concern.

**Ministry of Defence: Mental Health Services****John Healey:**[\[26086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 23049 on Ministry of Defence: Mental Health Services, how many personnel were employed at his Department's Specialist Mental Health Services in each year since 2010.

**Leo Docherty:**

Specialist mental health services are provided to the UK Armed Forces, including through Departments of Community Mental Health, satellite Mental Health Teams and visiting clinics. In my answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 23049 I provided the number of personnel, a mixture of military and civilian, currently employed in the provision of these services.

Like for like data is only held for the previous three years:

DATE	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL
July 2018	247
April 2019	235
April 2020	235

**Ministry of Defence: Recycling****Ruth Jones:**[\[25935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, 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.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Ministry of Defence (MOD) policy is to improve waste management by reducing the overall amount of waste generated, reducing the amount going to landfill to less than

10% and increasing the proportion recycled in line with the Greening Government Commitments (GGC).

MOD performance against the GGC is reported in the GGC annual report and in the Departmental Annual Report and Accounts. Overall performance for 2019/20 was a 38% reduction in waste produced against the 2009/10 baseline.

In 2019/20, 7% of Defence's total produce waste was sent to landfill, 56% was assigned for recycled including anaerobic digestion and composting, 36% incinerated with energy recovery and 1% incinerated with no energy recovery.

## ■ Royal Yacht: Procurement

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 11489 on Royal Yacht: Procurement, if he will list the merits of (a) constructing and (b) operating a National Flagship as identified by cross Government discussions conducted by the Cabinet Office.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* The National Flagship will showcase cutting-edge British shipbuilding, engineering and green technology, giving British business a new global platform to promote their products and technology. The National Flagship will have wide utility including supporting trade and investment in the UK.

The construction of the vessel will create jobs and upskilling opportunities, help drive a renaissance in the UK's shipbuilding industry and promote the best of British shipbuilding and ingenuity around the world.

The National Flagship will promote the UK's diplomatic and trading interests. It will provide a unique convening power to British exporters and a secure sovereign hub for diplomatic events. The operation of the vessel will support the UK's soft power capability and provide at sea training capabilities to the Royal Navy.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 11489, on Royal Yacht: Procurement, when he plans to announce the estimated cost of (a) constructing and (b) operating a new National Flagship.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* Estimated costs for the National Flagship will be tested and honed during market engagement. These figures are being withheld as release would prejudice the commercial interests of the Ministry of Defence.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 11489 on Royal Yacht: Procurement, if he will place in the Library a copy of the guidance used by his Department to evaluate the procurement of the new National Flagship.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* The Prior Information Notice in relation to this procurement was issued on 2 July 2021. The procurement for the design and subsequent manufacture phases will be the subject of commercial negotiation and evaluation and will follow in due course.

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[25802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 11489 on Royal Yacht: Procurement, what assessment his Department made of the potential defence benefits to be delivered (a) economically, (b) effectively and (c) efficiently by the (i) construction and (ii) operation of a National Flagship.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* As set out in the Defence Command Plan, Defence plays a unique role in protecting and promoting the three fundamental national interests identified by the Integrated Review: sovereignty, security and prosperity. The National Flagship will support these national interests including by boosting trade and promoting the nation's economic security.

The National Flagship will be built in UK shipyards. It will create jobs and upskilling opportunities; help drive a renaissance in the UK's shipbuilding industry; and showcase the best of British shipbuilding and ingenuity around the world. The Flagship will also complement the vision we will set out in the refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

The operation of the vessel will provide valuable experience for our personnel and promote wider opportunities outside of Defence. It will also support other high-profile Defence Engagement tasking which our ships undertake in support of wider government objectives.

**■ Shipping: Procurement****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[26103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 on Royal Yacht Procurement on the use of British steel in the National Flagship, what classes of vessels procured by his Department have not required steel in their construction.

**Jeremy Quin:**

All classes of ship procured by the Ministry of Defence have required the use of steel in their construction. Small patrol boats and Mine Counter-Measures vessels are principally constructed from glass-reinforced plastic, but steel is used in propulsion and other machinery.

**DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT****■ Casinos**

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[24181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals to modernise regulation of land-based casinos as part of the wider review of gambling laws to ensure they are fit for the digital age.

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[24182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what evidence his Department holds on the potential effect of the opening of land-based casinos as a result of the passing of the Gambling Act 2005 on levels of problem gambling.

**Andrew Bridgen:** [\[24183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the report by the House of Lords Select Committee on the Social and Economic Impact of the Gambling Industry, entitled Gambling Harm: Time for Action, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the recommendations in that report on reviewing the restrictions placed on land-based casinos operating under the Gaming Act 1968.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. This closed on 31 March and received approximately 16,000 submissions from a broad range of interested organisations and individuals, including representatives of the land-based casino sector. We are considering all the evidence received carefully and aim to publish a white paper by the end of the year outlining conclusions and next steps.

**■ Local Press: Advertising**

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[25060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of (a) trends in the level of advertising in local media outlets and (b) the financial viability of local media outlets.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The government has been engaging closely with local media outlets and with market experts to continue to inform our understanding of the financial pressures that local media sectors have been facing, including with respect to reductions in advertising revenues during the pandemic, and the impact of this on business continuity. We are aware in particular that, in some cases, these pressures have led local news publishers to make difficult decisions with regard to title closures or suspensions and staff redundancies.

It remains a priority of the Government to support local media sectors at this time of financial instability. Alongside our wider economic measures, many local newspapers have also benefited from a unique and unprecedented government advertising partnership, designed to deliver important messages to UK citizens and worth up to £35 million in additional government advertising revenue in its first phase. The government has also taken steps to help local radio stations, in particular through support on transmission costs. We will maintain our dialogue with local media as the situation continues to develop, and we continue to consider all possible options in the interests of supporting them.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Disability: Children

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[24317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that there is equality for disabled children and their non-disabled peers in their recovery from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

Our ambition is for every child and young person, no matter what challenges they face, to have access to a world-class education that sets them up for life. We want pupils and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including those in specialist settings, to continue to receive high-quality teaching and specialist professional support. We know that these pupils and students and their families can be disproportionately impacted by having been out of education, and we are committed to helping all pupils and students, including those with SEND, to make up learning lost because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The government will continue to focus on education recovery and making sure no child is left behind with their learning, with over £3 billion announced for catch up so far. We have consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts both in the 2020 catch-up premium and in the 2021 Recovery Premium, in recognition of the significantly higher per pupil costs they face.

Special schools will receive additional funding to ensure these settings can provide one-to-one tutoring for their pupils. We will also provide greater flexibility to schools to make it easier for them to take on local tutors or use existing staff to supplement those employed through the existing National Tutoring Programme. We anticipate that this will particularly benefit children and young people with SEND, where tutors familiar to these children can support them to realise the benefits of tuition.

Children will further benefit from additional funding to ensure that teachers in schools and early years settings are able to access high quality training and professional development. We know that high quality teaching is the best way to support all students, including those with SEND.

Young people with SEND aged 19 to 24 who have an education, health and care plan will be eligible for support via the 16 to 19 tuition fund, where they meet the fund criteria.

As part of the major investment in education, an additional £730 million is being provided for high needs this year, coming on top of an extra £780 million last year, which means high needs budgets will have grown by over £1.5 billion, nearly a quarter, in just two years.

## ■ GCE A-level

**Alex Sobel:** [\[24308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to determine the form of A level exams in 2022; and when he plans to announce his Department's policy on that matter.

**Alex Sobel:** [\[24309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has made for necessary adjustments in the event that A level exams in 2022 are cancelled nationally or locally.

**Nick Gibb:**

Examinations and other formal assessments remain the fairest way of assessing students. It is the Government's intention that GCSE, AS and A level examinations will go ahead in summer 2022. The Department recognises that students who will be taking A levels next year have had significant disruption to their education this year. We are therefore considering with Ofqual, the exam boards, and wider stakeholders what needs to be done to ensure that students are able to sit examinations and take other assessments safely and receive grades that are fair, even if further disruption does occur. The Department understands the need for the education sector to have certainty in order to plan for next year, and we will announce further details as soon as possible.

Although the Department remains committed to exams going ahead in 2022, we will continue to work with Ofqual on a range of contingencies in the event of further disruption to education.

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Kevin Brennan:** [\[25739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many items of written correspondence from hon. Members sent to Ministers in his 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.

**Nick Gibb:**

Between 1 April 2020 and 2 July 2021 the Department for Education recorded 22,150 items of written correspondence from MPs and 101 items from Members of the

House of Lords. Of these cases all but one was responded to or will be responded to by Ministers.

As per the Cabinet Office's guidance for handling correspondence from MPs and Members of the House of Lords, where appropriate Executive Agency or Non-Departmental Public Body Chief Executives may correspond directly. The above data does not include these cases.

## ■ Primary Education: Coronavirus

**Ruth Edwards:**

**[23374]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to end the requirement for primary school children to self-isolate under covid-19 restrictions.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department's goal is to support pupils and students to attend face to face education, and to reverse the long-term impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their education, wellbeing and wider development. That is why education has been prioritised as the Government works through the stages of the roadmap to relaxing restrictions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021#roadmap>.

The Department will be removing the need to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles') in schools and colleges, as well as the need to reduce mixing in nurseries, from Step 4 of the roadmap. The updated guidance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999602/Schools\\_guidance\\_Step\\_4\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999602/Schools_guidance_Step_4_update.pdf).

Unless they test positive, children and those who are fully vaccinated will not be required to isolate from 16 August if they are identified as a close contact. Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for COVID-19.

As the COVID-19 outbreak progresses, it is important that the Department is able to respond to the evolving public health situation. Depending on COVID-19 measures in place at the time, and subject to Step 4 of the road map commencing, there may be a need for regional or local safety measures to help limit the spread of the virus that could impact education and childcare in the coming months.

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



**■ Pupils: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:** [23259]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what advice he is providing to schools in response to the rising level of covid-19 infection.

**Rachael Maskell:** [23261]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that pupils engage with the covid-19 testing regime.

**Rachael Maskell:** [23262]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support pupils missing additional days at school as a result of the rise in rates of covid-19 infection.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department's priority is for schools to deliver face-to-face, high quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

The Department for Education has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise guidance for schools from Step 4, available to view here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/999602/Schools\\_guidance\\_Step\\_4\\_update.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999602/Schools_guidance_Step_4_update.pdf). The aim is to balance the risks associated with COVID-19 whilst moving to a 'steady state' that minimises both the burden of implementing a system of controls on staff and parents and the impact those measures have on young people's educational experience.

The Department will be removing the need to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles') in schools, colleges, and out-of-school settings, and the need to reduce mixing in nurseries from Step 4.

Face coverings will no longer be recommended in schools or on dedicated school transport. Individuals are free to wear a face covering in communal areas and on dedicated transport to school, where social distancing is difficult to maintain, if they wish to.

Twice weekly home testing will continue to be offered over the summer break in settings that remain open (e.g., nurseries, summer schools and colleges). On return in the autumn, asymptomatic testing is expected to resume for staff and for students of secondary age and above. Schools and colleges are preparing to offer students two lateral flow device tests at an on-site Asymptomatic Test Site, 3 to 5 days apart. Following the first two on-site tests, students should then prepare to resume twice weekly testing at home. New guidance emphasises that it is vital that staff and secondary school and college students continue to test for the last few weeks of this term, and throughout September.

From Step 4, schools and childcare settings will not routinely be required to undertake contact tracing. Instead, pupils who test positive will be subject to the



normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. Unless they test positive, children and those who are fully vaccinated will not be required to isolate from 16 August, if they are identified as a close contact. Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for COVID-19.

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

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

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has acted swiftly to help minimise the impact on pupils' education and provide extensive support for schools. We know the COVID-19 outbreak has caused challenges for some children who may already have been disengaged from education. That is why the Department is working closely with local authorities and schools to help them re-engage pupils, including providing best practice advice. In June 2020, the Department announced a £1 billion catch-up package including a National Tutoring Programme and a catch-up premium for this academic year. In February 2021, the Department committed to further funding of £700 million to fund summer schools, the expansion of tutoring programmes and a Recovery Premium for the next academic year.

Where pupils are away from school for a limited period, for example because they are self-isolating, schools have a legal duty to provide remote education. To provide clarity to the sector, the Department issued the temporary continuity direction in October 2020 which places an express legal duty on schools to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to COVID-19.

Where remote education is needed, the strengthened remote education expectations published on 7 January 2021 remain in place. These require schools to deliver 3 to 5 hours per day dependent on key stage and have a system in place for checking on a daily basis whether pupils are engaging actively with their work and education.

## ■ Schools: Exercise and Sports

**Andrew Rosindell:**

**[24117]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has for physical education and school sport as part of the covid-19 recovery plan for education.

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[24118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage the least active young people to participate more in physical education and school sport.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government published its cross-government School Sport and Activity Action Plan in July 2019, which sets out a number of actions to increase levels of physical activity for all children in England, providing them with greater opportunities to do 60 minutes of physical activity every day during and outside the school day. The Government has confirmed its intention to publish an update to this action plan later in 2021.

The Department has focused on ensuring that pupils have opportunities to be fit and active as part of education recovery. In addition to additional funding for recovery, the Department has confirmed £320 million for the physical education (PE) and sport premium in the next academic year. Schools have the flexibility to use the premium to provide additional opportunities, including engaging the least active children in PE and sport. The Department has taken steps to relax the ring-fencing arrangements for the PE and sport premium in the 2019 to 2020 academic year to allow any unspent grant to be carried forward into the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Any under-spends carried forward from the 2019 to 2020 academic year will need to be spent in full by the end of the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

The Department has also provided £10.1 million to provide support to schools to reopen sport facilities outside of the school day. We are also funding the Holiday Activities and Food Fund and Summer Schools programmes, which are targeted towards children from lower socio-economic groups and will help to maintain activity over the summer holidays.

#### ■ Schools: Protective Clothing

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[23260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what evidential basis is that mask wearing in classrooms reduces the risk of covid-19 infection transmission.

**Nick Gibb:**

From 17 May 2021, in line with Step 3 of the roadmap, face coverings are no longer recommended for pupils and students in classrooms or communal areas in schools. Face coverings are also no longer recommended for staff in classrooms.

From Step 4, face coverings will no longer be advised for pupils, staff and visitors either in classrooms or in communal areas. Face coverings will also no longer be recommended to be worn on dedicated school or college transport. Ahead of Step 3, the Department worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) and the Cabinet Office to consider a range of evidence, balancing both the health and educational considerations. This included the latest public health advice and the most recent scientific evidence, such as the latest available education related data, the latest data analysis on case rates in secondary school age children, and the broader COVID-19

epidemiological position. This also included stakeholder intelligence from schools and further education colleges on their experiences of wearing face coverings in classrooms and any perceived impacts on teaching and communication.

When the policy on classrooms was introduced, it was an appropriate additional safety measure while rates of infection were high in the community, the school and college testing regime was in its early stages, and the vaccine programme was just starting to roll out with little evidence of its impact on transmission. Face coverings can have an impact on reducing transmission as part of a wider system of controls, and schools have done a great job in adapting to COVID-19 secure guidance.

However, the Department recognises that its policy on face coverings needs to be weighed against the disadvantages. This includes the negative impact on communication between teachers and pupils in the classroom, particularly for those with special educational needs, the effect on mental health, and the discomfort of wearing face coverings for prolonged periods in warmer weather.

The assessment against the four tests was informed by the latest scientific evidence. It sought a balance between the Government's key social and economic priorities and the overriding goal to save lives and avoid another surge in infections that would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS. The removal of face coverings for all in the classroom and for students and pupils in communal areas at Step 3 was supported by PHE. As the four tests were met at Step 3, it was an appropriate time to remove the recommendation in schools and colleges as the balance of risks shifted.

Schools and colleges across the country continue to have robust protective measures in place, including regular weekly testing to break chains of transmission.

The Department is also taking additional measures in areas where there is a high prevalence of variants of concern. In enhanced response areas, directors of public health (DsPH) may work in partnership with schools and colleges to reinstate supervised on-site testing and to reintroduce face coverings advice for indoor communal areas including classrooms, subject to an assessment of the educational impact against public health benefit. DsPH may also decide to use these measures as part of specific outbreak management for a small number of schools and colleges, whether or not they are in an enhanced response area.

The policy on face coverings and the system of controls is kept under review and is informed by the latest scientific and medical advice from PHE. Further information on the use and effectiveness of face coverings can be found at: <https://phe.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-retrieve-file.pl?id=9adedb17d5622f9cd7e42febcbadb19ad> and [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963639/DfE\\_Evidence\\_summary\\_COVID-19\\_-\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_education\\_settings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf).

**■ Secondary Education: First Aid****Sir Mark Hendrick:****[24093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including CPR as a compulsory part of secondary education.

**Nick Gibb:**

All state-funded schools in England are required to teach first aid, including CPR, as part of Health Education, which is statutory alongside Relationships Education for primary school aged pupils and Relationships and Sex Education for secondary school aged pupils.

The statutory requirements, which came into force in September 2020, include basic first aid for primary school children, for example dealing with common injuries such as head injuries. Pupils in secondary schools are taught further first aid, for example how to administer CPR and the purpose of defibrillators.

The statutory guidance can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

To support schools further, the Department's teacher training modules cover all the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance. This includes online modules for primary and secondary teachers, containing key knowledge and facts to help teachers understand what they must teach in relation to basic first aid. The Teaching Basic First Aid training module for secondary school teachers aims to increase teachers' knowledge and skills, develop strategies to deal with questions, and help them feel more confident teaching about basic first aid. More information about the training module is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-basic-first-aid>.

**ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS****■ Animals: Exports****Kenny MacAskill:****[24344]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many animals were exported from the UK for the purpose of (a) breeding, (b) fattening and (c) slaughter in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This response has been compiled by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) using data provided by third parties, and as such, is reliant on the providers for the accuracy of the information.

The following has been extracted from TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System). TRACES is a European Commission system employed by EU member states to facilitate and record animal/animal product movements into and throughout the EU.

Below is the number of live animals exported to the EU from 2016:

REASON FOR EXPORT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Breeding	9,037,232	11,073,789	9,998,318	8,415,229	9,577,278
Fattening	93,778	92,193	76,915	80,934	87,936
Production	25,146	28,783	25,521	34,295	6,248
Slaughter	3,950,414	5,315,978	4,820,894	5,277,047	4,657,365

Exports to the rest of the world require an Export Health Certificate (EHC). APHA's data retention period for export certification is three years. Subsequently, APHA does not hold records for export consignments carried out before 2018.

The below information shows the number of EHCs issued. The APHA records do not hold the number of animals exported; numerous animals can travel on one EHC. Many of the EHCs agreed with countries are for breeding, fattening or production combined on one document so this data cannot be segmented by export reason.

REASON FOR EXPORT	2018	2019	2020
Breeding/Fattening/Production	1805	1812	2185
Slaughter	227	484	263

**Kenny MacAskill:**

[\[24345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) birds, (b) pigs, (c) wild boar, (d) bulls and (e) cows have been exported from the UK for the purposes of (i) breeding, (ii) fattening and (iii) slaughter in each of the last five years.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This response has been compiled by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) using data provided by third parties, and as such, is reliant on the providers for the accuracy of the information.

The following has been extracted from TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System). TRACES is a European Commission system employed by EU member states to facilitate and record animal/animal product movements into and throughout the EU.

Below is the number of live animals exported to the EU from 2016:

REASON FOR EXPORT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Bull/Cow</b>					
Breeding	6,143	4,184	5,632	6,042	2,407
Production	24,974	28,485	25,234	15,597	6,128
Slaughter	10,318	9,616	8,672	4,673	3,551
<b>Wild Boar</b>					
Breeding	0	3	0	0	0
<b>Pigs</b>					
Breeding	1,763	3,055	3,370	6,056	12,919
Production	2	125	1	418	
Slaughter	8,910	8,056	13,081	14,969	15,446
<b>Birds, other than poultry</b>					
Breeding	79	51	3	49	110,548
Slaughter	0	750	0	0	0
<b>Poultry</b>					
Breeding	9,022,269	11,059,627	9,981,653	8,397,890	9,446,174
Slaughter	3,551,225	4,875,861	4,349,451	4,865,515	4,257,736

Exports to the rest of the world require an Export Health Certificate (EHC). APHA's data retention period for export certification is three years. Subsequently, APHA does not hold records for export consignments carried out before 2018.

The below information shows the number of EHCs issued. The APHA records do not hold the number of animals exported; numerous animals can travel on one EHC. Many of the EHCs agreed with countries are for breeding, fattening or production combined on one document so this data cannot be split by export reason. The EHCs are based on commodities, and as such cannot be segmented into specific species.

REASON FOR EXPORT	2018	2019	2020
<b>Cattle</b>			
Breeding/Fattening/Production	568	553	696

REASON FOR EXPORT	2018	2019	2020
Slaughter	210	201	79
<b>Pigs</b>			
Breeding/Fattening/Production	21	28	35
Slaughter	8	282	181
<b>Poultry</b>			
Breeding/Fattening/Production	0	0	10
Slaughter	0	0	0

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[24347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Government's legislative proposals on animal welfare on the number of animals that will continue to be exported from the UK.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will ban exports of livestock and equines for slaughter and fattening from Great Britain. The numbers of live animals exported for slaughter and fattening have decreased in recent years, so that last year only around 6,300 sheep were exported for slaughter and around 38,000 sheep were exported for fattening from Great Britain to the EU[1]. This accounted for around 58% of exports of livestock and equines (excluding poultry) from Great Britain to the EU in the same year. The remaining 42% of livestock and equine exports were for purposes other than slaughter and fattening, such as breeding, which will continue to be permitted.

[1] Figures referenced are from the EU Trade and Control Expert System for year 2020

## ■ Birds: Exports

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[24346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason birds have not been included in the list of animals to be prohibited from live export under section 42(7) of The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We consulted earlier this year on the Government's commitment to end long journeys of livestock and equines going for slaughter or fattening and the provisions in the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill implement the consultation proposals.

Poultry exports primarily consist of significant numbers of recently hatched chicks, exported for breeding purposes from the UK to EU and non-EU countries. Moreover,



there were no exports of poultry for slaughter or fattening from Great Britain to the EU in 2020.

#### ■ Canal and River Trust: Finance

**Mike Amesbury:** [\[24311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on the financial sustainability of the Canal and River Trust of meeting all its dredging requirements based on its current levels of Government funding.

**Rebecca Pow:**

No such assessment has been made. As a charity independent of Government, the Canal and River Trust is responsible for operational matters on its waterways, including meeting its various statutory obligations.

#### ■ Dogs: Animal Welfare

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[24119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether protection dogs are recognised as a specific class of dog under UK legislation.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[24120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, where and how protection dogs are covered by the provisions of (a) the Animal Welfare Act 2006, (b) the Guard Dogs Act 1975 and (c) proposed improvements to animal welfare legislation.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Protection dogs, or guard dogs, are defined in the Guard Dogs Act (1975) as a dog which is being used to protect premises; or property kept on the premises; or a person guarding the premises or such property.

The Animal Welfare Act (2006) provide protection for all animals under the control of man. Protection dogs are included within this definition so are covered by all of the Act's provisions. The Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021 which came into force on the 29 June 2021 increased the maximum penalties available for cases of cruelty under the Act, and applies to protection dogs as well as service and other animals.

The Guard Dogs Act (1975) ensures that applications for a licence to operate guard dog kennels are appropriately assessed by the relevant local authority, and the act allows local authorities to assess applications in line with any conditions it sees fit. Where guard dog kennels fall within the scope of the statutory guidance published in support of The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations (2018) then those standards would apply. Where a licensee is convicted of an animal welfare offence then their licence may be revoked or suspended by the court.

Protection dogs already receive the same protections as other dogs and this will continue to be the case where existing animal welfare legislation is revised or new legislation is proposed.



## ■ Elephants: Zoos

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[24121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to ban the keeping of elephants in zoos.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government commissioned a 10-year-long report from the UK's Elephant Welfare Group (EWG) to examine the conditions in which elephants are kept, to make improvements and to make recommendations as to if and how those conditions can be further improved.

The EWG's report will be completed this year and will be considered by the UK's Zoos Expert Committee. The Government will then respond to the report, probably early next year. The Government will consider the report's recommendations carefully.

## ■ Fly-tipping: Crime Prevention and Sentencing

**Andrew Bridgen:**

[\[24184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to prevent fly-tipping on private land; and whether the Government plans to review sentencing guidelines for perpetrators of fly-tipping.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We appreciate the difficulty and cost that fly-tipping poses to landowners and we are working with a wide range of interested parties through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group, including the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), to promote and disseminate good practice.

Our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy set out our strategic approach to prevent, detect and deter waste crime. This included a commitment to develop a fly-tipping toolkit. The toolkit will be a web-based tool to help local authorities and others work in partnership to tackle fly-tipping.

Budget 2020 allocated up to £2 million to support innovative solutions to tackle fly-tipping. In April 2021 we commissioned a research project considering the drivers, deterrents and impacts of fly-tipping. This research project is due to be completed before the end of this year and will support informed policy making. We are exploring additional funding opportunities, including the role of digital solutions.

We are also preparing a number of legislative reforms to tackle waste crime, which should help to tackle fly-tipping. We are taking forward the commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy to develop proposals for the reform of the waste carrier, broker, and dealer regime. We are working with industry and the regulator and we intend to consult later this year. We also intend to consult on the introduction of mandatory electronic waste tracking. Digital records of waste movements will allow regulators to detect when waste doesn't reach the next stage, which may indicate illegal activity including fly-tipping.

We are bringing forward several measures in the Environment Bill to ensure agencies and authorities can work more effectively to combat waste crime through better access to evidence and improved powers of entry. These new powers will help ensure waste criminals, such as illegitimate waste operators reliant on fly-tipping for income, are held accountable for their actions.

Sentencing guidelines are issued by the independent Sentencing Council for England and Wales, which decides its own work plan for developing/revising sentencing guidelines. The Sentencing Council has issued guidelines for environmental offences, which cover fly-tipping and other waste crimes. The Resources and Waste Strategy includes a commitment to work with the Sentencing Council to support any updates to the Environmental Offences Definitive Guideline should a review be undertaken.

In recent years we have bolstered local authorities' powers to tackle fly-tipping. We have introduced the power to issue fixed penalty notices of up to £400 to both fly-tippers and householders who pass their waste to an unlicensed waste carrier. We have also increased local authorities' powers to stop, search and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers.

#### ■ **Meat: Labelling**

**Andrea Jenkyns:** [\[24280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that labels on meat products state the method by which the animal was killed.

**Andrea Jenkyns:** [\[24281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that parents whose children attend schools are given information in relation to the method by which meat in school meals is slaughtered.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The Government expects the industry, whether food producer or food outlet, to provide consumers with all the information they need to make informed choices about the food they eat. We plan to consult later this year on what can be done through labelling to promote high standards of animal welfare across the UK market. A review into food labelling presents an opportunity to examine this whilst also addressing some other consumer concerns, such as method of slaughter labelling.

The Government sets out required minimum standards for school food in the School Food Standards to ensure that children are served healthy, nutritious meals at school. The standards do not specify food requirements in terms of cultural and religious needs. Head teachers, governors and their caterers are best placed to make decisions about their school food policies. We expect schools to act reasonably providing choices that take account of cultural, religious and special dietary needs and to work with parents in making appropriate arrangements. In particular, schools should consult with parents when making changes to school food provision and ensure parents have access to information on the food provided. If parents are not

happy with the food provided by the school they can take it up with the school and consider using the schools complaints policy.

### ■ **Nappies: Recycling**

**Selaine Saxby:**

[\[24372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policies of the recommendations of the UN Environment Programme's Life Cycle Initiative's report on single-use nappies and their alternatives, published March 2021.

**Rebecca Pow:**

In line with the 25 Year Environment Plan, and our Resources and Waste Strategy, we are considering the best approach to minimise the environmental impact of a range of products, including nappies, taking on board the environmental and social impacts of the options available. Potential additional policy measures include standards, consumer information and encouraging voluntary action by business.

Through the Environment Bill, we are seeking powers that will enable us to, where appropriate and subject to consultation, introduce eco-design and consumer information requirements. This could include labelling schemes that provide accurate information to consumers, to drive the market towards more sustainable products. The Environment Bill will also enable us to put in place extended producer responsibility schemes as well as design and labelling requirements, that relate to the efficient use of resources, for a wide range of products, including potentially nappies.

We are aware of the UN Environment Programme's report which references a number of life cycle analyses on nappies from around the world, including the work carried out by the Environment Agency in the UK in 2005 and 2008. We are also funding our own environmental assessment of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products, with the primary focus on nappies, to bring the research for the UK up to date. The work will be published later this year, following peer review, and the sources of the information used will be included in the final report. Any future action on nappies by Government and industry will take this and any other relevant information into account.

### ■ **Natural Resources: Consumption**

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[24331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to reduce resource consumption in the UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Our plans for reducing resource consumption and preventing waste in England were set out in our draft *Waste Prevention Programme for England - Towards a Resource Efficient Economy*, which we consulted on between March and June this year. This builds on the measures set out in the 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy and includes designing products which last longer and that can be reused, repaired or

remanufactured, coupled with supporting systems and business models to keep goods and materials in circulation for longer.

As part of this we are exploring ways to help consumers and producers make more sustainable decisions for instance through information and labelling, incentives such as the carrier bag charge, introducing producer responsibility schemes, and looking at how the Government and local authorities can support reuse and repair as well as alternative models such as renting and sharing.

The devolved administrations were aware of our consultation on a new Waste Prevention Programme, and the policy proposals it contains are being discussed at official level.

The responses to the public consultation are now being analysed and we plan to publish a new Waste Prevention Programme for England in the autumn.

## ■ Nature Conservation: Finance

**Alicia Kearns:**

[\[24363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding is available for local groups or organisations to develop ecology centres or wildlife preserves that serve the local community and meet the broader policies of his Department.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund provides grants through its National Lottery Grants for Heritage, which can support communities to protect, share and enjoy their local natural environment. Since 1994, the Fund has invested more than £1.5bn into projects focused on England's natural heritage.

Defra's Countryside Stewardship scheme provides financial incentives for farmers, woodland owners, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment through agricultural or woodland land management. It also provides funding for educational access, allowing groups such as school pupils to visit farms to learn, understand and engage with farming and the environment. Among agreement holders in the scheme are a number of charities and organisations who own and manage nature reserves for wildlife.

Defra's £80m Green Recovery Challenge Fund has kick-started a pipeline of nature-based projects to restore nature, tackle climate change and connect people with the natural environment. For example, a project led by Gasworks Dock Partnership will deliver extensive habitat creation and restoration while establishing Cody Dock, in Newham, as a flagship centre for community led citizen science and academic ecology studies.

**■ Recycling: York****Rachael Maskell:**[\[24266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of recycling rates (a) nationally and (b) in York since March 2020.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Recycling rates for 2020/21 for local authorities in England are not yet available.

Recycling rates for [2019/20](#) were published on 3 March 2021. An ad hoc set of provisional results covering [April 2020 to June 2020](#) were published on 12 May 2021.

For the 2019 calendar year, the national 'waste from households' recycling rate was 45.5% for England. The provisional England 'waste from households' recycling rate for April to June 2020 was 45.0%.

The 'waste from households' recycling rate is not available at local authority level.

The most recent publication of waste statistics show that the 'household waste' recycling rate for York City Council for the 2019/20 financial year was 48.4% and was 45.6% for April to June 2020.

**FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE****■ Armenia: Prisoners of War****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[24127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with its Azerbaijani counterpart on releasing the full list of Armenian prisoners of war held in Azerbaijan to the Armenian authorities.

**Wendy Morton:**

During visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan in February, I urged both parties to work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to expedite the return of all prisoners of war. In June, I again raised the situation surrounding prisoners of war in conversation with the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister. Through the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and bilateral engagement in Baku and Yerevan, UK officials continue to urge the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities to prioritise this issue, alongside other unresolved issues following hostilities last year.

**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[24128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to help secure the release of Armenian prisoners of war held in Azerbaijan.

**Wendy Morton:**

During visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan in February, I urged both parties to work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to expedite the return of all prisoners of war. In June, I again raised the situation surrounding prisoners of war in conversation with the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister. Through the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and bilateral engagement in Baku and Yerevan, UK officials continue to urge the Armenian and Azerbaijani authorities to prioritise this issue, alongside other unresolved issues following hostilities last year.

## ■ Colombia: Foreign Relations

**Fabian Hamilton:** [\[26087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the change in the level of Official Development Assistance to date; and if he will make an assessment of the effect of that change on the UK's bilateral relationship with Colombia.

**Wendy Morton:**

Allocation decisions have been taken by Ministers in line with the objectives set out in the Integrated Review. These took account of a full range of factors, including analysis of potential impacts on beneficiaries of UK aid. We remain a world-leading aid donor, and across HMG, will spend more than £10 billion this year to fight poverty, tackle climate change, and improve global health.

Colombia is a key partner to the UK in Latin America, and the two countries will continue to work closely together. We have contributed more than £63 million in support via the UK's Conflict, Security, and Stability Fund, and are the largest donor to the UN Trust Fund for Colombia, supporting implementation of the peace accords. We are proud to lead on the issue at the UN Security Council, and will continue to strengthen the international community's support and commitment to peace, stability, and justice in Colombia.

## ■ Ebrahim Raisi

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[24108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect on the level of threat to Israel of the election of Ebrahim Raisi as president of Iran.

**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[24110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on the election of Ebrahim Raisi as president of Iran.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign Secretary most recently engaged with his Israeli counterparts during a visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the 25-26 May. We regularly discuss regional issues with international partners, and continue to support the security of our allies.

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[24109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Iranian counterpart on the election of Ebrahim Raisi as president.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign Secretary speaks regularly with his Iranian counterpart Foreign Minister Zarif. He and his officials, including those in the British Embassy in Tehran, engage with Iran on a wide range of issues, including our nuclear concerns, our consular cases, human rights and Iran's role in the region. We call on President-elect Raisi to set Iran on a different course and expect to engage him on the full range of issues when he takes office.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: LGBT People**

**Catherine West:**

[\[26155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many of his Department's staff are allocated to policies and programmes on global LGBT+ rights.

**Nigel Adams:**

The FCDO is fully committed to the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights globally. The FCDO has five dedicated members of staff allocated to LGBT+ policy and programme work centrally, and many staff in our overseas missions work to advance LGBT+ as part of our human rights portfolio.

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

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[24082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department makes available to its staff working at lower grades overseas in red list countries to ensure that they do not face a disproportionate financial burden as a result of the requirement to self-isolate under covid-19 restrictions on returning to the UK on a resilience journey.

**Nigel Adams:**

As approved by HMT, the FCDO has put measures in place to ensure that all staff posted overseas, including lower grades, do not suffer a disproportionate financial burden as a result of UK public health requirements to self-isolate on return to the UK. The FCDO covers the cost of pre-departure tests, and the mandatory testing on day 2 and 8 while in self-isolation. Accommodation costs cannot currently be met from public funds as per HMRC and HMT guidelines.



**■ Hong Kong: Travel****Afzal Khan:** [\[26158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of its foreign travel advice for Hong Kong in the context of the recent arrests of journalists under the National Security Law and the closing of Apple Daily newspaper.

**Nigel Adams:**

FCDO travel advice aims to inform British nationals so they can make decisions about travelling abroad. We constantly review all travel advice to make sure it reflects the current situation in that country or territory, and the latest assessment of risk to British people there.

Freedom of the press is one of the rights set down in paragraph 3(5) of the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration. It is vital that journalists are able to investigate and report without undue interference. We expect the Hong Kong authorities to abide by their international obligations and to investigate instances of attacks on the media.

**■ Israel: Diplomatic Relations****Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[24111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to increase UK diplomatic cooperation with Israel as part of the Integrated Review 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

The Integrated Review was published on 16 March and can be found on gov.uk. The review is the most comprehensive articulation of security, defence, development and foreign policy published by a British Government in decades. We are proud to enjoy an excellent bilateral relationship with Israel. We welcome the formation of a new government, and look forward to working together closely to ensure the relationship goes from strength to strength. We engage frequently with the Government of Israel, and will continue to do so.

**■ Israel: Overseas Aid****Stephen Morgan:** [\[24303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the total UK aid spend in Israel was in each of the last 10 years; and what the budget headings were for that expenditure.

**James Cleverly:**

Israel is not eligible for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) as per the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) guidelines. The UK therefore provides no ODA to Israel.



**■ Jimmy Lai****Afzal Khan:**[\[26159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether UK consulate officials have visited the pro-democracy activist and UK citizen Jimmy Lai in prison.

**Nigel Adams:**

We remain concerned about the targeting of pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong, and are following these cases carefully. The Foreign Secretary commented on 16 April that the Hong Kong authorities' decision to target leading pro-democracy figures for prosecution is unacceptable and must stop. For data protection reasons I cannot share information about a person without their permission.

**■ Overseas Aid: Environment Protection****Helen Hayes:**[\[25900\]](#)

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 for environmental research on the Government's ability to fulfil its commitment in the Integrated Review to maintain a place at the leading edge of science and technology.

**Helen Hayes:**[\[25901\]](#)

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 for environmental research on the Government's ability to fulfil its commitment in the Integrated Review to climate and biodiversity.

**James Duddridge:**

The economic impact of the Covid pandemic has forced the UK Government to take tough, but necessary decisions to move to a target of spending 0.5% of GNI on ODA in 2021, as a temporary measure. This has included cuts to ODA Science and Technology funding. We have worked with a range of stakeholders including UKRI, universities as well as directly with grant holders and funding partners to mitigate the impact of these cuts, adjust timeframes and results expectations, and continue to maximise the impact for every pound spent.

Despite the reductions, the UK remains a development superpower committing to double International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion and committing at least £3 billion of International Climate Finance to nature and biodiversity over the next five years. The UK is supporting new global targets to conserve or protect at least 30% of global land and at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030. FCDO ODA will be targeted to addressing seven global challenges facing the world's poorest including climate change and biodiversity, and science, research and technology. In 2021/22 the FCDO will make £251 million of science, research and technology investments across all seven challenges.

**■ Palestinians: Overseas Aid****Ben Lake:** [\[24302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of UK financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority has been spent on the Palestinian National Security Forces in the last three years.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK has not provided financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority National Security Forces in the last three years. UK financial assistance has helped to deliver essential health and education services in the West Bank. The UK does provide technical assistance to support the development of capable, accountable, sustainable, and inclusive Palestinian security forces.

**■ Turkey: Muslim Brotherhood****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[24123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent of Turkey's support for the Muslim Brotherhood over the last six months.

**Wendy Morton:**

We are aware that the Turkish government regards the Muslim Brotherhood as a political movement, not a terrorist organisation; and that Muslim Brotherhood figures have lived in Turkey, and associated media outlets have operated there, for many years. We continue to take concerns about the Muslim Brotherhood seriously.

**■ Turkey: Sanctions****Andrew Rosindell:** [\[24122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last discussed with his NATO counterparts the potential imposition of further sanctions against Turkey in response to its purchase and deployment of the Russian S-400 missile system.

**Wendy Morton:**

We do not speculate about possible future sanctions designations. It is for NATO Allies to make decisions on their own sanctions. Allies have committed to reducing dependencies on Russian-sourced equipment. We expect Allies to neither buy nor operate Russian military equipment and have regularly raised our concerns with Turkey that their procurement of Russian S400 systems is a threat to NATO interoperability and incompatible with Allied systems.

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[24124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the US, UK and EU imposing sanctions against Turkey in response to its illegal oil and gas exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**Wendy Morton:**

We do not speculate about possible future sanctions designations. It is for the US and EU to make decisions under their own sanctions regimes. The UK has consistently stated our support for the sovereign right of the Republic of Cyprus to exploit the oil and gas in its internationally agreed Exclusive Economic Zone. We continue to believe that any development of Cyprus' oil and gas should be for the benefit of all Cypriots. We believe the most enduring way of resolving difficult issues such as this is to achieve a Cyprus settlement. We encourage all parties to redouble their efforts in pursuit of this. We welcome Turkey's withdrawal of survey vessels from waters around Cyprus and the Aegean in recent months as a significant contribution towards de-escalation of tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean. We urge all parties to support measures aimed at de-escalation and reducing tensions; and to resolve issues through dialogue. The UK will continue to work with all parties in support of this.

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ **Abortion****Bob Blackman:**[\[24162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether all electronic mail communications since and including 26 March 2020 by (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department with abortion providers on policy issues has been via official Departmental electronic mail addresses; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

All email communications with abortions providers on policy issues is conducted through official Departmental email addresses. All ministers are aware of the guidance around personal email usage and Government business is conducted in line with that guidance

■ **Abortion: Drugs****Carla Lockhart:**[\[23394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 14 December 2020 to question 128881, Abortion: Drugs, what measures are in place to ensure that abortion pills sent by post are used by no-one other than the intended recipient.

**Helen Whately:**

The clinic will supply medicines obtained through the regulated supply chain, appropriately labelled for individual patients to be safely used only by those patients. The pills are only supplied following the patient's consultation. Abuse of the temporary measures by the passing on or selling of abortion pills remains unlawful and subject to criminal sanctions.

**■ Acne**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[25819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who suffer from acne by (a) age and (b) gender.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement do not hold the information requested. Most people who suffer from acne will be treated in primary care or use self-treatment.

**■ Asthma: Health Services**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[13942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on referrals to secondary care and specialist asthma centres for people with asthma.

**Jim Shannon:** [\[13943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that referrals to care for people with asthma return to the level they were at prior to the covid-19 outbreak; and what his timeframe is for reaching that level of asthma referrals.

**Jo Churchill:**

Specialist respiratory services for severe asthma have continued during the COVID-19 outbreak. In most cases people with severe asthma have been supported through remote consultations and biologic medication has been delivered at home. We have made £1 billion available to the National Health Service in 2021/22 to support the recovery of elective services, including referrals for patients with asthma. In secondary care, average waiting times have reduced by more than 40% since July 2020.

**■ Cancer**

**Paul Bristow:** [\[25964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to improve public awareness of sarcoma cancer.

**Jo Churchill:**

There are no specific plans to do so. Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement's campaign, 'Help us help you' which ran from October to December 2020, to raise awareness of general symptoms of cancer and encourage people experiencing persistent symptoms to contact their general practitioner. Further 'Help us help you' campaigns are under consideration.

**■ Cancer: Coronavirus****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[24092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Government's focus on responding to the covid-19 outbreak on trends in the number of early cancers being (a) diagnosed and (b) missed since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have not made a specific assessment as the data on rates of diagnoses in this period is not yet available.

**■ Cancer: Medical Treatments****Alex Norris:**[\[25912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of whether the outcomes of the NICE Methods Review support access to personalised cancer treatments; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) now appraises all new cancer medicines and significant licence extensions and aims to publish draft guidance on new cancer drugs around the time of licensing wherever possible.

NICE's review of its methods and processes is ongoing. The purpose of the review is to ensure that NICE's methods and processes remain cutting edge and support the ambition of the National Health Service to provide high quality care that offers good value to patients and to the NHS. NICE expects to consult on the draft programme manual in the summer, with implementation of the changes from early 2022.

**Alex Norris:**[\[25913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed Innovative Medicines Fund on personalised cancer treatments.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* The Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF) has provided access to over 64,000 National Health Service patients to the most promising cancer medicines. The Innovative Medicines Fund (IMF) will build on and extend the successful CDF. NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence expect to carry out an engagement exercise on detailed proposals for the IMF later this year.

**Alex Norris:**[\[25916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to reviewing the cancer ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan in the context of the backlog of cancer

treatment, increasing cancer prevalence and impact of the covid-19 outbreak on cancer patients.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* The Department's cancer strategy is incorporated as part of the NHS Long Term Plan and the National Health Service remains committed to delivering on the Plan.

In March 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement published the 2021/22 Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance. This sets out the priorities for the NHS, including the backlog of cancer treatment, increasing early diagnosis of and the impact of the outbreak on cancer patients.

■ **Care Homes**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[25063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department last made an assessment of the viability of care companies; and what assessment he has made of the resilience of such companies.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:* The Department regularly monitors risks to provider viability and continuity of care in England. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to shape their local markets to ensure that they are sustainable, diverse and offer high quality care and support for people in their area. The Care Act also provides for the Care Quality Commission to monitor the financial health of the largest and most difficult to replace adult social care providers. This allows them to warn local authorities if a provider is likely to fail for financial reasons and gives local authorities time to activate their contingency plans.

■ **Care Homes and Hospitals: Coronavirus**

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[24894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a regulatory impact assessment of the costs, benefits and alternatives of requiring staff in (a) care homes and (b) hospitals to be vaccinated against covid-19 as a condition of employment; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:* We intend to publish an impact assessment on the vaccination of staff in care homes as soon as possible. We will also consult further in relation to healthcare settings, such as hospitals. This consultation would seek views on the impacts in these settings in order to inform an impact assessment.

## ■ Care Homes: Dementia

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[22160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide additional support for dementia patients in care homes.

**Helen Whately:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic we have issued a range of guidance for care homes. In particular, the Social Care Institute for Excellence has published advice on COVID-19 and dementia in care homes in collaboration with NHS England and NHS Improvement, which was last updated in May 2021. It discusses four clinical situations to illustrate some common challenges to supporting someone with dementia and provides clear advice on how to approach these to ensure the person with dementia is adequately supported. This guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/dementia/care-homes#introduction>

In addition, we know that equipping the health and social care workforce with the skills they need is crucial for providing high quality care for those living with dementia, including those living in care homes. The requisite training needs are set out in the Dementia Training Standards Framework. Since 1 April 2015, newly appointed health care assistants and social care support workers, including those providing care to people with dementia, have been undergoing training as part of the national implementation of the Care Certificate. Since 2012, over one million care workers have completed the Care Certificate, or common induction standards.

## ■ Care Homes: Homophobia

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[24321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the prevalence of homophobia in residential care settings.

**Helen Whately:**

We have made no specific assessment. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have statutory duties to safeguard adults with care and support needs from discriminatory abuse as a result of a person's sexual orientation. This includes carrying out safeguarding enquiries where a safeguarding concern is raised.

## ■ Carers: Disability

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[24925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the saving to the public purse resulting from care provided to disabled people by unpaid carers.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:* We have made no such assessment. We recognise the vital role all carers play, particularly during the pandemic.

**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[24926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing carers who look after disabled people with (a) free prescriptions and (b) free further education and training once their caring responsibilities are over.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:* We have made no assessment. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are dispensed free of charge and to support those with the greatest need who do not qualify for an exemption, prescription pre-payment certificates allow the holder of a 12-month certificate to purchase the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

The Government is supporting any adult, including carers, who do not have A-levels or equivalent qualifications, to access almost 400 fully funded level 3 courses, with Free Courses for Jobs. In the first year, we are investing £95 million from the National Skills Fund to provide adults with this opportunity to gain their first level 3 qualification for free, which can also benefit carers.

**■ Cervical Cancer: Greater London****Feryal Clark:**[\[25973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many cervical screening examinations took place in the North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group in each of the last 10 years.

**Jo Churchill:**

Data on the number of cervical screening examinations that have taken place in North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is only available from April 2020 when this CCG was established. The latest data available comes from October to December 2020 and indicates that 211,270 screening tests were performed, which is a coverage of 57.5%.

**■ Childbirth****Sir Edward Leigh:**[\[23047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the guidance from the British Association of Perinatal Medicine, published in 2019, that neonatal stabilisation may be considered from 22 weeks gestation.



**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The Department has considered the 'Framework on Perinatal Management of Extreme Preterm Birth before 27 Weeks of Gestation' published by the British Association of Perinatal Medicine.

MBRRACE-UK published guidance in November 2020 to support health care professionals in the assessment and documentation of signs of life in extremely preterm births to support consistent decision making about birth classification.

**■ Community Care: Autism and Learning Disability****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[23198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department spent on capacity in community care settings for people with learning disabilities and autism in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 1 July 2021]:* Clinical commissioning group (CCG) spending on services for people with a learning disability and autistic people is not collected centrally.

The NHS Long Term Plan set out commitments for improving health care for people with a learning disability and autistic people, supported by investment in community services and support as alternatives to mental health inpatient care. This funding is additional to CCGs' spending on healthcare for people and began in 2019-20. In 2019-20, this investment was £17 million and £23 million in 2020-21.

**■ Coronavirus: Artificial Intelligence****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[24090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether artificial intelligence is being used in the diagnosis of covid-19.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

The National COVID-19 Chest Imaging Database (NCCID) was created by the NHSX Artificial Intelligence Laboratory to support a better understanding of the COVID-19 virus and enable the best care for patients hospitalised with a severe infection. The NCCID has enabled National Health Service trusts such as Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge to develop AI technologies, facilitate research studies and early detection and diagnosis of the disease.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[24164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) steps he is taking and (b) plans he has to ensure that people not registered with a GP are able to access covid-19 vaccines.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

We introduced the Enhanced Service Specification: COVID-19 vaccination programme 2020/21 which enables general practitioner (GP) practices to vaccinate unregistered patients within their eligible priority cohort.

For individuals not registered with a GP, the National Health Service and local partners will ensure they are offered appropriate support to receive the vaccine and avoid inequalities in access. This includes making the vaccination available from a range of settings. We are also working with community leaders and partners on initiatives to encourage people to register with a GP and with councils to ensure targeted support is included in local area vaccination plans for unregistered patients.

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[24169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 179661 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of prioritising 17-year-old students planning to start university in September 2021 to receive their first covid-19 vaccine so that those students will be able to be in receipt of two covid-19 vaccinations prior to the start of the 2021-22 academic year.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation is currently examining the evidence and the relative risks and benefits of routinely vaccinating children and young people against COVID-19 and will provide advice to the Department in due course. This will include consideration of those aged 16 to 17 years old.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[24335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the approval of the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine for 12 to 15 year olds by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, when he plans to announce whether people under 18 years old will be invited for vaccinations; and whether people under 18 years old who have been identified as clinically vulnerable will be prioritised for vaccination.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

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

**Anne Marie Morris:** [\[26110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the validity of evidence that suggests that people who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed may not receive the same level of protection from the covid-19 vaccines as the general population.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

Data from the Virus Watch study suggests a modestly reduced antibody response after one dose among individuals with immunosuppression, including those on immunosuppressive therapy. However, as this is not a direct measure of protection it

is too soon to determine the impact on clinical disease or whether this remains after a complete course of vaccination.

As part of the COVID-19 Immunity National Core Study, UK Research and Innovation is providing £1.8 million towards the OCTAVE study. This study will examine the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in clinically at-risk groups including patients with certain immunosuppressed conditions.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[26161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has for a covid-19 vaccine booster campaign in autumn 2021.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on a potential COVID-19 booster vaccination programme on 30 June 2021, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jcvi-interim-advice-on-a-potential-coronavirus-covid-19-booster-vaccine-programme-for-winter-2021-to-2022>

Final decisions on the timing and scope of the COVID-19 vaccine booster programme, as well as cohorts and eligibility, will not be made until later in the year, informed by further independent advice from the JCVI. NHS England and NHS Improvement are asking all local systems to develop detailed plans to ensure they are ready to deliver a booster programme from the start of September.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[26162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure long-term immune monitoring of people who have received a covid-19 vaccine booster.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has made interim recommendations on the potential use of a COVID-19 vaccine booster. If the COVID-19 booster programme goes ahead, plans to evaluate the programme will be developed in due course.

## ■ Day Centres: Older People

**Stuart Anderson:** [\[12300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what financial support is available to help run day centre provision and other activities for elderly people.

**Helen Whately:**

Under the Care Act 2014, decisions on how care is commissioned is devolved to local authorities, who are responsible for shaping their local markets to ensure that all people have a range of high-quality, person-centred care and support options available to them.

We are providing councils with access to over £1 billion of additional funding for social care in 2021-22. This will support local authorities to maintain care services, including day services, while keeping up with rising demand and recovering from the impact of COVID-19. We have provided over £2 billion for adult social care, in addition to over £6 billion which has been made available to local authorities to address pressures on their services. We have encouraged local authorities to allocate funding from the £1.49 billion Infection Control Fund to support the resumption of community and day support services.

#### ■ Dental Health

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[24255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will instruct Directors of Public Health to lead a strategy on oral healthcare with a focus on prevention of disease.

**Jo Churchill:**

Local authorities are already responsible for assessing the oral health needs of their local population, developing oral health strategies and commissioning oral health improvement programmes. Public Health England is working with local authorities and has published a number of resources to support them in improving oral health.

#### ■ Dental Services: Contracts

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[24253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timetable is for publishing plans for a reformed dentist contract.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with the Department and the British Dental Association to build on the learning from the dental contract reform programme.

An advisory group and technical working group have been formed and should it prove possible to make rapid changes to the existing contractual arrangements, these will take place at the earliest opportunity.

#### ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Energy

**Ruth Jones:** [\[25149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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.

**Edward Argar:**

Energy costs for electricity and natural gas for the Department's buildings in 2019/20 and 2020/21 are shown in the following table. Data for 2021/22 is not yet available.

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YEAR	GAS £	ELECTRICITY £
2019/20	134,172	1,398,290
2020/21	217,130	1,661,198

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## ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Recycling

**Ruth Jones:** [\[25936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, 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.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department is committed to improving its rates of recycling in line with the current Greening Government Commitments waste targets.

## ■ Diabetes

**Jim Shannon:** [\[25821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recommendations made by the JDRF in their report, Pathway to Choice, published in February 2020, what steps he is planning to take to support greater self-management among people with type 1 diabetes.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned two remote structured education programmes including MyType1Diabetes and DigiBete, to provide education and self-management support for those living with type 1 diabetes. These are available free of charge across England.

The latest technology to support individuals to gain better control over their glucose levels is currently undergoing assessment by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence. Hybrid closed-loop insulin delivery systems, allowing the system to react to insulin demands in real time, will begin testing in the next few months. The findings from the pilots will feed into the technology to inform future use.

## ■ Disability: Children

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[24312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled children can catch-up on missed (a) therapies and (b) health services as part of the recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[24313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help disabled children whose conditions have worsened during the covid-19 outbreak to recover progress on their healthcare outcomes.

**Helen Whately:**

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services and therapies for disabled children. In 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance that restoration of essential community services, including therapeutic support, must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or are going through an assessment for one. We have invested £6.6 billion from March to September to help the National Health Service recover from the pandemic and asked that systems ensure health inequalities are tackled in their recovery plans.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[24314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing funding for disabled children's health and care services as part of the covid-19 outbreak recovery.

**Helen Whately:**

There have been no specific discussions. However, as part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement on improving the provision of health and care services to disabled children. We have provided over £6 billion directly to councils to support them with the impacts of COVID-19, including for children's social care. Since 2019-2020, the Government has provided additional funding for adults' and children's social care via the social care grant and is allocating £1.7 billion in 2021-2022.

**Marsha De Cordova:** [\[24315\]](#)

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 health and wellbeing of disabled children.

**Helen Whately:**

We have made no specific assessment.

## ■ Eating Disorders

**Sir George Howarth:** [\[24902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the role that the health and fitness industry plays on people developing eating disorders.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We have no plans to make such an assessment.

We know that some people with eating disorders may struggle with excessive exercising. However, we also recognise the positive impact that sport can have on physical and mental health.

**Sir George Howarth:** [\[24903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to investigate the increase in the number of cases in eating disorders in the last 10 years.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

We currently have no plans to do so.

The Government is funding, via the National Institute for Health Research, a new eating disorder study jointly led with Kings College London and eating disorder charity, Beat. This is the largest ever study of eating disorders in England which aims to better understand these conditions and enable the design of new treatments aimed at improving the lives of patients.

#### ■ **First Aid: Education**

**Sir Mark Hendrick:** [\[24091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of offering free CPR courses to adults in England.

**Jo Churchill:**

No specific assessment has been made. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working in partnership with St John Ambulance to increase the awareness of the importance of CPR. St John Ambulance's Community Advocates currently offer free face to face and virtual training for the general public.

#### ■ **Flour: Folic Acid**

**Jessica Morden:** [\[26091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has a planned timescale for bringing forward legislative proposals to fortify flour products with folic acid.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department published a consultation on the proposed mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid from 13 June to 9 September 2019. A post consultation update was published on GOV.UK. Publication of the consultation response has been delayed due to the pandemic. We will publish the response as soon as possible outlining the next steps for this proposal.

#### ■ **Food: Advertising**

**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[24116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government's impact assessment on the introduction of restrictions on the promotions and placements

of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar included the potential effect of those restrictions on the competitiveness of the UK market and levels of inward investment.

**Jo Churchill:**

The impact assessment does not include this information. However, we have considered the views of a wide range of stakeholders as we developed our plans for implementing the healthy weight strategy including in response to proposals for restrictions on the promotion of high fat, salt and sugar products.

■ **Gender Recognition: Surgery**

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[25921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that phalloplasty surgery for trans men can resume on the NHS.

**Jo Churchill:**

The contract for phalloplasty services is currently out to tender with a view for rapid contract award.

■ **Hospitals: Waiting Lists**

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[24971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the median waiting time is for routine treatment at each NHS trust in England.

**Edward Argar:**

A table showing the median waiting time for routine treatment at each National Health Service trust in England is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. Median Waiting Times for Routine Treatment [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE Median wait times for RTT (incomplete) Apr-21 (1).xlsx]

■ **Hypertension: Screening**

**Simon Jupp:** [\[23400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available to people with the cost of purchasing a blood pressure monitor where GPs require patients to take blood pressure readings at home.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement are supporting local systems to facilitate patients to remotely manage their blood pressure, where appropriate. Approximately 200,000 monitors have been made available for distribution.

■ **In Vitro Fertilisation: Homosexuality**

**Stephen Morgan:** [\[25918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle discrimination against same-sex women couples accessing fertility treatment.



**Helen Whately:**

In England, decisions about local NHS fertility services are determined by clinical commissioning groups, taking account of the National Institute for Health Care Excellence's (NICE) fertility guidelines. The Government is clear that we expect local National Health Service commissioning bodies to commission fertility services in line with NICE guidelines.

NICE has started a scoping process for reviewing fertility guidelines including those for same sex female couples.

**Learning Disability: Nurses****Sir David Amess:**[\[24074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurses have been allocated to implementing policies introduced as a result of the Learning Disability Mortality Review programme.

**Helen Whately:**

This information is not held centrally.

**Medical Treatments****Chris Green:**[\[23222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the changes needed to (a) NICE and NHS England and Improvement's health technology approval processes and (b) NHS England's commercial policy to improve (i) access to and (ii) uptake of new medicines and vaccines; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing authoritative, evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service on whether new medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE is responsible for the methods and processes it uses in the assessment of health technologies and it is currently reviewing its appraisal methods.

New commercial flexibilities and support structures have been introduced to support access and uptake of transformative medicines, including NHS England and NHS Improvement's Commercial Framework.

**Catherine West:**[\[24297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's ongoing process review will assess the potential merits of giving patient consultees the right to challenge committee assumptions on patient evidence.

**Jo Churchill:**

Patients are represented on the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) appraisal committees and patient groups are able to register as stakeholders in appraisals and comment on NICE's recommendations.

NICE consulted on a range of proposed changes to its processes earlier this year as part of the ongoing review of its methods and processes. This included removing the terms 'consultee' and 'commentator' to allow all stakeholders, including patient groups, the same rights to participate in evaluations. NICE expects to consult on its draft programme manual in summer, with implementation of the changes from early 2022.

**■ Midwives****Jim Shannon:**[\[24180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many consultant midwives have been employed in the NHS in England in each of the last five years.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not hold the data requested.

**■ NHS: Mental Health****Afzal Khan:**[\[25131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure NHS workers have access to adequate mental health support.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:* Forty dedicated mental health hubs have been established to proactively identify at-risk staff with more complex needs, ensuring they receive rapid access to evidence-based mental health services. National Health Service staff have access to a comprehensive psychological and emotional support package, including a 24 hours a day, seven days a week support line, specialist bereavement support and free access to mental health and wellbeing apps.

**■ Obesity****Sarah Champion:**[\[24205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence the Government has used to support the introduction of calorie labelling on menus to tackle obesity.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government's response to its public consultation on calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector and accompanying impact assessment set out the evidence used to support the policy. The consultation response and impact assessment are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/calorie-labelling-for-food-and-drink-served-outside-of-the-home>

## ■ Paramedical Staff: Vacancies

**Jonathan Ashworth:** [\[24972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many vacancies each Ambulance Trust has for paramedics in England.

**Helen Whately:**

The Department does not hold the data requested.

## ■ Pharmacy: Medical Records

**Sir George Howarth:** [\[23078\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has been made of the potential merits of ensuring pharmacists have both read and write access to medical records to ensure a consistent and comprehensive record of care.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement, NHSX and NHS Digital are currently considering this access for pharmacists.

In some areas, medical records are already shared between medical professionals to support locally commissioned services. Nationally, pharmacists have read access via a patient's Summary Care Record. Following a successful pilot of the digital transfer between community pharmacy and general practitioner (GP) IT systems, when a patient has their NHS flu vaccination in a community pharmacy this information is sent electronically to the patient's GP where known and is automatically recorded in the patient's medical record. As access is extended, we are considering technical requirements, patient consent and data security to provide access to patient records as part of the integration of National Health Service IT systems.

## ■ Primary Health Care

**Sir George Howarth:** [\[23077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of a national approach to self care that (a) encourages referrals to pharmacy for self care advice and (b) empowers community pharmacists to refer people to other healthcare professionals as appropriate.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) 2019-24 five-year deal, commits £2.592 billion every year to the sector. Community pharmacy will support delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan by becoming better integrated in the National Health Service and delivering more clinical services.

The Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) launched in November 2019, enabling NHS111 to refer patients to a community pharmacist for minor illness or the urgent supply of a prescribed medicine. In November 2020 this service was expanded to general practitioner surgeries and we are exploring the potential to expand the CPCS to urgent treatment centres and accident and emergency

departments. Community pharmacists are already required, as part of their NHS contractual arrangements, to refer people to other health and social care providers and support organisations as appropriate.

### ■ Skin Diseases

**Tim Loughton:** [\[25706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of GP visits that are related to skin conditions.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* The data requested is not collected centrally.

### ■ Social Services

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[25075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 24 July to Questions 18543 and 18545 on Vision Impairment: Rehabilitation, whether specific reference to local authority tertiary rehabilitation services, as set out in Care and Support Statutory Guidance, will be included as a new responsibility for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to monitor and inspect as part of the CQC's assessments of local authorities' delivery of adult social care duties.

**Helen Whately:**

The Health and Care Bill will introduce a new duty for the Care Quality Commission to review and make an assessment of how local authorities are undertaking their adult social care duties to drive quality and outcomes for people across England. The assessment function is in the early stage of development and the Department will work with a wide range of stakeholders across the sector to inform detailed system design and practice.

### ■ Students: Finance

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[25947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will offer reimbursements to the single cohort of speech and language therapy undergraduates who self-funded their degrees when starting university in September 2017 before Government funding was re-instated.

**Helen Whately:**

We have no plans to do so.

### ■ Travel: Quarantine

**Clive Efford:** [\[10140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) NHS England and (b) SAGE on the potential risk of outbreaks of new variants of

covid-19 originating from people who are in quarantine in hotels having recently arrived from abroad; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 9 June 2021]:* There have been no specific discussions with NHS England or the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies.

However, Public Health England has risk assessed guest journeys and advised the Managed Quarantine Service on the public health mitigations which should be applied. This is regularly reviewed.

■ **Trikafta**

**Stephen Farry:**

[\[23391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps are being taken to make Kaftrio available for the treatment of cystic fibrosis in the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

Kaftrio is available to National Health Service patients in England in line with its licence through a four year interim access deal negotiated between NHS England and NHS Improvement and Vertex, the drug manufacturer. NHS England and NHS Improvement are committed to expanding patient access to Kaftrio to cover any future licence extensions. The availability of medicines elsewhere in the United Kingdom is a devolved matter.

■ **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[24131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criterion his Department will use when deciding on the selection of UK Government accredited observers for the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (COP9); and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The criteria for accredited observers is determined by the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

## HOME OFFICE

■ **Animal Experiments: Inspections**

**Henry Smith:**

[\[24154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with respect to Section 18, 2(b) of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, how many and what proportion of inspection visits carried out by officials of her Department to establishments designated as breeding, supplying or using animals during (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019 were without notice; and whether she has plans to increase those type of inspection visits.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Inspections are conducted by the Home Office in accordance with the requirements of ASPA and according to risk. In 2017, 59% of inspection visits were unannounced, 2018 63% and 2019 36%. Full details are published in the Regulator's annual reports available at: [Animals in Science Regulation Unit annual reports - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

The Home Office inspects establishments at a frequency that is compliant with the requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986). Both announced and unannounced inspections are undertaken, depending on the regulatory outcomes required. No plans have been made to change the frequency of unannounced visits.

**Henry Smith:** [24155]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the longest interval was between visits made by officials of her Department to any establishment designated as breeding, supplying or using animals under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 in (a) 2017, (b) 2018 and (c) 2019.

**Victoria Atkins:**

The Home Office Regulator inspects all establishments at a frequency that is fully compliant with the requirements of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986). The Regulator aims to inspect all establishments at least once a year. The Regulator also undertakes a governance review of each establishment on an annual basis.

**■ Au Pairs: EU Nationals****Daisy Cooper:** [26166]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 10664, with how many countries she has started to negotiate the Youth Mobility Scheme arrangement for au pairs.

**Kevin Foster:**

We remain open to negotiating Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) arrangements with other countries and territories, including the EU or nations within it. However, we are unable to disclose the status of negotiations as they occur, further details of additional YMS agreements will be announced once they are concluded.

We currently have nine YMS agreements with countries and territories across the world, which enable over 20,000 young people to travel to the UK each year. YMS visa holders have a general right to work across the economy and are not limited to undertaking a role as an au pair.

As has been the case since 2008, the UK's immigration system will not offer a dedicated route for au pairs and this Government will not look to create one.

Our YMS agreements provide a valuable route for mutual cultural exchange and are not simply a one-way route for recruiting from overseas.

## ■ Cannabis: Medical Treatments

**Crispin Blunt:**

[R] [\[26081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the evidential basis is for cannabis-based products for medical use to be placed alongside fentanyl and diamorphine in Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001; and if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of placing such products in lower schedule such as Schedule 4.1 alongside Sativex.

**Kit Malthouse:**

In February 2019, the then Home Secretary commissioned the ACMD to conduct a longer-term review of Cannabis-Based Products for Medicinal use (CBPM). The ACMD published their report on 27 November 2020 on gov.uk. In it they recommended:

*“that the scheduling of CBPMs under Schedule 2 of the MDR remains appropriate and that no further legislative amendments to the MDR regarding CBPMs are required at this point in time.”*

Unlike Sativex, most CBPM do not have a marketing authorisation from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). As such, in the absence of the reassurance that a CBPM has gone through the safety, quality and efficacy process established by the MHRA, it is right that it is in Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. However, should a cannabis-based medicine receive a marketing authorisation from the MHRA, the Government will commission the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to reconsider the scheduling of the product under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. This was the case for Sativex following its marketing authorisation.

## ■ Drugs: Smuggling

**Crispin Blunt:**

[R] [\[26080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 5143, what evidence demonstrates that the arrests made have included high-level actors in the trafficking of controlled drugs; and how many of those arrested or charged in relation to Operation VENETIC have been convicted.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The NCA reports that data derived from Operation VENETIC has, to date, led to over 2,300 people being arrested, over 1000 charged and 162 individuals convicted of a range of serious offences. These include well publicised cases of individuals involved in drug trafficking, like Thomas Maher, described by the judge at his trial as “an extremely important cog in the wheel of a sophisticated network”. A large number of cases linked to Operation VENETIC are progressing through the criminal justice system and it would be inappropriate to comment further on these at this time. The NCA regularly publishes the outcomes of investigations via press notices on its website.



**■ Home Office: Correspondence****Kevin Brennan:** [\[25738\]](#)

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

**Chris Philp:**

Data about intake and performance in answering MP Correspondence and Customer Complaints about Home Office operations are published quarterly with latest Quarter available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-transparency-data>

During the period April 2020 to March 2021 we received 42,692 letters or emails from MPs about operational matters.

In the same time period we closed 36,961 written queries, of which 34,050 required a response – of these 1,903 responses were signed by a Minister or Director General.

**■ Immigration: EU Nationals****David Simmonds:** [\[24384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the number of EU citizens eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**David Simmonds:** [\[24385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens have applied to the EU Settlement Scheme to date.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the '[EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)'.

The latest published information shows the total number of applications to the EUSS was 6.02 million up to 30 June 2021, of which 5.45 million had been concluded.

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

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

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a blog on 2 July 2021, further discussing the differences and their plans for future population estimates:

[Are there really 6m EU citizens living in the UK? | National Statistical \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)



ONS are currently transforming their population and migration statistics to put administrative data at the core of what they do. The latest information on their work programme and longer term plans to transform migration and population statistics was published on 16 April 2021:

[Population and migration statistics system transformation – overview - Office for National Statistics](#)

**David Simmonds:** [24391]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will extend the leave to remain of EU citizens with an outstanding application to the EU Settlement Scheme so that they do not lose access to rights while they wait for a decision.

**Kevin Foster:**

Under the Citizens' Rights (Application Deadline and Temporary Protection) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020, those who applied before the deadline, but whose application is not decided until after it, have their existing EU law rights protected pending the outcome of their application, including any appeal.

**Rachael Maskell:** [26141]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of providing people who have received EU Settled Status with physical documentation of their status.

**Rachael Maskell:** [26142]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what support is available for people who find it difficult to upload their EU Settled Status to their passport.

**Rachael Maskell:** [26143]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she will take to support people who require proof of their settled status in response to difficulties logging onto the EU Settled Status website.

**Kevin Foster:**

We are developing a border and immigration system which is "digital by default", which over time means we will increasingly replace physical and paper-based products and services with accessible, easy to use online and digital services.

Individuals continue to receive written notice of their immigration status by email or letter, which they can keep for their personal records if they wish and can use when contacting the Home Office.

Should users find themselves unable to access their online immigration status because of technical issues or other problems, we have a dedicated call centre which provides telephone and email support which can assist them to use the service, and where necessary, enable individuals' status to be verified through alternative means. The call centre can also help users to update their personal details and travel documents.

**■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships: Internet****Mark Pawsey:** [\[24166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to make permanent the temporary powers within the Coronavirus Act 2020 enabling the electronic registration of deaths.

**Kevin Foster:**

Although the current easements to death registration in the Coronavirus Act 2020 have not enabled the electronic registration of deaths, the General Register Office continues to look for opportunities to modernise the death registration process.

The current easements for death registration are currently planned to expire in line with the Coronavirus Act 2020, to retain them would require changes to the Primary Legislation which underpins the death registration process

**■ UK Border Force: Patrol Craft****Emily Thornberry:** [\[24137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to seek a UK supplier for the replacement of the UK Border Agency's existing cutter fleet.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[24138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the procurement process for the replacement of the UK's existing cutter fleet due to begin in April 2022 will be covered by the security exception set out in Article III of the WTO Government Procurement Agreement.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[24139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the procurement process for the replacement of the UK's cutter fleet, due to begin in April 2022, will be covered by the warships exception set out in Item 47 of Annex 4 of the coverage schedules certified as part of the UK's accession to the WTO Government Procurement Agreement.

**Kevin Foster:**

Earlier this year the Secretary of State for Defence announced a refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy. This will outline the Government's plans for shipbuilding programmes and how it intends to set the conditions for a globally successful, innovative and sustainable national shipbuilding enterprise.

The Home Office is fully engaged with the strategy refresh, with overarching priorities and decisions being subject to wider considerations in forthcoming spending reviews.

Any consequent procurement process will support wider Government Policy and be conducted in line with all relevant legislation.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Buildings: Insulation**

**Lucy Powell:** [\[26111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release, Government steps in to help homeowners caught up in EWS1 process, published on 21 November 2020, how many of the 6,000 building assessors are qualified to carry out the EWS1 assessment.

**Lucy Powell:** [\[26112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release, Government steps in to help homeowners caught up in EWS1 process, published on 21 November 2020, how much of the £700,000 to train more assessors has been allocated to date.

**Lucy Powell:** [\[26113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to increase the number of qualified fire assessors that are qualified to carry out the EWS1 assessment for buildings over 18m.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government has provided the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) with a grant for nearly £700,000 to develop and deliver training for up to 2,000 assessors who will be able to carry out EWS1 assessments.

This training enables these assessors to undertake external wall system assessments for low to medium rise residential buildings of up to 18 metres. The newly qualified assessors will help increase the number of professionals qualified to carry out such assessments, and free up the specialist engineers who are able to assess buildings over 18 metres and those which are high risk and require specialist testing.

Training commenced in January and course enrolments are currently around 870. If fewer than 2,000 individuals enrol on the course, then RICS will repay part of the grant to the Department.

**■ Environmental Health: Staff**

**Ms Karen Buck:** [\[26083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of environmental health practitioners in local authorities in England in each of the last 10 years.

**Luke Hall:**

The Department has convened the Regulatory Services Task and Finish Group to understand the pressures facing regulatory services teams in local government,

which includes Environmental Health, and propose short and long-term options to support the sector.

The Group consists of senior officials from government departments and representatives from local government and professional bodies. The Group has worked collaboratively with partners on several priority work areas, including understanding the size and composition of the environmental health workforce.

## ■ Housing: Construction

**Taiwo Owatemi:**

[\[24358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) effectiveness of local authorities' powers to prevent underqualified builders from constructing developments once planning permission has been granted.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Building Regulations rests with the people carrying out the work. The building control body will inspect building work on site at appropriate stages. The local authority has the power, under Section 36 of the Building Act, to take enforcement action against non-compliant work.

The Building Safety Bill includes a power to make Regulations regarding the competence of anyone carrying out design or building work. We intend, through Regulations, to require that individuals and the people they employ are competent for their roles. To support these legal requirements, we are working with the industry and the British Standards Institution (BSI) to develop an Overarching Competence Framework Standard that can be adapted for different sectors to produce sector-specific competence frameworks.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[26168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his Department's press release, Government to bring an end to unsafe cladding with multi-billion pound intervention, published on 10 February 2021, if he will publish details on how cladding costs will be financed for developments whose remedial work will exceed £50 a month per leaseholder.

**Christopher Pincher:**

On 10 February, we announced a generous finance scheme, which will provide leaseholders in buildings of 11-18 metres with access to finance for cladding remediation costs, and a commitment that their monthly cladding repayment costs will not exceed £50 a month. We will publish more information on the scheme as soon as we are in a position to do so.

## ■ Housing: Planning

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[24263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to prioritise homes with gardens over flats without gardens in housing planning applications.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government, through the National Planning Policy Framework, asks local planning authorities to ensure size, type and tenure of housing, and access to outdoor space needed for different groups in the community is assessed and reflected in local planning policies and decisions. The National Design Guide, which sits alongside the National Planning Policy Framework as guidance, emphasises the importance of providing a network of high quality green open spaces, which could be public, shared or private.

## ■ Local Plans: York

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[24264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the timeframe is for York to have a Local Plan.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Local Plan remains at examination and a public consultation is currently underway. The Government has set a deadline for all local planning authorities to have up-to-date local plans by the end of 2023. The Secretary of State will not hesitate to use the full range of powers Parliament has given him in order to ensure plan-making is maintained. This will help deliver the certainty that local communities and businesses deserve.

## ■ NHS Test and Trace

**Steve Reed:**

[\[26114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to increase data sharing to local authorities from NHS Test and Trace in response to the report by the National Audit Office entitled Test and trace in England: progress update, published on 25 June 2021.

**Luke Hall:**

MHCLG and DHSC have been engaging with local authorities to obtain their feedback in relation to Test and Trace arrangements. Feedback in relation to data sharing has been received and is being used to identify where improvements can be made. DHSC lead engagement with local authorities on Test and Trace matters.

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]**

**Jim Shannon:** [\[25817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress has been made towards agreeing a trade deal with Australia.

**Greg Hands:**

On 14th June, the main elements of the deal were agreed by the Prime Minister and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison. This Agreement in Principle was published on 16 June. This deal is the first the Government has negotiated from scratch since leaving the EU.

The negotiating teams will now start to finalise the text of the agreement ahead of signature. Parliament will have the opportunity to scrutinise the agreement further when the text is published at signature along with an impact assessment.

■ **Department for International Trade: Email**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[23132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her departmental IT systems routinely allow officials, advisers and ministers to access private email accounts from their office desktop computers, department-issued laptop computers and mobile phone devices.

**Greg Hands:**

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

The Government Security Group have confirmed that it is government policy not to comment on specific technical security controls; however, the incidental personal use of private email accounts from departmental systems is subject to our IT Acceptable Use policy.

■ **Imports: Brazil**

**Neil Parish:** [\[24953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect on the rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil of British businesses importing resources or products from that country.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

The United Kingdom has a strong history of promoting her values globally.

We continue to support work with indigenous communities across Brazil, including in the Amazon region. We are taking steps domestically to tackle illegal deforestation and, through our Partnership for Forests programme, we are supporting almost 2,000 indigenous people to strengthen their livelihoods through sustainable forest management.

## ■ Shipping: Exports

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[24107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what support her Department is providing to maritime SMEs participating in international export activity.

**Graham Stuart:**

The UK maritime sector is export intensive and contributed £12 billion to the UK's total exports in 2017. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is supporting maritime small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to reach their exporting potential with a range of schemes. The Department recently launched the Internationalisation Fund. The fund, part of the Government's Export Growth Plan and supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), offers eligible SMEs in England between £1,000 - £9,000 in matched funding to help overcome barriers to grow their overseas trading and strengthen their business. This is in addition to a suite of practical, promotional and financial initiatives from DIT to boost exports right across the economy including the Export Academy. DIT is also supporting maritime SMEs through engagement with industry stakeholders and events aimed at enabling companies to export more.

## JUSTICE

### ■ Marriage: Age

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[24179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will hold discussions with Cabinet colleagues on increasing the legal age of marriage to 18 years old.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Government in principle supports raising the legal age of marriage to 18 years of age by removing the ability to marry at age 16 or 17 with parental consent. We will do so when a suitable legislative opportunity arises. In that context, the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Bill was introduced by the hon. member for Bromsgrove on 16 June as a Private Members' Bill. The hon. member for Mid Derbyshire is now sponsoring that Bill and Ministers will meet with her shortly to discuss its provisions. The Government will make its further intentions clear in due course.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### ■ Trade Agreements: Northern Ireland

**Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[25722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps he is taking to encourage businesses in Northern Ireland to buy goods from the rest of the UK in preference to buying them from the EU.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

*[Holding answer 6 July 2021]:* Northern Ireland is an integral part of the United Kingdom, its internal market and customs territory. Northern Ireland's place in our Union is a culmination of the relationships, the commerce, and the history shared across these islands, which we celebrate in Northern Ireland's centenary year. The UK Government is committed to strengthening the economic and business ties between Northern Ireland and Great Britain as well driving up the export of Northern Ireland's excellent goods and services to global markets.

However, as currently operating, the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol is causing significant challenges for people and businesses in Northern Ireland, with the complexity of new requirements seeing goods movements disrupted, trade patterns changing, and businesses stepping away from trading in Northern Ireland. The UK is engaging with the Commission on these issues that are having a real impact on people's lives and livelihoods.

The Government is committed to protecting the UK Internal Market by ensuring that Northern Ireland goods have unfettered access to the rest of the UK. To facilitate the significant trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, we have launched the UK Trader Scheme and the Movement Assistance Scheme to support traders moving goods under the Protocol.

**SCOTLAND**■ **Energy: Scotland****Alan Brown:**[\[27215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to the Answers of 9 and 16 June and 1 July 2021 to Questions 10486, 13125 and 21266 on Energy: Scotland, for what reason he will not publish the information referred to in advance of quarterly reporting; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

I refer the honourable Gentleman to my answer of 1 July to question 21266, to my answer of 16 June to question 13125 and to my answer of 9 June to question 10486. Information about Ministerial meetings with external organisations for the period January to March 2021 is due to be published on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) on 15 July 2021.

**TRANSPORT**■ **High Speed Two: Offices****Philip Davies:**[\[24145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost of HS2 Ltd's office space in London was in (a) each financial year and (b) total since 2018.



**Andrew Stephenson:**

(a) The HS2 Ltd London whole office estate costs are as follows:

2018/19 £7,270,000

2019/20 £5,180,000

2020/21 £5,280,000

Note the figures include rent, VAT on rent, utilities, facilities management costs, National Non Domestic rates and other building costs. Accommodation costs are disclosed in the HS2 Annual Report and Accounts.

(b) The total for the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 £17,730,000

**■ Tees Valley Combined Authority: Finance****Bridget Phillipson:**[\[26104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has received a request from the Tees Valley Combined Authority for additional financial support in respect of the costs associated with Teesside Airport.

**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[26105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to provide financial support to the Tees Valley Combined Authority in respect of the costs associated with Teesside Airport.

**Robert Courts:**

We do not comment on the commercial or financial matters of private firms, because this information is commercially sensitive.

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry because of Covid-19 and firms experiencing difficulties can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor.

This support includes the Airport and Ground Operations Scheme which provides eligible commercial airports and ground operators support towards permitted fixed costs subject to certain conditions. These eligible businesses can claim based on the equivalent of their business rates liabilities, or COVID losses, whichever is lower.

The Scheme originally opened for applications on 29 January for the 2020/21 financial year. In the March Budget, the Chancellor announced a six month renewal to the scheme from 1 April 2021. The renewed scheme opened for applications on 28 May 2021. £86.9m was awarded in grants under the first round of AGOSS, of which £65.1m was awarded to commercial airports. Applications for support under the second round of AGOSS are currently being considered. We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all policies under review.

**■ Travel: Serbia****Munira Wilson:** [\[26167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including Serbia on the covid-19 green list for travel.

**Robert Courts:**

The traffic light system categorises countries based on risk to protect public health and the vaccine rollout from variants of COVID-19. The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) produces risk assessments of countries and territories. Decisions on Red, Amber or Green List assignment and associated border measures are taken by Ministers, who take into account the JBC risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors.

Serbia has been on the Amber list since 17 May 2021. Changes to the country lists are implemented every three weeks, unless concerning evidence means we need to act faster to protect public health.

**TREASURY****■ Business: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:** [\[24260\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to help businesses affected by covid-19 restrictions when business rates are next due.

**Jesse Norman:**

From 1 July, following a 15-month business rates holiday, the Government is providing a new 66% capped relief to eligible properties in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. It is right that businesses start contributing towards business rates as restrictions ease. However, this package recognises the continuing challenges faced by businesses and provides them with certainty of support for the full financial year.

The Government has also made available a wider package of support worth billions which includes an extension to the furlough scheme; extension to VAT cuts; a new UK-wide Recovery Loan Scheme; and enhanced Time to Pay for taxes.

**■ Carbon Emissions****Christian Wakeford:** [\[24381\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in what circumstances low carbon investments pay (a) 20 per cent and (b) five per cent VAT.

**Jesse Norman:**

VAT is a broad-based tax on consumption and the 20 per cent standard rate applies to most goods and services. While there are exceptions to the standard rate, these have always been limited by both legal and fiscal considerations.

One such exception is the reduced rate of VAT of 5 per cent for the installation in residential accommodation of certain energy-saving materials, such as ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps and solar panels, that help to reduce carbon emissions. Detail about the circumstances in which such reliefs apply can be found in VAT Notice 708/6 on energy-saving materials and heating equipment:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vat-on-energy-saving-materials-and-heating-equipment-notice-7086>.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25965]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the attainment of net zero (a) in the UK and (b) globally of the exclusion of firm low-carbon power from the Government's Green Financing Framework.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25966]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to his Green Financing Framework, what assessment he has made of whether net zero is achievable without large scale firm power sources.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25967]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for what reason nuclear energy is not included in the Government's Green Financing Framework; and if he will make a statement.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25968]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of classifying nuclear energy as sustainable for investment purposes.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25969]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the energy market of excluding large-scale firm low carbon energy sources from the Government's Green Financing Framework.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25970]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Government's Green Financing Framework, what assessment he has made of nuclear energy's lifecycle carbon footprint compared to those of (a) wind, (b) solar and (c) gas with carbon capture and storage.

**Charlotte Nichols:** [25971]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the National Infrastructure Strategy, page 52, stating that the Government will continue to consider the potential role of government finance during construction, if he will make an assessment of the compatibility of that statement with the decision not to include nuclear energy in the Government's Green Financing Framework.

**John Glen:**

The government recognises that reaching net zero emissions by 2050 will require power to be generated from low carbon sources. As set out in the Government's

Energy White Paper last autumn, nuclear power will play an important role in achieving net zero. EDF's Hinkley Point C project will be the first nuclear plant in a generation and power up to six million homes once operational.

Some energy sources have been excluded from the UK Government Green Financing Framework, including nuclear energy. This is in line with current international market standards for sovereign green bonds, it does not represent an assessment of what the Government considers 'green' or affect an expenditure's eligibility for traditional financing instruments. We will review the framework on a regular basis with the aim of adhering to best practices in the market.

The Government is developing a UK green taxonomy, which will create a shared understanding of which economic activities count as environmentally sustainable and will establish an Energy Working Group to provide expert advice on the treatment of energy in the taxonomy, including nuclear power.

The Government expects therefore that the energy market and the attainment of net zero in the UK and globally will be unaffected by any exclusions set out in the Green Financing Framework.

## ■ Cryptocurrencies

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[25820\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment has made of the potential (a) merits and (b) risks of cryptocurrencies as a means of payment.

**John Glen:**

The Government launched a consultation on its regulatory approach to cryptoassets and stablecoins on 7 January. This set out the view that new and emerging forms of cryptoassets, known as stablecoins, which seek to stabilise their value, could be used as widespread means of payment and potentially deliver improvements in cross-border transactions. At the same time, depending on scale and nature of use, these developments could pose similar financial stability and consumer risks as traditional regulated payment systems.

The government's proposed approach would make sure stablecoins meet the same high standards we expect of other payment methods. High volatility has been a notable feature of some cryptoassets, making them less suitable for payments and attractive to some holders as a high-risk speculative investment.

The Government is considering responses and will outline next steps in due course. Any steps taken in light of this consultation will aim to balance the potential risk to consumers with the ambition to foster competition and innovation in the sector.

## ■ Employment Agencies

**Owen Thompson:** [24274]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to prohibit the practice of recruitment agencies asking for incentives to recommend contractors to an umbrella company.

**Owen Thompson:** [24275]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure that umbrella companies do not unlawfully deduct employers' taxes from contractors' pay.

**Jesse Norman:**

Like all employers, umbrella companies are responsible for paying employer National Insurance Contributions (NICs) where they are due. Employers cannot, by law, deduct employer NICs from an employee's gross pay. The payment of employer NICs out of the umbrella company's fee may be shown on the same payslip as deductions, such as Income Tax, from the employee's gross pay, meaning that it can look as if an individual is paying the employer NICs, when this is not actually the case.

The Government improved transparency for agency workers by introducing the Key Information Document from 6 April 2020. This sets out a range of pay-related facts, including the minimum rate of pay an agency worker can expect, who pays them, how often they are paid, and if there are any deductions or fees taken from their pay. Any differences between the rate of pay given to the umbrella company by the employment business and the sum given to the agency worker (after fees and deductions) must be accounted for and explained.

When set up and operated correctly, umbrella companies comply with tax and NICs legislation. Umbrella company employees who believe that an umbrella company is not complying with its tax or NICs obligations can report it to HM Revenue and Customs: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/report-fraud-to-hmrc>.

Commercial and loyalty incentive schemes may be a legitimate business-to-business interaction, between an agency and umbrella company, and they are not within the scope of the agency regulations enforced by the Employment Agency Standards (EAS) Inspectorate.

Protecting and enhancing workers' rights through robust regulation, including for those employed by umbrella companies is a priority for the Government. The Government's plans for a new single enforcement body will include umbrella companies in its remit, and will have new powers to tackle non-compliance.

## ■ Government Actuary's Department: Re-employment

**Bridget Phillipson:** [25784]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is

taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the Government Actuary's Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25785\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic at National Savings and Investments; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25786\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the Government Internal Audit Agency; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25787\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic by the National Infrastructure Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260, on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the UK Debt Management Office; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in Reclaim Fund Ltd; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25790\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in The Crown Estate; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25791\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the Financial Conduct Authority; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25792\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the Infrastructure and Projects Authority; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25793\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the Payment Systems Regulator; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25794\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in the Royal Mint; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25795\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in UK Asset Resolution Limited; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25796\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in UK Government Investments; and if he will make a statement.

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[25797\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 15260 on Civil Service Agencies: Standards, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that fire and rehire is not being used as a negotiating tactic in his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has been clear that using an approach which threatens to 'fire and rehire' staff is not acceptable as a negotiation tactic. HM Treasury is committed to maintaining the reputation of the Civil Service as a good employer and does not use this approach as a negotiation tactic.

Government departments are responsible for ensuring that terms and conditions of employment for civil servants are in accordance with the rules of Civil Service Management Code. The Civil Service Management Code only binds organisations that employ civil servants. Departments covered by the Civil Service Management Code are obliged to submit to the Cabinet Office workforce proposals or



arrangements which are contentious or raise questions of propriety (which is made clear in paragraph 4).

Our Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) are responsible for managing their own staff but are governed by the Framework document that sets out the remit and governance arrangements for each ALB. ALBs are also governed by the Civil Service Management Code if they employ Civil Servants.

#### ■ Heating: VAT

**Christian Wakeford:** [\[24382\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue has been raised from VAT on heat pumps.

**Jesse Norman:**

HMRC do not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products or services because businesses are not required to provide figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.

#### ■ Insurance: Business

**Gareth Thomas:** [\[25171\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 21130 on Insurance: Business, if he will publish the (a) name and (b) value at transfer of each of the businesses subject to a Part VII transfer since 2008; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Treasury does not hold the requested information and the question has been passed to the Prudential Regulation Authority who will reply directly to the Honourable Member by letter. I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 1 July 2021 to Question 21130.

#### ■ Retail Trade: Non-domestic Rates

**Stuart Anderson:** [\[25158\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of business rates on retail unit vacancy.

**Jesse Norman:**

Eligible businesses in the retail sector have paid no business rates in the 15 months to 1 July 2021, and over 90% of businesses will have their rates bills cut by 75% across the year in 2021-22. The Government has also decided to freeze the business rates multiplier in 2021-22, saving businesses in England an estimated £575m over the next five years.

The Fundamental Review of Business Rates will consider ideas for reform on all elements of the business rates system and the Review will conclude in the autumn.



## ■ Self-employed: Government Assistance

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[24259\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support is available to self-employed people who have been ineligible for Government covid-19 support schemes to date to restart their business.

**Jesse Norman:**

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK.

The Government put in place a very substantial package of support through the furlough and self-employed income support schemes (SEISS), support for businesses through grants and loans, business rates and VAT relief.

The Government acknowledges that it has not been possible to support everyone as they might want, and that the rules, criteria and conditions needed to ensure the effective operation of the SEISS have meant that some people did not qualify. The design of the SEISS, including the eligibility requirement that an individual's trading income must be at least equal to their non-trading income, means it is targeted at those who are most reliant on their self-employment income.

The SEISS is also just one element of a substantial package of support for the self-employed. The self-employed may also have access to other support available, including Restart Grants, the Recovery Loan scheme, business rates relief, and other business support schemes.

## ■ Treasury: Email

**Bridget Phillipson:** [\[26102\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 23166 on Treasury: Email, if he will place in the Library a copy of all the Acceptable Use policies currently in force for technology used by HM Treasury civil servants and special advisers.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

It is Departmental policy not to publish the content of our security related policies externally.

## ■ Treasury: Energy

**Ruth Jones:** [\[25145\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 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.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Details of HM Treasury's energy use and associated costs in 1 Horse Guard's Road can be found in the Treasury's Annual report and Accounts:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-annual-report>. Details on our energy use can be found on page 234.

The Annual Report for 2020-21 will be published later in the year and this will include the costs of energy for 2020-21.

For the financial year 2021-22, costs are expected to be in line with the trend provided in the Annual Report and Accounts referenced above.

Details on the energy usage in the Treasury's Norwich office is not readily available as this information is held by the landlord, the Government Property Agency.

## WALES

### ■ Wales Office: Energy

**Ruth Jones:** [\[25154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, 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.

**David T C Davies:**

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales is committed to reducing our energy usage to help achieve the UK's net-zero emissions target. The Office incurred the following costs for energy usage in the financial years listed:

FINANCIAL YEAR	COST
2018-19	£20,931
2019-20	£17,155
2020-21	£12,017

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

### ■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

**Mr Richard Holden:** [\[902463\]](#)

What discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on bringing forward legislative proposals to ban virginity testing.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

This Government shares the concern about virginity testing. The World Health Organisation is clear that it has no scientific merit and is a violation of human rights. That is why we have conducted a review into virginity testing and hymenoplasty.

Ministers from DHSC, Home Office and DfE met recently to discuss the review's findings and any legislative proposals. These will be published in the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

## ■ Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[23324\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment she has made of the accuracy of the data and evidence used in the March 2021 report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities took an evidence-led approach, using quantitative data and qualitative research drawn from a number of sources which are referenced throughout the document. This includes statistical datasets derived from the Race Disparity Unit's 'Ethnicity Facts and Figures' website, other Government sources and a range of already published analysis from within and outside Government.

The Government is currently considering the Commission's report and the evidence it considered in shaping its recommendations, and we will respond later in the summer.

## ■ Maternal Mortality: Ethnic Groups

**Catherine McKinnell:**

[\[24176\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what steps the Race Disparity Unit has taken to support the Department of Health and Social Care in reducing maternal mortality rates among black women.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The government is committed to understanding and addressing the ethnic disparities in maternal mortality rates. Maternal deaths are fortunately rare and overall women's experiences of maternity care are positive, but it remains important we encourage every expectant mother to engage with NHS maternity services so they get the support they are entitled to.

I have been supporting the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) in this area since last summer. This includes co-hosting a roundtable discussion on maternal mortality rates for ethnic minority women in September 2020, which identified the need for more intelligent use of data to target action.

Following this, officials in the Race Disparity Unit have been working with DHSC colleagues to understand how data can be disaggregated and flow more easily among NHS agencies, and research bodies. They have also been supporting DHSC officials on initiatives such as the new £7.6m Health and Wellbeing Fund that will support 19 projects to reduce health inequalities among new mothers and babies.

## ■ Sexual Harassment: Employment

**Ruth Jones:** [\[23327\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent progress she has made on publishing the Government's response to its consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Ruth Jones:** [\[23328\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the trade unions on the Government's consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Ruth Jones:** [\[23329\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with local government on the Government's consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace focussed on ensuring that laws to protect people from harassment at work are operating effectively. We received 133 responses to our technical consultation, including from the LGA and a range of trade unions.

We have considered all of the responses received and listened carefully to the experiences shared through this consultation. We will be setting out the Government's response shortly, and officials continue to engage with a range of stakeholders as they consider next steps.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Child Maintenance Service

**Alyn Smith:** [\[25157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will provide a definition of the term temporary as used by the Child Maintenance Service.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Child Maintenance Service uses the term temporary as a definition of a measure which lasts for a limited time. This is opposed to something which is permanent.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[27228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to support low income parents in their navigation of the Child Maintenance Service to secure adequate contact arrangements.

**Guy Opperman:**

Issues regarding contact are handled by the family courts. The Child Maintenance Service responsibility is limited to maintenance payments.

Where possible the Child Maintenance Service supports separated parents to work together in the interests of their children and set up their own family based child maintenance arrangements. Child Maintenance Options provides free and impartial information to help with these decisions.

#### ■ Child Maintenance Service: Standards

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[27227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Child Maintenance Service in considering the period a child spends with each parent when calculating the child maintenance payments.

**Guy Opperman:**

No recent assessment has been made.

We believe that this approach strikes a balance between reflecting extra costs incurred by the paying parent and providing stability of maintenance payments.

Reductions are made for the extra cost of care where it is shared by the paying parent. The paying parent must have overnight care of any qualifying children for at least 52 nights a year. The amount of child maintenance payable is reduced to a maximum of fifty per cent based on the number of days' overnight care is provided over a 12-month period.

#### ■ Children: Maintenance

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[27224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made a recent estimate of the cost of raising children of different ages for the purposes of calculating child maintenance payments.

**Guy Opperman:**

Child maintenance is calculated based on several factors including the number of children to ensure that the calculation is fair and affordable. The Department continues to keep the policies under review.

**Rachael Maskell:** [\[27226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Justice on the provision of legal aid in child maintenance cases.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Secretary of State has not had any recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Justice this issue.

## ■ Children: Poverty

**Grahame Morris:**

[24947]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2019-20, published by Loughborough University Centre for Research and Social Policy in May 2021, if she will commission a report to identify the reasons for the North East experiencing the largest increase in England in child poverty from 2014-15 to 2019-20.

**Will Quince:**

*[Holding answer 5 July 2021]:* No.

The Loughborough University Centre for Research and Social Policy report 'Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2019/20' makes an assessment of poverty figures based on relative poverty. This Government believes, and has always believed, that absolute poverty is a better measure of living standards than relative poverty which can provide counter-intuitive results. In particular, relative poverty tends to fall when median income shrinks, such as during economic downturns, which is particularly relevant in the current circumstances.

To monitor poverty for different groups and regions the Department publishes the annual Households Below Average Incomes (HBAI) publication which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-for-financial-years-ending-1995-to-2020>

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.

As the economy recovers, our ambition is to help parents move into, and progress in, work as quickly as possible, based on clear evidence around the importance of parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty. The In Work Progression Commission published their report on the barriers to progression for those in persistent low pay on 1 July 2021.

Government will consider the recommendations and respond later in the year.

## ■ Food Banks

**Kate Osamor:**

[25107]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish data on the number of welfare benefit claimants who use food banks.

**Will Quince:**

Food banks are independent charitable organisations and there is no consistent and accurate measure of food bank usage. We take the issue of food insecurity seriously, which is why we added internationally used food security questions to the Family Resources Survey in 19/20 and published the data in March this year.

In addition, from April 2021 we introduced a set of questions into the Family Resources Survey (FRS) on food bank usage. The first results of these questions are expected to be published in March 2023 subject to usual quality assurance.

## ■ Funeral Payments

**Paul Blomfield:** [\[24950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of amending the rules governing eligibility for the Funeral Expenses Payment to provide discretion for another close family member to be granted the payment in circumstances where the partner of the deceased is unable or unwilling to take responsibility for a funeral.

**Guy Opperman:**

There are no current plans to amend the eligibility criteria for Funeral Expenses Payment.

To receive support through the Funeral Expenses Payment scheme, a person must be in receipt of a qualifying income-related benefit and be the person responsible for making the funeral arrangements. In cases where the deceased has a surviving partner, they are considered to be the responsible person. Where there is no surviving partner or the surviving partner was estranged from the deceased at the time of death, an immediate family member (parent or child), a close relative or a close friend may be considered for help through the scheme.

Where the surviving partner of the deceased was not estranged but is unable to act on their own behalf, a person, or a body of people, may apply to act on their behalf as an appointee. If a surviving partner is able to act on their own behalf and but is not estranged or willing to take responsibility for the funeral arrangements, a Funeral Expenses Payment cannot be awarded to another family member. They could, however, apply for a Budgeting Loan or a Universal Credit Budgeting Advance to help pay towards the cost of a funeral, if they meet the eligibility criteria.

In certain circumstances, Public Health funerals are provided by local authorities.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[24286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many assessments for (a) personal independence payment, (b) universal credit and (c) employment support allowance her Department has carried out by video call since March 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

From November 2020 to date, 930 Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments and 760 Work Capability Assessments (WCA) have been carried out by video call. We are unable to break down the WCAs into Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance.

Video assessments were introduced, along with telephone assessments, as part of the Covid-19 response, however video assessments are still in the trial stage. The experience and feedback from the trial will inform wider roll out and initially participation in video assessments will be limited, and by invitation only. Video assessments, where appropriate, have taken place alongside telephone and paper based assessments, which have been carried out successfully throughout the pandemic. In addition, face to face assessments resumed in May.

\*All volumes have been rounded to the nearest 10.

All of the above data is derived from management information produced by the Assessment Providers.

Please note: the above data is derived from unpublished management information which is collected for internal Departmental use only and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics Publication standards.

**Vicky Foxcroft:**

[\[24287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of assessments for (a) personal independence payment, (b) universal credit and (c) employment support allowance were carried out by video call in each of the last three months.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

We are currently exploring alternative ways of conducting health assessments as part of the Covid-19 response, and this includes a trial of video assessments.

Stage one of the video trial for Work Capability Assessment (WCA), which includes assessments for Universal Credit (UC) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), was completed in March 2021 and the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) trial is still ongoing. The experience and feedback from the trials will inform wider roll out and initially participation in video assessments will be limited and by invitation only.

Video assessments, where appropriate, have taken place alongside telephone and paper based assessments, which have been carried out successfully throughout the pandemic. In addition, face to face assessments resumed in May.

	<b>PIP</b>	<b>PROPORTION OF VIDEO ASSESSMENTS MONTH UNDERTAKEN</b>
March 2021	0.09%	
April 2021	0.29%	
May 2021	0.43%	



	<b>WCA (INCLUDING UC &amp; ESA)</b>	<b>PROPORTION OF VIDEO ASSESSMENTS MONTH UNDERTAKEN</b>
March 2021	0.26%	
April 2021	0.00%	
May 2021	0.00%	

All volumes have been rounded to the nearest 10.

All of the above data is derived from management information produced by the assessment providers.

Please note: the above data is derived from unpublished management information which is collected for internal departmental use only and has not been quality assured to Official Statistics Publication standards.

## ■ Universal Credit

**Kate Osamor:**

[\[25106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of ending the £20 uplift to universal credit on universal credit claimants.

**Will Quince:**

No assessment has been made.

The £20 per week uplift to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit was announced by the Chancellor as a temporary measure in March 2020 to support those facing the most financial disruption as a result of the public health emergency. A further 6 month extension announced to the uplift was announced in March at this year's Spring Budget, and more than £9bn will have been spent on it by the time it ends, well beyond the end of the roadmap.

As the Government has done throughout this pandemic, it will continue to assess how best to support individuals and businesses as the situation develops.

We are committed to supporting families most in need, spending billions more on welfare and planning a long-term route out of poverty by helping people increase their hours in employment or find new work through our Plan for Jobs.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Life Sciences Vision

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Business and Industry) and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment) (Nadhim Zahawi):** [\[HCWS156\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Innovation) (Lord Bethell), has made the following written statement:

In 'Build Back Better: our plan for growth', the Government committed to publishing a series of Sector Visions that back the sectors and technologies that will shape the UK's future. I am delighted to announce the publication of the first of these, on Life Sciences.

The Life Sciences Vision sets our ambitious plans, jointly developed by Government, the NHS and the sector, to maintain the UK's position as a global Life Sciences leader. It builds on the successes of the science and research response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in vaccines and research, and benefits from new regulatory freedoms and opportunities now that we have left the European Union.

The policy content of the Vision focusses on three areas: 1) Science and Research, capitalising on the UK's deep industrial and academic expertise, and realising the significant potential of Genomics and Health Data to consolidate the UK's status as a world leader in research; 2) NHS as an Innovation Partner, ensuring the NHS is using the latest and most innovative science and technology; and 3) Business Environment, making sure the incentives are right for life science companies to start, grow and invest in the UK.

The Vision also highlights seven core disease and technology areas where there is an opportunity for Government, industry, the NHS, medical research charities and academia to work together to meaningfully improve treatment options. These key disease areas are: Cancer, Dementia, Mental Health, Obesity, Ageing, Respiratory Disease and Vaccines.

The pandemic shows the importance of a flourishing Life Sciences sector to resilience and economic growth across the nations and regions of the UK. This Vision will plot the course for the UK to maintain its global leadership in this important sector.

In developing this Vision, we have undertaken extensive engagement with stakeholders representing small and large businesses, charities, patient interest groups, and businesses representative organisations around the country, as well as the NHS and the devolved administrations. We will continue to do so as we begin to develop our implementation plans.

**TREASURY****■ Finance Bill 2021-22 L-day update****The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman):****[\[HCWS155\]](#)**

The Government will introduce the Finance Bill following the next Budget.

In line with the approach to tax policy making set out in the Government's documents 'Tax Policy Making: a new approach', published in 2010, and 'The new Budget timetable and the tax policy making process', published in 2017, the Government is committed, where possible, to publishing most tax legislation in draft for technical consultation before the legislation is laid before Parliament.

The Government will publish draft clauses for the next Finance Bill, which will largely cover pre-announced policy changes, on Tuesday 20 July along with accompanying explanatory notes, tax information and impact notes, responses to consultations and other supporting documents. All publications will be available on the GOV.UK website.