



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 12 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:35 P.M., 12 July 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	7	■ Social Security: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	7	■ Veterans: Zero Hours Contracts	20
■ Business: Coronavirus	7	COP26	20
■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Electric Vehicles	7	■ Climate Action Implementation Committee	20
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	8	■ Forests	21
■ Electricity: Storage	8	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Children	21
■ Energy Performance Certificates	9	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Sustainable Development	22
■ Hospitality Industry: Ministers	9	■ Wind Power: International Cooperation	22
■ Housing: Carbon Emissions	10	DEFENCE	23
■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries	10	■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations	23
■ Minimum Wage: Enforcement	11	■ Ajax Vehicles	23
■ Renewable Energy: Finance	11	■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement	23
CABINET OFFICE	12	■ Ajax Vehicles: Testing	24
■ Civil Servants: Location	12	■ Antiship Missiles	25
■ Coronavirus: Death	13	■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus	25
■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Freedom of Information	13	■ Armed Forces: Mental Health Services	25
■ Elections: Proof of Identity	13	■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences	26
■ Lord Bethell	14	■ Gurkhas: Pensions	27
■ Motor Vehicles: Export Duties	14		

■ Gurkhas: Universal Credit	28	■ Schools: Coronavirus	45
■ Military Aid: Coronavirus	28	■ Schools: Discipline	47
■ Military Decorations	29	■ Schools: Inspections	48
■ Ministry of Defence: Correspondence	29	■ Special Educational Needs: Reviews	48
■ National Flagship	29	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	49
■ Navy: Mesothelioma	29	■ Agriculture	49
■ Veterans: Employment	30	■ Badgers: Disease Control	49
■ Yemen: Military Intervention	30	■ Beverage Containers: Recycling	50
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	31	■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control	50
■ Charities: Bank Services	31	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Correspondence	52
■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	32	■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Energy	52
■ Events Industry: Coronavirus	32	■ Heating: Refrigerators	53
■ Exercise: Children	34	■ Morrisons: Takeovers	53
■ Film: Highlands of Scotland	34	■ Pigeon Racing	53
■ Musicians: Travel	35	■ Plants: Imports	54
■ Playing Fields: Sales	36	■ Plastics	55
■ Public Libraries: Coronavirus	36	■ Seafood Exports Working Group	56
■ Small Businesses: Cybercrime	37	■ Waste Disposal: Abandoned Vehicles	56
■ Sports: Coronavirus	37	■ Water Supply: Germany	57
■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure	38	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	58
■ Wembley Stadium: Coronavirus	39	■ Belarus: Political Prisoners	58
EDUCATION	40	■ Bolivia: Overseas Aid	58
■ Academies	40	■ British Overseas Territories: Seas and Oceans	59
■ Department for Education: Recycling	40	■ Cameroon: Peace Negotiations	59
■ Education: Coronavirus	40		
■ Education: Counter-terrorism	42		
■ LGBT People: Education	42		
■ Pupils: Absenteeism	43		
■ Pupils: Coronavirus	44		
■ Schools: Admissions	45		

■ China: Falun Gong	60	■ Prisoners: Torture	72
■ China: Genocide	60	■ Russian: Money Laundering	72
■ China: Import Controls	60	■ Tigray: Armed Conflict	72
■ Cyprus: Turkey	61	■ Tigray: Sexual Offences	73
■ Developing Countries	62	■ Travel: Coronavirus	73
■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus	62	■ Ukraine: Overseas Aid	73
■ Development Aid: Education	62	■ West Papua: Human Rights	74
■ EU Countries: Press Freedom	63	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	74
■ Famagusta: Turkey	63	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	74
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: EU Countries	64	■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Children	75
■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Human Rights	64	■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Lancashire	75
■ Georgia: LGBT People	65	■ Arthritis: Coronavirus	75
■ Global Partnership for Education	65	■ Cancer	76
■ Hong Kong: British National (Overseas)	66	■ Cancer: Waiting Lists	76
■ Human Rights	66	■ Coronavirus: Screening	76
■ Integrated Activity Fund	67	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	77
■ Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser and Mohammad Said Hamayel	67	■ Counselling: Children	80
■ Jerusalem: Armed Conflict	67	■ Dental Health: Pupils	80
■ Jerusalem: Palestinians	68	■ Dental Services	81
■ Kashmir: Riot Control Weapons	68	■ Dental Services: Coronavirus	82
■ Myanmar: Overseas Aid	69	■ Dermatology: Children	82
■ Overseas Aid	69	■ DNACPR Decisions	82
■ Overseas Aid: Press Freedom	70	■ Eating Disorders: Health Services	83
■ Palestinians: Children's Rights	70	■ Food: Advertising	83
■ Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review	71	■ Hospitals: Consultants	84
		■ Integrated Care Systems	84
		■ Maternity Services	84
		■ Medicine: Education	85
		■ Members: Correspondence	85
		■ Mental Health Services: Finance	86

■ Mental Health: Children and Young People	86
■ NHS: Drugs	86
■ NHS: Quarantine	87
■ Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust: Maternity Services	87
■ Pregnancy: Coronavirus	88
■ Travel: Coronavirus	88
HOME OFFICE	89
■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	89
■ Antisocial Behaviour: Sports	92
■ Asylum	93
■ Asylum: Housing	93
■ Forensic Science: Private Sector	94
■ Fraud: Mobile Phones	94
■ Hate Crime: Ethnic Groups	95
■ Immigration: Afghanistan	95
■ Immigration: EU Nationals	96
■ Immigration: Hong Kong	97
■ Migrants: Detainees	98
■ Police	98
■ Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill	99
■ Primates: Animal Experiments	99
■ Refugees: Resettlement	100
■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships: Welsh Language	100
■ UK Border Force: Boats	101
■ UK Border Force: Finance	101
■ Visas: Turkey	102
■ Windrush Generation: Compensation	102

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	102
■ All Party Groups: Finance	102
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	103
■ Antisocial Behaviour	103
■ Building Safety Fund	103
■ Community Ownership Fund	103
■ Community Ownership Fund: Community Ownership Fund: Devolution	104
■ Community Ownership Fund: Scotland	104
■ Environmental Health: Recruitment	104
■ Hate Crime	105
■ Housing: Insulation	105
■ Housing: South of England	106
■ Immigration: Hong Kong	106
■ Kingspan Group: Insulation	107
■ Local Government Services: Noise	107
■ Migrant Workers: Hong Kong	108
■ Permitted Development Rights	108
■ Private Rented Housing: Housing Benefit	109
■ Public Lavatories: Disability	109
■ Travellers: Caravan Sites	109
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	110
■ Department for International Trade: Correspondence	110
■ Department for International Trade: Treaties	110
■ Overseas Trade: China	110
■ Trade Agreements: Australia	110
■ TRIPS Agreement	111

■ World Expo: United Arab Emirates	112	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests	121
JUSTICE	112	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Facilities	121
■ Downview Prison	112	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment	122
■ Drugs: Crime	113	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment and Training	122
■ Family Proceedings	113	■ Large Goods Vehicles: Driving Tests	123
■ Judiciary: Training	114	■ Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Boats	123
■ Legal Aid Scheme: Domestic Violence	115	■ Motor Vehicles: Speed Limits	123
■ Prosecutions	115	■ Musicians: EU Countries	124
■ Sex Offender Treatment Programme: Gender Recognition	115	■ Railway Stations: Disability	124
NORTHERN IRELAND	116	■ Railways and Trams	125
■ Northern Ireland Government	116	■ Roads: Batley and Spen	125
PRIME MINISTER	116	■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance	125
■ Ministers: Conduct	116	■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions	126
SCOTLAND	117	■ Transport: Coronavirus	126
■ Scotland Office: Correspondence	117	■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus	126
TRANSPORT	117	■ Travel Restrictions: Pakistan	127
■ Bridges: Northern Ireland and Scotland	117	■ Travel: Coronavirus	127
■ Bus Services: Highlands of Scotland	117	■ Travel: Cyprus	127
■ Car Sharing	117	■ Vehicle Number Plates	128
■ Cycling: West Yorkshire	118	TREASURY	129
■ Department for Transport: Electric Vehicles	118	■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	129
■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards	119	■ Corporation Tax	129
■ Driving Tests: Large Goods Vehicles	120	■ Gift Aid	130
■ Dual Carriageways and Motorways	120	■ Net Zero Review	130
■ High Speed Two	120	■ Pensions: Terminal Illnesses	130
		■ Social Enterprises: Government Assistance	131

■ Treasury: Electric Vehicles	131	■ Personal Independence	
■ UK Trade with EU: VAT	132	Payment: Long Covid	137
WALES	132	■ Social Security Benefits:	
■ Wales Office: Correspondence	132	Disability	138
WOMEN AND EQUALITIES	132	■ Universal Credit	138
■ Gay Conversion Therapy	132	■ Universal Credit: Lone Parents	139
WORK AND PENSIONS	133	■ Universal Credit: Newport East	139
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	133	■ Work Capability Assessment	139
■ Employment and Income:		WRITTEN STATEMENTS	141
Young People	134	CABINET OFFICE	141
■ Industrial Health and Safety:		■ English Votes for English Laws	141
Batteries	134	EDUCATION	142
■ Members: Correspondence	135	■ Education Update	142
■ National Insurance	135	TREASURY	143
■ Occupational Health	135	■ Treasury Update	143
■ Pension Credit: Wales	136	WORK AND PENSIONS	145
■ Pensions	136	■ Employment and Support	
■ Personal Independence		Allowance	145
Payment: Appeals	136		

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

■ **Business: Coronavirus**

Sarah Olney:

[28287]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to support businesses ineligible for the expanded retail discount scheme for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses.

Paul Scully:

On 25 March, the Government announced an additional £1.5 billion relief for ratepayers who have not been able to access existing relief throughout the pandemic. The new £1.5 billion relief will enable councils to provide a meaningful and certain level of support to those most affected.

Further funding has been made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) to support those businesses that have had their trade adversely affected. Local Authorities in England have been allocated £2bn in this additional discretionary funding, to provide support that best suits their area. It should be used as quickly as possible when and where most needed. The FAQs issued to Local Authorities on 6 May reiterate that ARG funding can be used as a top-up for businesses that are in receipt of grants under other schemes.

Additionally, the Government have extended the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeiture for the non-payment of rent to the 25 March 2022 and we will introduce legislation to help landlords and tenants resolve historic Covid-19 rent debt through binding arbitration if necessary.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Electric Vehicles**

Kerry McCarthy:

[28987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department for Government business are electric vehicles.

Amanda Solloway:

BEIS currently has contracts with the Government Car Service, which is a division within the Department for Transport, for the provision of two cars. The vehicles supplied to BEIS by the Government Car Service are owned and operated by the Department for Transport and are leased by BEIS.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-car-service>.

The vehicle fuel type can vary depending on which car has been allocated to cover on that day. Generally, the cars are electric or hybrid.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Virginia Crosbie:

[29167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on increasing the number of electric vehicle public charging points across the UK to meet the Climate Change Committee's recommendation of 150,000 points by 2025.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department regularly engages with the Department for Transport on tackling climate change and delivering our net zero commitments.

The Government is investing £1.3 billion in accelerating the roll out of charging infrastructure over the next four years, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major roads, and installing more on-street chargepoints near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. Our grant schemes and the £400 million Charging Infrastructure Investment Fund will see thousands more electric vehicle charge-points installed across the UK.

Government and industry have supported the installation of almost 25,000 publicly available charging devices. This includes more than 4,500 rapid devices. In order to ensure the private sector can continue to expand the charging network at pace in the 2020s, the Government will invest £950 million in future proofing grid capacity along the Strategic Road Network and launching a £90 million Local EV Infrastructure Fund to support the roll out of large on-street schemes and potentially rapid charging hubs in England.

However, we have not set an overall target for the number of chargepoints. Having a "target" number risks assuming technology stands still and creating a uniform approach to charging mixes and needs across the country.

Later this year we will publish an EV Infrastructure Strategy to set out the vision and action plan for charging infrastructure rollout needed to achieve the 2030/35 phase out successfully.

■ Electricity: Storage

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [29035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of undertaking a Strategic Environmental Assessment into the hazards of mass deployment of lithium-ion batteries for grid storage.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There are mechanisms in place at a local level to assess the environmental impacts and benefits of lithium-ion battery storage projects. Any applications for such projects will be carefully assessed by relevant decision-makers against all relevant criteria.

■ Energy Performance Certificates

Helen Hayes:

[\[28269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Energy Performance Certificates in assessing carbon emissions in traditional buildings built before 1919.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for existing dwellings are generated through the Reduced data Standard Assessment Procedure (RdSAP). EPC assessors collect and input data on the fixed components of the building during an on-site assessment. RdSAP uses this data to model energy performance and generate recommendations tailored to the property to improve the EPC rating. Though EPCs use a cost metric, RdSAP also generates an estimate of the building's annual CO₂ emissions to be displayed on the EPC. We are continuing to keep the metrics displayed on EPCs under review as we develop policies to decarbonise homes.

Previously there was an update to RdSAP in 2017 to update the U-value of uninsulated solid brick walls (the wall type most often found in pre-1919 dwellings) to take into account BEIS solid wall research which found these types of walls performed significantly better on average than previously assumed. We have now commenced work on the development of the next version of RdSAP, in line with changes to the energy system, to ensure it continues to be an accurate, effective, and transparent tool.

Furthermore, we are continuing to deliver the commitments in our EPC Action Plan, published last year, to maximise the effectiveness of EPCs as a tool to help improve the energy performance of buildings. This includes considering the additional training requirements for assessors to assess traditional buildings and reviewing the recommendations on EPCs to ensure suitability for older property types.

■ Hospitality Industry: Ministers

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[28159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to create a minister for hospitality.

Paul Scully:

Responsibility for the hospitality sector is split between the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS). BEIS is responsible for cafés, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs, while DCMS is responsible for hospitality accommodation, given the close links to tourism.

Within BEIS, we have a dedicated hospitality sector support team, and hospitality has been recognised formally as a key part of my ministerial portfolio.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Helen Hayes:

[28268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of developing a strategy for decarbonising traditional domestic buildings that were built before 1919.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There is a package of policies, including grants, incentives, and advice, currently in place to support low income and fuel poor households, as well as to encourage investment in decarbonisation and energy efficiency improvements within the domestic housing stock. This package includes grant funding delivered via local authorities (including the Local Authority Delivery Scheme, Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Home Upgrade Grant). The Energy Company Obligation is not a grant scheme, but an obligation on the largest energy suppliers to deliver heating and energy efficiency measures to low income and vulnerable and fuel poor households.

Traditional properties built before 1919 will be eligible for upgrades through these schemes. Advice is also provided through the Simple Energy Advice service. We are consulting on requirements for lenders to support homeowners to improve the energy performance of their homes.

Further, the most recent PAS2035 and PAS 2030:2019 standards set out clear requirements for retrofitting homes built before 1919 to ensure that the most appropriate measures are installed for the building. The risk assessment in the standard is used to help the installers and designers take into consideration the age of the building and any features of heritage or design that need to be considered when upgrading these buildings.

■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[29000]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to trials, pilots and full-scale projects underway in countries including France, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Italy on using hydrogen to produce primary steel, what steps she is taking to ensure steel production in the UK keeps pace with international competitors on developing and using clean steel production technology.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The UK is monitoring international progress on low carbon steel making trials, using hydrogen and other technologies, and is actively engaged in international initiatives to support industrial decarbonisation innovation, including the Mission Innovation platform and the Leadership Group for Industry Transition.

Decarbonising UK industry is a core part of the Government's ambitious plan for the green industrial revolution. The Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, published on 17 March, commits government to work with the Steel Council to consider the

implications of the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to 'set targets for ore-based steelmaking to reach near-zero emissions by 2035'. The Steel Council is a forum for Government, industry and trade unions to work together on the shared objective of creating a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future for the sector. Hydrogen-based steelmaking is one of the technological approaches being examined as part of this process.

The UK steel sector will be given the opportunity to bid into industrial fuel switching innovation programmes under the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio (NZIP), which is intended to promote switching away from more carbon-intensive fuel sources. The Government has also announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the UK steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production, through investment in new technologies and processes.

■ **Minimum Wage: Enforcement**

Gill Furniss:

[\[29123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to create a single enforcement body for the enforcement of the national minimum wage.

Paul Scully:

HM Revenue and Customs already effectively enforces the minimum wage. Since 2015, HMRC has ordered employers to return £100m to 1 million workers who had been underpaid.

The Government have been unequivocal in our commitment to protect and enhance workers' rights as build back better from the pandemic and to bring forward legislative proposals to better protect vulnerable workers and create a level playing-field for the majority of employers complying with the law.

As laid out in our manifesto, legislating to establish a Single Enforcement Body for employment rights will be a central part of our efforts to achieve this ambition.

We have already made good progress on this by publishing our response to the consultation, which sets out high level proposals for the body. As laid out in our response, this new single enforcement body will bring together three existing bodies: the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, and HMRC's National Minimum Wage Enforcement.

We will bring forward further detailed proposals in due course, and in the meantime continue to work with stakeholders to take necessary action to support businesses and protect jobs.

■ **Renewable Energy: Finance**

Ian Murray:

[\[28149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his Department's latest estimate is of the savings that will be delivered for consumers from

the successful projects in Contracts for Difference Allocation Round 3 in each of the 15 years of their Contracts for Difference.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As part of the evaluation of Contracts for Difference (CfD), we have carried out some analysis on the estimated saving of successful projects in CfD Allocation Round 3 in comparison to the Renewables Obligation. This analysis will be published in due course.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Civil Servants: Location

Rachel Hopkins: [\[28376\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the Places for Growth programme on (a) civil servants with protected characteristics and (b) non-departmental public body staff with protected characteristics.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[28377\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Places for Growth programme does not disproportionately adversely effect (a) civil servants with protected characteristics and (b) non-departmental public body staff with protected characteristics.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[28378\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Places for Growth programme equality impact assessment.

Rachel Hopkins: [\[28379\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions his Department has had with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on the effect of the Places for Growth programme on EHRC staff with protected characteristics.

Julia Lopez:

The Government has committed to relocating 22,000 roles from London across the UK, ensuring the Civil Service is representative of the communities it serves, bringing more diversity of thought into policy-making. The Places for Growth portfolio is at the heart of delivering this agenda.

Places for Growth has adopted an approach that is aimed to capture the broadest view of diversity and inclusion, whilst considering the characteristics protected under law. The portfolio is committed to ensuring that the focus of the portfolio and departments is much wider and remains committed to greater socioeconomic

diversity, greater regional diversity and to create clusters and critical mass where we can effectively harness cognitive diversity to enable decision making.

■ **Coronavirus: Death**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[28973\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many people died between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 with covid-19 being mentioned on the death certificate; and how many of those people were (a) over 65 and (b) had underlying health conditions.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ28973 [UKSA's final response to PQ28973.pdf]

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

Cat Smith:

[\[26116\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 21937, how many requests for advice on handling freedom of information requests the central Cabinet Office Clearing House received in 2020-21.

Chloe Smith:

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

■ **Elections: Proof of Identity**

Catherine West:

[\[29119\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed Voter ID reforms on the number of eligible voters in Haringey.

Chloe Smith:

Everyone who is eligible to vote will have the opportunity to do so.

Any voter who does not have one of the wide range of accepted documents will be able to apply for a free, locally issued Voter Card from their local authority.

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

■ **Lord Bethell****Angela Rayner:** [29060]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to take steps in response to the late inclusion of ministerial meetings in transparency returns and the reported use of private email accounts for Government business by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Innovation).

Chloe Smith:

The Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office set out the Government's position in [her response](#) on 28 June 2021.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Export Duties****Sir Desmond Swayne:** [28042]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will take steps to ensure that EU member states do not charge duty on classic vehicles which are exempt under the terms of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Penny Mordaunt:

UK officials are working with their EU counterparts to ensure the Trade and Cooperation Agreement is implemented in full, including that duties are not applied to goods that meet the rules of origin requirements in the Agreement. We recognise that this can be a particular issue with classic cars. Both the UK and EU have issued extensive guidance on how businesses can evidence origin in line with the terms of the Agreement. The Agreement also establishes a Specialised Committee on customs and rules of origin, which is due to meet before the end of the year, through which we can consider implementation issues.

■ **Social Security: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement****Alan Brown:** [25866]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Working Group on Social Security Coordination.

Alan Brown: [25867]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Working Group on Organic Products.

Alan Brown: [25868]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24

December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Working Group on Motor Vehicles and Parts.

Alan Brown: [\[25869\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Working Group on Medicinal Products.

Alan Brown: [\[25870\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade.

Alan Brown: [\[25871\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Goods.

Alan Brown: [\[25872\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Customs Cooperation and Rules of Origin.

Alan Brown: [\[25873\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

Alan Brown: [\[25874\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Services, Investment and Digital Trade.

Alan Brown: [\[25875\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Intellectual Property.

Alan Brown: [\[25876\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Public Procurement.

Alan Brown: [\[25877\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Regulatory Cooperation.

Alan Brown: [\[25878\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Level Playing Field for Open and Fair Competition.

Alan Brown: [\[25879\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Trade Specialised Committee on Administrative Cooperation in VAT and Recovery of Taxes and Duties.

Alan Brown: [\[25880\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Specialised Committee on Energy.

Alan Brown: [\[25881\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Specialised Committee on Air Transport.

Alan Brown: [\[25882\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Specialised Committee on Aviation Safety.

Alan Brown: [\[25883\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement published on 24

December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) UK Government representatives sit on the Specialised Committee on Road Transport.

Alan Brown: [\[26120\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU representatives and (b) Government representatives are members of the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination.

Alan Brown: [\[26121\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) Government representatives are members of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries.

Alan Brown: [\[26122\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) Government representatives are members of the Specialised Committee on Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation.

Alan Brown: [\[26123\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Working Group on Social Security Coordination has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26124\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Working Group on Organic Products has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26125\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Working Group on Motor Vehicles and Parts has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 15 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Working Group on Medicinal Products has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Goods has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26128\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Customs Cooperation and Rules of Origin has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26129\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26130\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26131\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Services, Investment and Digital Trade has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26132\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Intellectual Property has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26133\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Public Procurement has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26134\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how many (a) EU and (b) Government representatives are members of the Trade Specialised Committee on Regulatory Cooperation; and how often that committee has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26135\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24

December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Level Playing Field for Open and Fair Competition has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26136\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Trade Specialised Committee on Administrative Cooperation in VAT and Recovery of Taxes and Duties has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26137\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 12 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Energy has met.

Alan Brown: [\[26138\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Air Transport has met.

Alan Brown: [\[27210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Aviation Safety has met.

Alan Brown: [\[27211\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Road Transport has met.

Alan Brown: [\[27212\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination has met.

Alan Brown: [\[27213\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Fisheries has met.

Alan Brown: [\[27214\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to page 13 of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, published on 24 December 2020, how often the Specialised Committee on Law Enforcement and Judicial Cooperation has met.

Julia Lopez:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) establishes a Partnership Council to oversee implementation of the Agreement. The Partnership Council is supported by a network of other committees, including the Trade Partnership Committee and 18 Specialised Committees. Together, these fora enable the UK and EU to discuss the effective implementation of our trade deal.

The TCA Specialised Committee on Social Security Coordination met on 6 July. The Specialised Committee on Fisheries is scheduled for 20 July. No other TCA Committee has yet met. The EU and UK have to agree meeting dates jointly. We are currently working with the EU to agree dates for other Specialised Committee meetings. The UK and EU co-chairs of each TCA Committee and Working Group determine their respective delegations to each meeting. Numbers in each delegation will vary between meetings, depending on what agenda items are scheduled for discussion.

■ Veterans: Zero Hours Contracts**Stephen Morgan:**[\[28302\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information his Department holds on the number of veterans employed on zero hours contracts.

Leo Docherty:

The Government does not hold this data centrally. We are committed to ensuring that veterans have the best possible opportunities to secure rewarding and sustainable employment after their service and have taken a number of steps to support this. These include making it easier for veterans to join the Civil Service, introducing a National Insurance contribution holiday for employers of veterans and establishing a network of dedicated Armed Forces champions in JobCentre plus.

COP26**■ Climate Action Implementation Committee****Philip Dunne:**[\[27086\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to his oral evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee on 11 March 2021, HC 222, Qq 80-82, on what dates the Climate Action Implementation Committee of the Cabinet has met since June 2020; what (a) business was considered and (b) decisions were taken at each such meeting; what decisions have been taken by correspondence since the Committee was established; what matters have been referred to the Committee for implementation by the Climate Action Strategy Committee; and if he will make a statement.

Philip Dunne:

[\[27087\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, on how many occasions the Climate National Strategy Implementation Group has met since June 2020; what (a) business was considered and (b) decisions were taken at each such meeting; what matters have been referred to the Committee for implementation by (a) the Climate Action Implementation Committee of the Cabinet (b) other Cabinet committees and (c) other bodies; and if he will make a statement.

Alok Sharma:

It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

Through the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan and our Energy White Paper, we have set out concrete steps we will take to build back greener from the pandemic and reach net zero emissions by 2050. Ahead of COP26, we will set out ambitious plans across key sectors of the economy, including a comprehensive Net Zero Strategy, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy. This will raise ambition as we outline our path to meet net zero by 2050, our Carbon Budgets and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

■ Forests

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25889\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what recent discussions he (a) has had and (b) plans to have to halt deforestation on the planet; and what estimate he has made of when that will be achieved.

Alok Sharma:

As incoming President of COP26 and recently as President of the G7, the UK is putting nature and forests at the heart of our response to tackling climate change.

In the recently published G7 Leaders' '2030 Nature Compact', we set out a G7 ambition to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and to tackle deforestation, including by supporting sustainable supply chains and demonstrating clear domestic action. To achieve this, the UK has brought together agricultural commodity consumer and producer countries in the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) dialogue. The UK is also helping to build the LEAF coalition, which aims to mobilise \$1 billion in financing, and is expected to become one of the largest ever public-private efforts to protect tropical forests and support sustainable development.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Children

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25886\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to engage school age children in the lead up to COP26.

Alok Sharma:

On 10 June, we published the Together for our Planet Schools Pack which was sent to schools across the UK. The pack is designed to encourage conversations about climate change, engage students on COP26, and help schools celebrate students who are going "One Step Greener" by recycling, walking to school, or taking other steps to tackle climate change. In April, we partnered with Blue Peter to launch a writing competition which asked children to submit a story about something that is affecting our planet today. We will transform the winning work into an animated film which will premiere at COP26 to inspire urgent climate action.

The COP Unit has a dedicated youth engagement team who are working to ensure youth voices are heard at COP26 and in its legacy. I have set up a Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council so that young activists are informing our planning for an inclusive COP26. The UK is also working in partnership with the Italian government Government, who will host the Pre-COP and Youth4Climate event, bringing together 400 young climate leaders from across the world.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Sustainable Development**Rachael Maskell:**[\[25885\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he has taken to incorporate the 17 Sustainable Development Goals into his outcome planning for COP26.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Presidency set out four goals for COP26, outlining what needs to be achieved at the summit. Through COP26, we aim to accelerate climate action by securing global net zero and keeping 1.5 degrees in reach; adapting to protect communities and natural habitats; and mobilising finance. We must also work together to deliver, through collaboration between governments, businesses and civil society.

These goals support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13, related to climate action, and SDG 15, protecting forests and halting biodiversity loss. We are working closely with all countries to take action to tackle climate change and to protect our natural habitats.

■ Wind Power: International Cooperation**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[25781\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps his Department has taken to raise international ambition for onshore wind ahead of COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Accelerating the global energy transition from coal to clean power is a top priority of the UK COP26 Presidency. We are working with countries to expand the use of clean, renewable energy sources such as onshore and offshore wind. We launched the Energy Transition Council to bring together the political, financial and technical leaders of the global power sector to ensure that clean power is the most attractive

option for new power generation for all countries. At the G7, members committed to achieving overwhelmingly decarbonised power systems in the 2030s. Wind generation will play an important role in delivering this in the UK, and internationally we are working closely with partners including the Global Wind Energy Council.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[28970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the capabilities of the Afghan army and police to withstand any upsurge in violence once NATO forces have withdrawn from Afghanistan.

James Heappey:

Afghan forces have led on security in Afghanistan for the last six years. The ANDSF are now 350,000 strong and are increasingly capable and self-sufficient. They have shown remarkable resilience and courage in meeting the challenges they face. They are committed to protecting the people of Afghanistan while tackling the threat from non-state actors, to ensure Afghanistan does not again become a safe-haven for terrorists. We are committed to providing financial support to the ANDSF through to at least 2024.

■ Ajax Vehicles

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[28103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Ajax armoured vehicle is air portable in the A400m aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

We fully expect that Ajax will be air portable by not only the A400M Atlas but also the C-17.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[28107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much money has been paid to General Dynamics UK for the Ajax Armoured Vehicle Programme as at 6 June 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

As of 6 June 2021, £3,167 million (incl. VAT) has been paid to General Dynamics UK. This spend has been on overlapping Design, Demonstration and Manufacture activity, including vehicle development and trials, manufacturing, major assemblies, armour turrets and facilities.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Testing

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Initial Operating Capability for the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle can be declared prior to the demonstration of (a) static versus moving firing and (b) moving versus moving firing.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether Initial Operating Capability for the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle can be declared while operators are required to wear protective headwear due to the functionality of the vehicle.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to declare Initial Operating Capability for the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

Initial Operating Capability (IOC) equates to the delivery of the first 25 Capability Drop 1 Ajax vehicles, (8 ARES, 2 ATLAS, 3 APOLLO and 12 AJAX), and their associated support, training and infrastructure packages and is designed to enable vehicle familiarisation, initial training and experimentation, including static firing. Further system integration and fire on the move capability is planned to be cleared next as part of the operationally deployable Capability Drop 3 level.

As I have said previously to the House, we will not accept a vehicle that falls short of our requirements, and will not declare IOC without establishing a path to resolution on the noise and vibration issues.

The sequential steps for the demonstration phase for AJAX mean that capability will be enhanced by a series of capability drops. Capability drop 3 vehicles will enable the AJAX to be deployed on Operations. The final capability drop (4) will deliver the final vehicles and enable Full Operating Capability to be declared.

I would further refer the right hon. Member to the answers I gave on 14 June 2021 to Questions 12074 and 12968.

Attachments:

1. 12074 - Ajax Vehicles; Testing [12074 - Ajax Vehicles Testing.docx]
2. 12968 - Ajax Vehicles [12968 - Ajax Vehicles.docx]

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to provide an update on the progress of the independent assessment at Millbrook Proving Centre on the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

We temporarily paused all Ajax mobility trials and training on 25 June as a precautionary measure due to noise and vibration concerns; this remains under

review. Trials at Millbrook will only recommence once we are assured that this can be done safely.

■ **Antiship Missiles**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[28090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many UK jobs are supported by the manufacture of the Harpoon anti-ship missile.

Jeremy Quin:

Manufacture of the Harpoon anti-ship missile does not directly support any UK jobs. Since the 1980s, it has been procured through a Foreign Military Sales agreement with the USA.

■ **Armed Forces: Coronavirus**

John Healey:

[\[28945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 23054, how many armed forces personnel deployed overseas in the past 12 months have tested positive for covid-19.

James Heappey:

In the year to 11 June 2021, 965 Armed Forces personnel had a positive COVID-19 test result entered on their medical record in an overseas location.

■ **Armed Forces: Mental Health Services**

Feryal Clark:

[\[28359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the provision of mental health services for (a) current and (b) former members of the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

The Government is committed to improving the mental health of our Armed Forces and veterans. We are determined to provide the best possible mental healthcare services to our Armed Forces, and to this end work closely with the Departments of Health, the NHS, including the Devolved Administrations and Voluntary and Civil Society organisations.

Defence Medical Services introduced a new care pathway for Armed Forces personnel with common mental health disorders to enhance the care provided by MOD GPs, in line with national best practice. MOD accelerated the roll out of remote ways of working by introducing digital triage, eConsult, and remote video consultation using the AttendAnywhere platform to maintain access to mental health services during COVID-19. Patients can now access specialist mental health services across the UK using secure remote video consultation.

The provision of veterans' mental healthcare is the responsibility of the NHS in England and the Devolved Administrations. Where Personnel leaving the Armed

Forces have an enduring need for mental healthcare, we work in partnership with the NHS to ensure continuation of care. The MOD's Departments of Community Mental Health initiative remains accessible for up to six months after discharge, to help veterans during their transition period.

Not only can veterans access all mainstream services, but several bespoke veterans' services have been developed to meet the needs of military personnel, veterans and their families. The bespoke services include the veteran's mental health service 'Op Courage', which has received over 10,000 referrals to date. Op Courage brings together three NHS England veterans' mental health services into a single pathway with a common point of access. Together these services provide a complete mental health care pathway for veterans with individuals benefitting from personalised care plans, ensuring they can access support and treatment both in and out of hours. £17.8 million has been provided for these services this financial year, and an additional £10 million has also been allocated to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust to distribute to charitable projects supporting veterans' mental health needs.

■ **Armed Forces: Sexual Offences**

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[29127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he has taken to ensure (a) understanding and (b) acknowledgement of the term Military Sexual Trauma (MST) by (i) his Department and (ii) the Office of Veterans Affairs.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not accept the term 'Military Sexual Trauma'. What we have done is make it absolutely clear we have zero-tolerance of unacceptable behaviour. All allegations are thoroughly investigated, and all victims supported appropriately. We recognise the great courage it takes to come forward and report a sexual offence. Personnel can have full confidence that allegations are thoroughly investigated; Commanding Officers must always refer any allegations which have a sexual element to the Service Police. Anyone found to fall short of our high standards or to have committed an offence is dealt with appropriately, up to and including imprisonment and dismissal.

The Armed Forces are addressing sexual assault and harassment through a range of actions, including awareness campaigns and training on consent. In 2020 we published a leaflet on sexual harassment and how to report it, and started a 24-hour bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline to offer support and advice. In June 2021 we introduced new and updated policies on behaviour and complaints, making them easier to understand, more accessible and reinforcing our zero-tolerance policy. The MOD will also assess the findings of the Services' sexual harassment surveys to plan interventions.

The Government plans to make the United Kingdom the best place to be a veteran anywhere in the world, including for those whose service was affected by sexual violence. We recognise that such experiences can have profound and enduring

impacts on an individual both during their service and as a veteran. Veterans, and their families, are offered a gold standard of tailored support, such as Op COURAGE: The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. This Government is continuously working to identify and draw upon lessons from other countries for both our serving and veteran populations.

■ **Gurkhas: Pensions**

Jack Lopresti:

[\[27136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the pensions of Gurkha veterans are equivalent to those offered to other armed service personnel.

Leo Docherty:

The Gurkha Pension Scheme closed to new applicants in 2007 and those serving from that date, or those who chose to transfer to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, receive the same pension rates as all other armed forces service personnel.

For veterans who chose to remain on the Gurkha Pension Scheme it represents a very fair scheme ensuring that Gurkha veterans are provided with a good standard of living. For most Gurkha veterans the Gurkha Pension Scheme provides a pension at least as good, and in many cases better, than that given to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme members with identical periods of service.

John Healey:

[\[28063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many claimants to the Gurkha Pension Scheme (a) reside in the UK and (b) did not transfer to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme through the Gurkha Offer to Transfer.

Leo Docherty:

The information is not held in the format requested.

This is because an individual claimant may be resident in the UK, but elected to be paid through one of the pay offices, Dharan, Pokhara, Kathmandu, to a Nepalese bank account for tax purposes, and therefore have a non-UK address recorded on the Far East & Nepal Administration Scheme (FENAS).

In addition, FENAS would also include individuals who have voted to transfer to the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS) but have not yet reached their 60th birthday and therefore continue to be paid their immediate Gurkha Pension until they move to AFPS75 at age 60.

John Healey:

[\[28064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Gurkha veterans receive a pension through the Armed Forces Pension Scheme after transferring on the Gurkha Offer to Transfer.

Leo Docherty:

The information is not held in the format requested.

The population who elected to transfer to the Armed Forces Pension Schemes (AFPS) under the terms of the Gurkha Offer to Transfer fall into three distinct categories; those at transfer who received an immediate AFPS pension, those who were serving at the time of the Offer to Transfer who subsequently left service as an AFPS member with accrued rights and those who remain as Gurkha Pension Scheme members who will transfer across to AFPS at age 60.

Those members who did not receive an immediate AFPS pension become members of their elected scheme at retirement and are not specifically identified as Gurkhas nor is there a centralised data base where the records can be accurately identified to show how many of these have now left with pension benefits.

■ **Gurkhas: Universal Credit**

John Healey: [\[28061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what information his Department holds on how many former Gurkhas living in the UK are in receipt of universal credit.

John Healey: [\[28062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what information his Department holds on how many Gurkha veterans are resident in the UK.

Leo Docherty:

Neither the MOD nor the Home Office keep records on the location of Gurkha veterans.

The Department for Work and Pensions, who are responsible for the payment of Universal Credit, do not keep records on whether claimants are Gurkha veterans.

■ **Military Aid: Coronavirus**

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[28087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to deployments of Military Aid to the Civil Authorities in Northern Ireland during the covid-19 outbreak, whether he has received complaints from political parties or representatives in Northern Ireland on those deployments.

James Heappey:

Throughout the pandemic the Ministry of Defence has supported the Northern Ireland Assembly in their response to COVID-19. Armed Forces personnel have worked around the clock to protect our people in all four corners of the nation and assisted the Northern Ireland Department of Health with vaccinations and providing support to other health services. All political parties have recognised the overarching need to save lives and support the health service during the pandemic and Ministers have received no complaints regarding the support provided.

■ Military Decorations

Julian Sturdy: [27146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing the policy governing the award of military medals for the purposes of establishing whether the case for a national defence medal has improved since the last review in 2012.

Leo Docherty:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Armed Forces (James Heappey) on 19 March 2020 to Question 30067 to the hon. Member for Broadland (Mr Jerome Mayhew).

Attachments:

1. Military Decorations [\[UIN 30067.docx\]](#)

■ Ministry of Defence: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan: [28080]

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

Leo Docherty:

The Government recognises the great importance of the effective and timely handling of correspondence.

The Cabinet Office is currently compiling data on the timeliness of responses to hon. and right hon. Members from Government Departments and Agencies. This data will be released, and made available to Members, in due course.

■ National Flagship

Mr Kevan Jones: [28983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department classifies the UK's new national flagship as a warship.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence does not classify the National Flagship as a warship.

■ Navy: Mesothelioma

John Healey: [28059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Royal Navy personnel his Department has paid compensation to for mesothelioma in each year since 2016.

John Healey: [28060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department has spent on compensation to Royal Navy personnel with mesothelioma in each year since 2016.

Leo Docherty:

It is taking time to collate the required information to answer the hon. Member's Questions. I will write to him when the information is available, and a copy of this letter will be placed in the Library of The House.

■ Veterans: Employment**Feryal Clark:****[28360]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the transition out of the armed forces into employment for former service women and men.

Leo Docherty:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 5 July 2021 to Question 23323 to the hon. Member for Newport West (Ms Jones).

Attachments:

1. Veterans Employment [\[UIN 23323.docx\]](#)

■ Yemen: Military Intervention**Kenny MacAskill:****[28332]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many British military personnel have operated from Al-Ghaydah airport in Yemen in the last 12 months; what their role has been; and what regiment they serve in.

Kenny MacAskill:**[28333]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his policy is on updating the House on the deployment of British military personnel in Yemen.

Kenny MacAskill:**[28334]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether UK military personnel have reported any concerns on torture or mistreatment at Al-Ghaydah airport in Yemen in the last 12 months.

Kenny MacAskill:**[28335]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports by Human Rights Watch that torture is being practised at a Saudi-run prison camp at Al-Ghaydah airport in Yemen.

Kenny MacAskill:**[28336]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Consolidated Guidance to Service Personnel on overseas detention and reports by Human Rights Watch of torture being practised by Saudi forces at al-Ghaydah airport, what assessment he has made of the compliance with that guidance of the deployment of UK military personnel to Al-Ghaydah airport in Yemen.

James Heappey:

I am aware of speculation in the media regarding UK military personnel operating in Yemen. The UK is not a member of the Saudi-led Coalition. Since the conflict in Yemen began, the then Defence Attache accompanied the then Foreign Secretary on his trip to Aden in March 2019. In 2020 the UK attached a military officer to the office of the UN Special Envoy in an advisory capacity. This military officer has visited Yemen several times in this role. Overseas operational deployments of military personnel are notified to Parliament in line with the longstanding convention of successive Governments.

Separately, the UK Government does not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone unlawful killing, the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment ("CIDT"), or extraordinary rendition.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Charities: Bank Services****Sarah Olney:****[28285]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing mandatory police permits for street charity collectors who ask for direct debits.

Matt Warman:

Effective and responsible fundraising underpins the success of the charity sector, and is essential for charities' independence. Face to face (direct debit) fundraising is self-regulated by the Fundraising Regulator and there are no national official figures on volumes. The Fundraising Regulator stands up for best practice in fundraising, in order to protect donors and support the vital work of fundraisers.

Direct Debit fundraising does not require licences or permits, however the fundraiser must meet Chartered Institute of Fundraising site management agreements that are in place with the local authority for regular [face-to-face](#) fundraising on the [street](#). These Site Management Agreements (SMA) set controls on where and when fundraising can take place.

If members of the public are concerned that a group or individuals are acting fraudulently they should report this matter to their local police force. They can also complain to the Fundraising Regulator.

Government continues to encourage and support collaborative work between the charity sector, licensing and enforcement agencies in an effort to curb unlicensed or bogus collections.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell:

[28250]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of attendance at sporting or mass gathering events on levels of covid-19 infection in the (a) hospitality sector and (b) wider community.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is drawing evidence from a range of sources in order to shape our understanding of the overall impact the effects of the pandemic has had on our sectors.

Since 17 May, events have been able to reopen subject to capacity caps which vary depending on whether the event is indoors or outdoors. There has been COVID guidance in place for all settings, including the hospitality industry to ensure every precaution is taken to minimise the risk of infection. This guidance includes social distancing, the use of face masks, ventilation and general COVID 19 precautions.

From Step 4 of the roadmap all settings will be open, including nightclubs. Large events, such as music concerts and sporting events can resume without any limits on attendance or social distancing requirements.

There will be an ongoing assessment of data, and public safety is our main priority. We will continue to work closely with the local authorities, DHSC, and PHE to closely monitor attendees. This includes monitoring any potential prevalence of COVID-19 as a result of the events. The Test and Trace team are working closely with the ERP on our pilot events to ensure that any attendee who tests positive for the virus is contacted, and understands the requirement to self-isolate.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[28247]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what proportion of attendees at each of the Events Research Programme pilots reported post-event covid-19 test results.

Nigel Huddleston:

Details of testing rates and test results for the pilot events in the first phase of the Events Research Programme (ERP) are available in the Events Research Programme: Phase I findings report which was published on Friday 25 June and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/events-research-programme-phase-i-findings>

As with the first phase of ERP, scientific studies are led by a number of scientists and the ERP's research partners, who will publish the results of the second and third phases of ERP in due course.

Rachael Maskell:

[28248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Events Research Programme, what assessment he has made of the covid-19 viral load people who tested (a) negative before and (b) positive after an event were exposed to.

Nigel Huddleston:

The risk of COVID-19 transmission at any event will depend on several biological, behavioural and environmental factors including the prevalence of disease at the time, venue design, extent and effectiveness of venue ventilation (including whether events are held indoors or outdoors), numbers and characteristics of attendees, type, nature and purpose of contact, and length of time spent close to others.

Details of the risk of COVID-19 transmission are available in the Events Research Programme: Phase I findings report which was published on Friday 25 June and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/events-research-programme-phase-i-findings>

The ERP pilots demonstrated how risk mitigation measures could be put in place to reduce and manage the risks identified for events. Mitigation options include: communications, crowd and audience management strategies, face coverings and ventilation.

It is challenging to generate robust, generalisable evidence of the transmission risk associated with particular events from the first phase of the ERP, including those associated with the event. Phase I pilots were necessarily limited in scale, and took place during a period of low prevalence of the virus. Further, they were insufficient in scale, scope and study designs to generate any direct evidence based on transmission data. Therefore, evidence on case numbers should be treated with caution.

Our independently chaired Science Board agreed that we needed to run more events over multiple dates, in order to gather and generate stronger data that consolidates our evidence base. The third phase of the ERP is currently taking place and will continue to produce additional scientific research and evidence, as well as implementation considerations for government, event organisers, and consumers on reopening events safely with a greater number of attendees.

Public safety is our main priority, and we continue to work closely with the local authorities, DHSC, and PHE to closely monitor attendees. This includes monitoring any potential prevalence of COVID-19 as a result of the events. The Test and Trace team are working closely with the ERP on our pilot events to ensure that any attendee who tests positive for the virus is contacted, and understands the requirement to self-isolate.

■ Exercise: Children

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[27246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the number of children attaining the Government's recommended amount of exercise per week.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have the best opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity. Our Sporting Future strategy sets out how important it is for all children to have a good experience of sport and physical activity while they are young.

The Government's arm's-length body, Sport England, has invested over £190 million into physical activity for children and young people over 2016-2021, including programmes such as the £40 million Families Fund, which encourages low-income families with children to do sport and physical activity together. Initiatives such as the Studio You video platform, funded by Sport England and powered by This Girl Can, are also encouraging more teenage girls to be active.

A key driver of the Government's School Sport and Activity Action Plan (jointly published by the Department for Education, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and Department for Health and Social Care in July 2019) is to ensure that all children and young people have access to at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. This is supported by £320 million per year through the PE and sport premium. More recently, the Government has hosted roundtables on how to take support for young people even further, and has committed to updating the Government sport strategy, with children and young people central to this.

■ Film: Highlands of Scotland

Jamie Stone:

[\[29128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to promote the Scottish Highlands as a film location for movies and television.

Caroline Dinenage:

My department continues to work closely with its Arm's Length Body, the British Film Institute (BFI), to ensure it meets the full range of its responsibilities, including to support the film sector nationwide. In its ongoing support for Scottish production, the Government has worked with the BFI to ensure a wide range of funding and initiatives are available to support Scottish production and the development of talent.

Examples of support that have been given to the Scottish film industry include the BFI Film Fund, the BFI NETWORK and the BFI Film Audience Network, which use National Lottery Funding for development, production, distribution and promotion, supporting Scottish films, Scottish audiences and emerging Scottish filmmakers. The

BFI Film Fund has funded a number of Scottish projects including *The Origin*, which was shot in the Scottish Highlands in October 2020.

The British Film Commission (BFC), a national body predominantly funded by DCMS, also supports and promotes UK-wide film and high-end television production, including in Scotland. It works in close partnership with Screen Scotland, the national screen agency for Scotland funded by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. Scotland is featured as part of all BFC marketing campaigns and assets, including show reels, websites and brochures, that are designed to facilitate film making and promote British locations, and the BFC facilitates regular business development meetings with international film and television clients. These meetings include representatives from all UK nations, including Scotland.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 the Government has worked closely with the UK Nations to ensure Covid-secure production guidance supports safe production for film and high-end television in Scotland and across the UK. Screen Scotland has been part of the Screen Sector Taskforce, coordinated by the BFI, which helped to develop the guidance and has also looked at the impact of Covid and recovery measures for the sector, in collaboration with DCMS. In addition, the UK-wide £500 million Film and TV Production Restart Scheme is getting nationwide TV and film productions that have been halted or delayed by a lack of insurance back up and running, by giving productions the confidence they need that they will be supported if losses are incurred due to Covid-19.

VisitBritain also uses high profile filming locations as part of its international tourism marketing activity. For example, in the past it has run campaigns promoting Glen Coe, as featured in James Bond's *Skyfall*.

■ Musicians: Travel

Alison Thewliss:

[\[28226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to introduce transition funding to support touring musicians.

Caroline Dinenage:

The UK's creative industries are the finest in the world and this government is determined to support them.

UK performers and artists are of course still able to tour and perform in the EU, and vice versa. However, we understand the concerns about the new arrangements and we are working with the creative and cultural sectors to help them get to grips with the changes to systems and processes.

As the Secretary of State has said, we have moved at pace and with urgency, and have provided much greater clarity about the current position, including through the DCMS-led working group. The group has discussed the issues faced by the sector, has worked to provide clarity regarding the practical steps that need to be taken by touring professionals when touring the EU, and has explored further steps as to how these sectors can be supported to work and tour in the EU with confidence. This

includes looking closely at proposals for an Export Office that could provide further practical help.

Through bilateral engagement with EU Member States, we have established that at least 17 out of 27 Member States, including France and Germany, allow some visa and permit free touring. We are now engaging with those Member States that do not have any visa or permit free touring to encourage them to adopt a more flexible approach in line with the UK's own rules, which allow creative professionals to tour easily here.

■ **Playing Fields: Sales**

Steve Reed:

[\[29054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what data his Department holds on the number of local authority football pitches that have been sold in each of the last 10 years.

Nigel Huddleston:

This department and Sport England (the lead organisation with responsibility for grassroots sport in England) do not hold information on the number of local authority pitches that have been sold in each of the last 10 years.

■ **Public Libraries: Coronavirus**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[29149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 15 October 2020 to Question HL8910 on Public Libraries: Coronavirus, what the outcome was of the joint letter with the Local Government Association to local authorities in England requesting detail of restoration of their library services.

Caroline Dineneage:

The joint letter was issued on 16 July 2020 and followed physical library buildings being permitted to reopen at that time. The purpose of the letter was to remind local authorities in England of the Secretary of State's statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and asked them to share their plans for the restoration of their library service from July 2020 onwards to assist this function. Of the 150 local authorities in England, 149 responded to this request, including a detailed reply from Stockport.

Since that time further restrictions and lockdowns were introduced which restricted the services libraries were able to deliver and included physical library locations having to close during the lockdown earlier this year. DCMS worked closely with library sector stakeholders to identify and achieve important exceptions to restrictions on physical services and although library locations were closed they were enabled to provide limited specific services including order and collect services or providing access to public PCs for essential services and home library services. Whether services were provided was for each local authority to determine after appropriate risk assessments around safety of both users and people working in libraries.

■ Small Businesses: Cybercrime

Chi Onwurah:

[\[28185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 14 September 2020 to Question 87545 on Small Businesses: Cybercrime, how many SME businesses have taken up the Government's Cyber Essentials scheme to date.

Matt Warman:

At the end of June 2021, 70,859 Cyber Essentials certificates have been awarded to organisations in the UK, including 55,645 to small and medium sized organisations. This includes an increase of 20,438 (17,477 to SMEs) in the overall number of certificates awarded since the end of August 2020. 12,566 certificates have been awarded so far this year, including 10,721 to SMEs. For a smaller number of older certificates (pre-2017) we do not have information available on the size of the organisation.

On 12 May 2021 at CYBERUK 2021, the government announced the launch of the Cyber Essentials Readiness Tool. The interactive tool provides a bespoke action plan to organisations to improve their cyber security and will help SMEs prepare for Cyber Essentials certification.

On 10 September 2020 the government announced a £500,000 fund to help SME businesses in the healthcare sector improve their digital resilience. The funding package, which has now been completed, supported 170 SMEs to work towards achieving Cyber Essentials certification and take other steps to improve their cyber security, helping to ensure they can continue providing vital products and services to deal with the current pandemic.

■ Sports: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[28249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether covid-19 testing for indoor and outdoor sporting events will continue after 19 July 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

Testing will continue throughout Phase III of the Events research programme in order to gain entry to events, all attendees must either provide proof of a negative NHS Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test taken within 48 hours of entering the event; OR proof of two vaccinations with the second vaccination being given at least 14 days prior to entry of the event via the NHS App; OR must have natural immunity, based upon a positive PCR test within 180 days of the event.

The Prime Minister set out plans on Monday 5th July for the final step of the Roadmap in England, giving businesses and the public more time to prepare. Step 4 is expected to begin on Monday 19th July if the government's four tests for easing COVID restrictions have been met. This will be confirmed on Monday 12th July following a review of the latest data.

At step 4 there will be no Covid certificate required as a condition of entry to any venue or event, although businesses and events can make use of certification, and the NHS app gives you a Covid pass as one way to show your Covid status.

The Government will maintain contingency plans for reimposing economic and social restrictions at a local, regional or national level if evidence suggests they are necessary to suppress or manage a dangerous variant. It is possible that certification could provide a means of keeping events going and businesses open, if the country is facing a difficult situation in autumn or winter. Any future implementation would involve consultation and appropriate parliamentary scrutiny.

■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure

Bim Afolami:

[\[28297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government plans to reform the Electronic Communications Code to make it easier for companies to install infrastructure to support full fibre gigabit broadband in blocks of flats and rural land.

Matt Warman:

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

This consultation closed on 24 March 2021. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the possible outcomes of the consultation at this stage, as responses are being considered. The consultation response will be published in due course and we will bring legislation forward as soon as parliamentary time allows.

The Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Act gained Royal Assent in March 2021. This Act aims to address one stated policy barrier: making it easier for telecoms companies to access multi-dwelling buildings (such as blocks of flats) where a tenant has requested a new connection, but the landlord has not responded to requests for access rights.

The Act inserts a new Part 4A to the Electronic Communication Code which provides a process that telecommunications operators could use to gain code rights to multi-dwelling premises for a defined period. This only applies where:

- a lessee in occupation in a multi-dwelling building has requested a telecommunications service from an operator
- to connect the property the telecoms operator requires an access agreement with another person such as the landlord
- the landlord has not responded to the telecoms operator's request for access

My Department has also recently launched a consultation which seeks views on the terms which will accompany the interim Code rights provided to operators who have successfully applied for an order made under Part 4A of the Electronic Communications Code. This consultation closes on Wednesday 4 August. Responses will be considered and the consultation response will be published in due course.

■ **Wembley Stadium: Coronavirus**

Charlotte Nichols:

[29147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what evidence his Department based its decision on when deciding to allow spectators into the EURO 2020 football matches held at Wembley Stadium in June and July 2021 prior to the proposed further easing of covid-19 restrictions on the 19 July 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Events Research Programme (ERP) is running pilot events, including the EURO 2020 matches at Wembley, to inform decisions around the safe removal of social distancing at Step 4 of the roadmap. The pilots are running across a range of settings, venues, and activities, so that findings support the full reopening of similar settings across multiple sectors.

Decisions are guided by a Science Board of relevant experts including senior PHE representation, who take into account the latest public health data. All pilots are designed in a scientifically controlled way, with special consideration to reduce risk of transmission. The Science Board provides scientific assurance across the programme, and ensures that events follow ethical and scientific principles, generating evidence of sufficient quality to inform decisions.

Our Science Board follows a scientific framework developed by SAGE's Environmental Modelling Group. This includes understanding appropriate audience sizes for the ERP's research purposes.

These capacities have been agreed in advance with event organisers, and the health and safety capacity caps of their respective venues.

The second phase of the ERP included the England games against Croatia (13 June), and Scotland (18 June). Public health is our main priority and entry to these EURO 2020 pilot events required proof of a negative NHS Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test taken within 48 hours of entering the event, or proof of two vaccinations with the second vaccination being given at least 14 days prior to entry of the event via the NHS COVID Pass within the NHS App. In addition to this, attendees to events in the ERP's third phase can also show proof of natural immunity, based upon a positive PCR test within 180 days of the event.

The Government is working closely with industry partners to design these pilot events to help gather evidence on opening events safely.

EDUCATION■ **Academies**

Imran Hussain: [25850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools that have had an academy order imposed upon them have waited (a) between 24 and 35 months, (b) between 36 and 47 months, (c) between 48 and 59 months and (d) longer than 60 months before their academisation process was completed.

Nick Gibb:

As of the 1 June 2021, there have been 574 sponsored academies that have opened after the predecessor local authority maintained schools were issued with academy orders following receipt of inadequate Ofsted judgements. 56% of these sponsored academies opened in less than 12 months, and more than 90% opened in less than 24 months of the academy order being issued. Of the remainder:

- 33 took between 24 and 35 months.
- 13 took between 36 and 47 months.
- 4 took between 48 and 59 months.
- 1 took longer than 60 months.

■ **Department for Education: Recycling**

Ruth Jones: [25940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, 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.

Nick Gibb:

The Department contributes to, and works within the parameters of, the Government Greening Commitments (GGC) on recycling rates. The last annual report publication, from April 2018 to March 2019, shows that 85% of waste was recycled by the Department.

The Department has committed to increasing the rate of recycled waste, whilst reducing the overall amount of waste generated in line with the next GGC which runs from 2021 to 2025.

Further information on Greening Government Commitments can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/883779/ggc-annual-report-2018-2019.pdf.

■ **Education: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell: [29087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to review covid-19 measures ahead of the autumn 2021 term in the event of increased infection levels.

Nick Gibb:

On 5 July 2021, it was announced that when the Government moves to Step 4 of the roadmap, most COVID-19 restrictions will be relaxed across all parts of society. As measures will be eased at Step 4, it is appropriate to relax the measures in early years, schools, colleges, and universities so that we can return to normal as far as possible.

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

When we move to Step 4, the Department's aim is to balance the risks associated with COVID-19 whilst moving to a 'steady state' that minimises the burden of implementing the system of controls on staff and parents, and the effect those measures have on young people's educational experience.

Asymptomatic testing will resume in the autumn term for staff and for pupils of secondary age and above. Schools and colleges should offer pupils 2 lateral flow device tests at an on-site asymptomatic test site, 3 to 5 days apart. They may start this testing up to 3 days before the start of term and can stagger the return of pupils during the first week of term to accommodate this. Following the first two on-site tests, pupils should continue to test twice weekly at home until the end of September, when this will be reviewed.

Staff across all schools, colleges, and nurseries should also test regularly at home until the end of September, at which point this will be reviewed in line with public health advice.

All schools and nurseries should have outbreak management plans outlining how they would operate if there was an outbreak on site or in their local area. If an outbreak occurs or if they are in an enhanced response area, the local director of public health might advise a school to temporarily reintroduce some control measures. The contingency framework describes the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools and nurseries:

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

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise guidance for schools, colleges and nurseries from Step 4. We will continue to keep these measures under review in partnership with health experts and informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice. The guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/education-and-childcare>.

■ Education: Counter-terrorism

Sarah Owen:

[28341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 20549 on Education: Counter-terrorism, what assessment he has made of the potential risk of discriminatory biases when school staff exercise their discretion on referrals to Prevent.

Nick Gibb:

The Prevent strategy is designed to safeguard and support vulnerable people to prevent them from being drawn into terrorism. Prevent does not target specific faiths or ethnic groups, or children - it deals with all forms of extremism.

The Department trusts teachers and other staff to exercise their professional judgment about whether a Prevent referral is appropriate, as they do for all other safeguarding concerns. Teachers are subject to professional requirements to safeguard pupil wellbeing, whilst understanding, and acting within, statutory frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010.

Through teacher referrals, local authorities can ensure that support is obtained for children and young people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences. A referral allows for a multi-agency safeguarding assessment to be conducted, where all referrals are carefully assessed based on the specific details of the case. If a vulnerable individual is found to not be at risk of radicalisation, the case is immediately closed to Prevent. In these instances, they may be referred to other appropriate safeguarding services so that they can receive the support they need, or no further action may be taken.

Through Prevent training, the Department is equipping frontline professionals with the skills and knowledge to safeguard vulnerable individuals from radicalisation. There is specific e-learning available to ensure that when a referral is made, it is robust, informed and with good intention, and that the response to that concern is considered, and proportionate. This e-learning is available at:

https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/prevent_referrals/01-welcome.html.

The Government is committed to assessing the effectiveness of the Prevent strategy, which is why an independent review of Prevent is being carried out. The reviewer will be able to consider criticisms and complaints of the current approach, as well as how best to improve the UK's strategy to support people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

■ LGBT People: Education

Stephen Morgan:

[25919]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that all children receive LGBTQ+ inclusive education.

Nick Gibb:

To prepare children for life in modern Britain, pupils need to understand the world in which they are growing up. That is why the Department has made Relationships Education compulsory for all primary school pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) compulsory for all secondary school pupils, and Health Education compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools.

The RSE and health education guidance states that all pupils should receive teaching on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) content during their school years.

This guidance is available at:

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

LGBT content in their teaching. Primary schools are strongly encouraged and enabled, when teaching about different types of family, to include families with same-sex parents. Through these subjects, children will be taught about the importance of respectful relationships and the different types of loving and healthy relationships that exist. This can be done in a way that respects everyone's views.

The key priority is for relationships, sex and health education to help schools to support a diverse range of pupils with these complex and sensitive matters and to ensure that all pupils are supported and treated with kindness and understanding. The Department has published a guidance page for teachers on GOV.UK, to support the teaching of RSHE, at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>.

■ Pupils: Absenteeism**Esther McVey:****[25809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information his Department holds on student absenteeism, by (a) primary school, (b) secondary school and (c) local authority in each of the last three years.

Esther McVey:**[25810]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information his Department holds on student absenteeism, by (a) number of school days absent and (b) reasons for absence in each of the last three years.

Esther McVey:**[25811]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a statutory obligation on local authorities to collate and submit data on student absenteeism to central Government.

Esther McVey:**[25812]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what definition of student absenteeism is used to record data on student absence.

Nick Gibb:

Information relating to pupil absence in school is collected on a termly basis from schools via the school census. Completion of the school census is a statutory requirement under section 537A of the Education Act 1996. Guidance on what is collected on termly attendance, including the full list of absence reasons, can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/data-items>.

The overall absence rates for state-funded primary and secondary schools in England, by local authority, for academic years 2016/17 to 2018/19, can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/99898173-7d81-4132-b9c7-9ef5695e425a>.

The number of sessions of absence, by reason for absence, in state-funded primary and secondary schools, and special schools in England for academic years 2016/17 to 2018/19, can be found here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/35b2b378-982d-4220-a992-26c678bb3e18>. A session refers to half a day.

Data is also published in the publication 'Pupil absence in schools in England', which gives information by academic years and is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england>.

There are similar publications on absence in the autumn term, and absence in the autumn and spring terms. The latest release covering autumn term 2020 can be found at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term>.

Information has also been collected daily on attendance in schools and nurseries during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus**Charlotte Nichols:****[25170]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will review the rule which requires school children in a bubble to isolate for 10 days in the event that one child in that bubble tests positive for covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

From Step 4 of the roadmap, it will no longer be necessary to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not be required for any summer provision, for example summer schools, or in schools from the autumn term.

From Step 4, nurseries, schools and colleges will not routinely be required to undertake contact tracing for children and young people. Instead, pupils who test

positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. This will be limited to very close contacts.

Unless they test positive, children and those who are double 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.

The Department for Education has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to develop guidance for schools.

■ Schools: Admissions

Emma Hardy:

[\[25124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department is having with local authorities on flexible school admissions for summerborn children.

Nick Gibb:

The Department published updated guidance for local authorities and parents on the admission of summer born children in 2020 to help ensure that parents can make an informed decision about what is right for their child, and that admission authorities make decisions that are in the best interests of the child.

In May, the Department published the results of our latest research surveys of local authorities and parents into the delayed admission of summer born children to school. This research shows that local authorities are responding positively to requests by parents to delay their summer born child's start in Reception.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, issued a statement to all admission authorities, including local authorities, to ensure admission authorities take these decisions in the best interests of the child.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[25101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to review the guidance on covid-19 bubbles within schools ahead of the summer holidays.

Nick Gibb:

From Step 4 it will no longer be necessary to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles'). This means that bubbles will not need to be used for any summer provision (for example, summer schools) or in schools from the autumn term.

As well as enabling flexibility in curriculum delivery, this means that assemblies can resume, and schools no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch. Schools and colleges may of course decide to keep the current arrangement for the last few days of term.

Schools and colleges should make sure their outbreak management plans cover the possibility that in some local areas it may become necessary to reintroduce 'bubbles' for a temporary period, to reduce mixing between groups.

Any decision to reintroduce 'bubbles' would not be taken lightly and would need to take account of the detrimental impact they can have on the delivery of education.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to develop guidance for schools.

Emma Hardy:

[25122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what data his Department holds on the prevalence of the Delta variant of covid-19 within schools; and what steps he is taking to stop further transmission of covid-19 to pupils aged under 16.

Nick Gibb:

Data on the Delta variant is held by the Department of Health and Social Care, where Public Health England (PHE) leads on surveillance and outbreak management.

PHE publishes weekly technical briefings on COVID-19 variants of concern and variants under investigation in England, which are available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/997418/Variants_of_Concern_VOC_Technical_Briefing_17.pdf.

This sets out (pages 34-37) data on the number of clusters or outbreaks associated with a range of settings, including schools, colleges and nurseries.

PHE also publishes the total number of cases of each variant in the UK as part of information on variants of COVID-19, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/new-sars-cov-2-variant>. This includes total confirmed Delta variant cases and prevalence split by region, as part of PHE weekly technical briefings.

The Delta variant is now the dominant strain in the UK. Therefore, as well as variant surveillance, both PHE and the Office for National Statistics' routine surveillance on case rates, outbreaks, and prevalence are tracking Delta.

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.

We have worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and PHE to revise guidance which schools should follow to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The guidance is available here:

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

We will continue to keep these measures under review, in partnership with health experts and informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice.

Rachael Maskell:

[25890]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps Ofsted is taking to provide support to schools during the rise of covid-19 infections.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member directly and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Rachael Maskell:

[28251]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of (a) staff and (b) pupils have tested positive for covid-19 in each of the last three months.

Nick Gibb:

Data on lateral flow device tests in education is published by the Department of Health and Social Care. The latest published data is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/weekly-statistics-for-nhs-test-and-trace-england-17-june-to-23-june-2021> in the document 'Tests conducted: 28 May 2020 to 23 June 2021'. Table 8 details the volume of testing, the weekly number of positive cases for secondary school pupils, and the weekly number of positive cases for staff in primary and secondary schools.

■ Schools: Discipline

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[29009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of special provisions in the Behaviour Hubs programme for pupils with ADHD and other neurodiverse conditions.

Nick Gibb:

The behaviour hubs programme is designed to support the development and implementation of positive whole-school behaviour cultures which benefit all children, including those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other neurodiverse conditions.

The behaviour hubs programme pairs lead schools and multi academy trusts (MATs) that have exemplary behaviour practices with partner schools or MATs who want and need to improve pupil behaviour.

Lead schools and MATs have been selected from across the school sector, and include primary, secondary, alternative provision, special schools and MATs. This provides partner schools and MATs with access to good practice across different types of provision, including specialist provision. Experienced senior leaders and executive teams that have implemented strong, positive behaviour cultures within their schools will be able to support the specific challenges that a partner school is facing, including those relating to pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

All schools on the programme have access to training on specific issues, common problems, and effective approaches led by expert advisers that can be implemented in their school context. Training modules have been developed and reviewed by experts from across the school sector. The training includes a mandatory module on SEND, which covers how to ensure behaviour policies and practices are inclusive and take reasonable adjustments into account, including any adjustments required for those who are neurodiverse.

The programme is designed and delivered by the Department's taskforce of behaviour advisers. The behaviour advisers bring experience from across the school sector, including alternative provision and special schools, providing broad representation of all schools and their specific needs, including SEND.

The Department has procured an independent evaluator to assess the effectiveness of the programme. Where possible, analysis from all components of the evaluation will seek to provide insights by school type (such as secondary, alternative provision and special schools) and characteristics of the schools and the pupils at those schools (for example the proportion of pupils with SEND or eligible for free school meals).

■ Schools: Inspections

Rachael Maskell: [\[26139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential (a) merits and (b) risks of Ofsted inspections proceeding while schools are experiencing high covid-19 infection rates.

Rachael Maskell: [\[26140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans for Ofsted inspections to proceed in schools where pupils are having to isolate as a result of covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to the hon. Member and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Special Educational Needs: Reviews

Olivia Blake: [\[28375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish the findings of the review into support for special educational needs announced on 6 September 2019.

Vicky Ford:

The COVID-19 outbreak has unavoidably delayed the pace of the work of the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Review and materially altered the context for reform. This is noted by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, in her most recent report on putting children and young people with SEND at the heart of

our recovery plans: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-old-issues-new-issues-next-steps>.

We only have one chance to get this right and have, after careful reflection, decided we should take more time to ensure our reform plans can deliver the systemic change needed. We will be using this time to make certain our plans complement the wider work being done on recovery and school reform, and that they have the longevity needed to offer stability to the sector. We will work at pace over the coming months, closely with system leaders, SEND organisations, schools, and parents, so that we are in a strong position to publish bold proposals for public consultation.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture

Alex Cunningham:

[28184]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his oral contribution of 17 June 2021, Official Report, column 437, if he will provide details of the meeting with representatives of the ornamentals sector referred to in that oral contribution.

Victoria Prentis:

On 16 June 2021, as part of his sector engagement activities, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs met with stakeholders from the edible and non-edible horticulture sector, to discuss labour issues and the effectiveness of the current Seasonal Workers Pilot.

■ Badgers: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell:

[26149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the badger cull on the badger population.

Victoria Prentis:

We have never culled more than 10% of the badger population during any given year. The badger population of England is estimated at 424,000¹, with numbers rising each spring as cubs are born.

As part of the badger culling licensing criteria, for intensive and supplementary badger control, Natural England set minimum and maximum numbers of badgers to be removed, in line with Defra's commitments under the Bern Convention. This is to ensure the badger control operations deliver disease reduction benefits without endangering the local badger population. Badger control operations are monitored by Natural England to ensure local extinction of badgers is avoided and to monitor the humaneness, safety and effectiveness of the culls.

[1] Judge et al. (2017) Abundance of badgers (*Meles meles*) in England and Wales. *Scientific Reports*. 7.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-00378-3/#:~:text=The%20expected%20badger%20population%20size%20is%20approximately%20424%2C000,Group%20with%20standard%20error%20and%2095%25%20confidence%20intervals>

■ Beverage Containers: Recycling

Charlotte Nichols: [26169]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of all-in deposit return scheme, including glass, for the stability of the drinks container materials market.

Charlotte Nichols: [26170]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to include glass in the scope of the proposed Deposit Return Scheme to help maintain the market for existing glass drinks container materials; and if he will make a statement.

Charlotte Nichols: [26171]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department intends to include all drinks containers of (a) glass, (b) plastic and (b) aluminium in the scope of the proposed Deposit Return Scheme; and what steps he plans to take to help ensure equitable treatment of materials and avoid market distortion in the implementation of that Scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

We have now consulted twice on introducing a deposit return scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and are analysing the responses to the second consultation, with a view to publishing a government response later this year. The government response will include a final decision on the scope and materials to be included in the deposit return scheme. An impact assessment for the introduction of the scheme will also be published.

Any materials not included within the scope of a deposit return scheme will be included under the reformed packaging producer responsibility regime to ensure equitable treatment of packaging materials, which would then be collected through kerbside recycling collections.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [26144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the badger cull on the spread of Bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Sheffield Hallam, Olivia Blake, on 28 June 2021, PQ UIN20573.

Rachael Maskell:

[26145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the need to increase biosecurity to stop the transmission of Bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government's March 2020 response to the independent Bovine TB Strategy Review led by Professor Sir Charles Godfray noted that good biosecurity will not, on its own, resolve the bovine TB epidemic. Even so, herd biosecurity is an essential element of our programme and will help us to bank the benefits from other multiple interventions. Progress made since then includes the development of a new Cattle Health Certification Standards (CHECS) TB entry level herd accreditation membership, the design of which was commissioned by Defra, and completion of a tender exercise for the delivery of a new and expanded TB Advisory Service for livestock farmers in England. Announcements on the new service will be made in the coming weeks. We are also working with the British Cattle Veterinary Association on a new bovine TB training offer for private sector vets and developing new tools to help herd owners understand the risks posed by cattle movements. Further work to take forward the commitments in the Government response are either in progress or are being planned.

Information on CHECS can be found at:

<https://tbhub.co.uk/preventing-tb-breakdowns/protect-your-herd-from-bovine-tb/protect-your-herd-cheecs-accreditation/>

<https://cheecs.co.uk/>

Rachael Maskell:

[26148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to apply experience gained in the management of covid-19 through the test, trace and isolate process to the management of bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

We believe that the experience of managing Covid-19 will provide lessons that can be applied more widely, including to animal disease controls. There are already similarities, however. It is a longstanding statutory requirement for TB test-positive cattle to be isolated from the rest of the herd while they await their removal to slaughter, and for the affected herds to be placed under movement restrictions pending the completion of a programme of repeated TB testing with negative results. Furthermore, any animals that may have been moved out of a TB-infected herd between the last negative test of that herd and the application of TB movement restrictions are forward-traced by the Animal and Plant Health Agency and, if still alive on the new destination farm(s), they are tested for TB.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan:

[\[28083\]](#)

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

Victoria Prentis:

The Government recognises the great importance of the effective and timely handling of correspondence.

The Cabinet Office is currently compiling data on the timeliness of responses to Hon. and Rt Hon. members from Government Departments and Agencies. This data will be released, and made available to Members, in due course.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Energy

Ruth Jones:

[\[25926\]](#)

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

Victoria Prentis:

The Department's energy costs over the last three years are detailed below.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Total energy costs ('000£)	17,238	17,145	17,122

This information will be available in our Annual report and Accounts which will be published shortly.

The Department is defined as comprising the following bodies:

Defra Core Department

Executive Agencies

- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Rural Payments Agency
- Veterinary Medicines Directorate

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

- Environment Agency
- Marine Management Organisation

- Natural England
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew
- Forestry Commission

■ Heating: Refrigerators

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[28169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the cost of prohibiting the use of modern refrigerants including unsaturated hydrofluorocarbons in heat pumps, and replacing them with natural refrigerants such as ammonia, carbon dioxide and hydrocarbons.

Rebecca Pow:

Unsaturated hydrofluorocarbons, also known as hydrofluoro-olefins (HFOs), are used increasingly in products and equipment such as heat pumps as replacements for hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) due to their much lower Global Warming Potential.

HFCs are powerful greenhouse gases and their use is being phased down under legislation. We are reviewing that legislation to see whether we can go further in support of the UK's net zero target. As part of the review, we will assess the availability, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of all alternatives to HFCs, including HFOs and natural refrigerants.

■ Morrisons: Takeovers

Mr David Jones:

[\[28126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on UK agriculture of a foreign takeover of Morrisons plc.

Victoria Prentis:

We continue to monitor the situation. The Government is committed to ensuring that the UK remains open for business, while protecting the livelihoods of British workers and investment in the UK. We recognise that overseas investors play a major and positive role in stimulating economic growth in every part of the UK. In most cases, it is right that mergers are treated as a commercial matter for the parties involved.

We have received reassurances from Morrisons of the priorities of the potential new investor, including support of the relationships Morrisons has fostered with small suppliers and farmers and no material changes to existing payment practices are expected.

■ Pigeon Racing

Luke Pollard:

[\[25133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure the cross-Channel free movement of racing pigeons between the UK and EU member states.

Luke Pollard: [\[25134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what restrictions apply to the cross-Channel movement of racing pigeons from EU member states to the UK.

Luke Pollard: [\[25135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when restrictions on the cross-Channel movement of racing pigeons between the UK and EU member states will be lifted.

Luke Pollard: [\[25136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the EU Commission and the French Government on the cross-Channel movement of racing pigeons between the UK and EU member states.

Victoria Prentis:

Now that the transition period has come to an end, Great Britain is treated as a third country by the EU and vice versa. The EU has different requirements for animals entering the EU from third countries than for those moving between Member States, including the requirement for the animals to be accompanied by a health certificate and/or quarantine periods where appropriate. The European Commission has recently stated its intention to allow movements of racing pigeons (for racing purposes) from GB to continue to enter the EU (and Northern Ireland) until 20 October under national rules applicable prior to 21 April 2021. After this period, these movements must meet the new requirements set out in the EU Animal Health Regulation and be accompanied by the appropriate EU Export Health Certificate.

We continue to encourage the EU, through our regular engagement, to act pragmatically as part of our new trading relationship.

■ Plants: Imports

Kevin Hollinrake: [\[25066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with representatives of the ornamental horticulture industry on the effect of fees for the inspection of plant and tree imports from the EU on that industry.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra took the decision to delay the introduction of fees for import checks of high-priority plants from the EU for 5 months to give businesses more time to prepare and adjust to the new charging arrangements. This has enabled an accurate calculation of the fees and allowed businesses more time to successfully implement the change. During this time, Defra communicated extensively with industry and stakeholder groups to ensure they were prepared for the new fees coming in.

The methodology used to calculate fees for plant health services was agreed with trade following a fees review and consultation in 2017.

It has long been UK Government policy to charge for many publicly provided goods and services. The standard approach is to set fees to recover the full costs of service delivery. This relieves the general taxpayer of costs, so that they are properly borne by users who benefit from a service. This allows for a more equitable distribution of public resources and enables lower public expenditure and borrowing. Defra plant health services operate in line with that principle and have done for many years. Plant health fees are reviewed regularly and adjusted to ensure no under, or over, recovery of costs and amended as necessary.

■ Plastics

Dr Julian Lewis:

[28926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent estimates his Department has made of the (a) ranking of the UK in the international table of plastic produced per head of population, (b) proportion of plastic waste recycled within the UK and (c) reasons for the level of recycling (i) overall and (ii) within the UK; what steps his Department has taken to recycle plastic waste since 2010; what the results were of implementing such plans; and if he will make it his policy to (A) formulate and (B) implement a nationwide policy on reduction of single-use plastic products.

Rebecca Pow:

In our 25 Year Environment Plan, the Government has already set out its policy of eliminating all avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042, which will include avoidable single-use plastic waste. In December 2018 we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy and keep resources in the system for as long as possible. We know more needs to be done, and for the most problematic plastics we are going faster - which is why we have committed to work towards all plastic packaging on the market being recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025.

We have made significant progress on reducing single-use plastic products. In October 2020, we introduced measures to restrict the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds. The single-use carrier bag charge, which has led to a 95% reduction in the use of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarkets, has been increased to 10p and extended to all retailers to encourage customers to bring their own bags to carry shopping and reduce the volumes of single-use plastic being used. We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and materials to take a systematic approach to reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products, including problematic packaging materials. However, we must think carefully about introducing bans and other policy solutions to avoid unintended consequences, such as a switch to another single-use material. To note, waste and environmental policy is a devolved area and therefore devolved administrations are taking their own approach.

Whilst plastic appears separately in some of our published data sets, we do not hold statistics for all plastic waste. Plastic waste contained within the residual waste stream will appear in mixed waste categories.

We do publish information on the amount of plastic packaging that is recycled. The latest figures are for 2018 and the amount of plastic packaging recycled was 43.8%. From April 2022, plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled content will be subject to a tax of £200/tonne. The tax will provide a clear economic incentive for businesses to use recycled material in the manufacture of plastic packaging, which will create greater demand for this material. In turn, this will stimulate increased levels of recycling and collection of plastic waste, diverting it away from landfill or incineration. Further details on the development of this tax can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-plastic-packaging-tax-from-april-2022/introduction-of-plastic-packaging-tax-2021>.

The Government has not made a recent estimate of how the UK compares internationally regarding plastic production per capita.

■ Seafood Exports Working Group

Liz Saville Roberts: [29111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the Seafood Exports Working Group last met.

Liz Saville Roberts: [29112]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish an update on the progress of the work of the Seafood Exports Working Group.

Victoria Prentis:

In response to difficulties with exporting to the EU, Defra established the Seafood Exports Working Group in January to monitor live, immediate operational issues across the UK and work with industry on responses to minimise disruption to trade flows of seafood. The last group meeting was held on 25 March, when it was paused to allow officials to focus on developing longer-term system improvements with industry, which the group had identified as a priority. There are no current plans to publish an update on the group's work.

■ Waste Disposal: Abandoned Vehicles

Steve Reed: [29055]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on the number of local authorities that provide a service to remove abandoned cars.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra does not hold data on the number of local authorities that provide a service to remove abandoned vehicles.

The Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 places a duty on councils to remove vehicles that are abandoned on any land in the open air, including private land, and council officers may legally enter land to investigate and remove abandoned vehicles.

Authorities do not have to remove an abandoned vehicle if the cost of moving it to the nearest highway is unreasonably high. It is for councils to determine whether any particular vehicle has been abandoned, and whether it is subject to their duty to remove it.

The Government has published guidance on councils' responsibilities for removing abandoned vehicles, which is available at gov.uk.

■ Water Supply: Germany

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[28166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department (a) is in discussions with the German Federal Environment Agency to obtain further information on that Agency's reports of leakage of trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) into German water supplies from heat pumps and air conditioning and (b) has made an assessment of whether those reports of leakage of TFA into German water supplies have implications for the Government's plans with regards to heat pumps.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[28168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has commissioned independent research on the potential dangers arising from trifluoroacetic acid that has leaked into the environment.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has no current plans to commission independent research on this topic. Evidence tells us that the primary source of trifluoroacetic acid in the environment is believed to be through atmospheric oxidation of the CFC-replacement gases, HCFC-123 and HFC-134a, though various fluorochemicals have the potential to degrade to trifluoroacetic acid.

Trifluoroacetic acid is one of a group of thousands of substances collectively called poly- and per-fluorinated substances (PFAS), which are highly persistent in the environment. As a group they are being considered under a risk management options analysis under UK chemical regulation (UK REACH). The Environment Agency also considered Trifluoroacetic acid as part of its priority and early warning system for chemicals.

My Department has had no discussions with the German Federal Environment Agency regarding their reports on trifluoroacetic acid but is aware of its monitoring approach.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Belarus: Political Prisoners****Zarah Sultana:**[\[18605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Belarus government on the detainment of (a) Roman Protasevich and (b) other political prisoners.

Wendy Morton:

As the Foreign Secretary made clear in his 24 May statement to Parliament, the Belarusian authorities' forced landing of Ryanair flight FR4978 and their subsequent arrest of the journalist, Roman Protasevich, was a shocking attack on human rights, media freedom, civil aviation and international law. The UK has acted swiftly, robustly and in coordination with our allies. On 24 May, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas summoned the Belarusian Ambassador to condemn the Belarusian authorities' actions and call for the immediate release of Mr Protasevich. On 24 and 25 May, the UK took measures to prevent all Belarusian aircraft from entering UK airspace, unless authorised, and advised all UK airlines to avoid Belarusian airspace. The UK has condemned the actions of the Belarusian authorities on the international stage, including at the OSCE in Vienna and the UN in Geneva. On 8 June, in a meeting with the Belarusian Foreign Minister, Her Majesty's Ambassador to Belarus, joined by the Heads of Missions from the EU, Japan, Switzerland and the US, demanded the release of all political prisoners, including Mr Protasevich. On 21 June the UK acted in coordination with our international partners to implement sanctions against those responsible for the forced landing of the Ryanair flight and Mr Protasevich's arrest.

■ Bolivia: Overseas Aid**Catherine West:**[\[29116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's bilateral relationship with Bolivia.

Wendy Morton:

ODA 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 impacts on the beneficiaries of UK aid. Ministers considered the impact on people with protected characteristics, including any potential impact on equalities. The UK will continue to act as a global development actor, focused on supporting the world's poorest people, which is a key objective in the UK's diplomatic and development work. We remain committed to protecting human rights, and contributing to a fairer and more prosperous world. Provisional ODA spend for 2020 will be published in the autumn. The UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset, will be published in 2022.

■ British Overseas Territories: Seas and Oceans

Stephen Doughty:

[\[8614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which maritime boundary or rights disputes the UK and its Overseas Territories have engaged in directly or indirectly in the last five years; and what the status is of each of those disputes.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 7 June 2021]: We are not aware of any maritime boundary or rights disputes the UK or its Overseas Territories have engaged directly or indirectly in the last five years aside from the UK's commitment to working with Mauritius to explore all aspects of its interests in relation to the British Indian Ocean Territory's (BIOT) Marine Protected Area (MPA) and implementation of the 2015 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Arbitral Award. The Government is aware of the judgment of 28 January by the Special Chamber of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) formed to deal with a dispute concerning delimitation of a maritime boundary claimed by Mauritius to exist between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean. The UK is not a party to these proceedings, which can have no effect for the UK or for maritime delimitation between the United Kingdom (in respect of BIOT) and the Republic of the Maldives.

■ Cameroon: Peace Negotiations

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[24362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to encourage the President of Cameroon to enter inclusive peace talks mediated by an impartial third party, setting out a roadmap toward a new constitutional settlement recognising the rights and aspirations of minority populations in Cameroon; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the crisis in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon, including the disturbing reports of human rights abuses by both armed separatists and security forces. We assess that the root causes of the conflict are varied and complex. These include constitutional issues and the different legal and education systems in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, and the need for sustained political will on all sides to resolve the crisis. These were discussed at the Grand National Dialogue in 2019 and we continue to urge progress on the issues identified, including further inclusive dialogue to address the root causes of the crisis.

We regularly raise our concerns with the Government of Cameroon. In March I travelled to Cameroon and met President Biya, Prime Minister Ngute and Foreign Minister Mbella Mbella to push for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. I also met the President of the South-West Regional Assembly, civil society, political opposition and religious leaders, to hear the experiences of the affected communities. We have

shared our experiences of conflict resolution with the Government of Cameroon, and we urge all sides to remain engaged with the Swiss-led process to facilitate talks.

■ **China: Falun Gong**

Stephen Kinnock: [\[28213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his counterpart in the Chinese Government on the reported (a) illegal practice of organ harvesting and (b) persecution by that Government of the Falun Gong people in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. The freedom to practice, change or share one's faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy. We continue to monitor the issue of alleged organ harvesting closely and consider carefully all evidence presented to us. We regularly raise our concerns about the human rights situation with the Chinese authorities, and will continue to do so.

■ **China: Genocide**

Ms Nusrat Ghani: [\[28244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has (a) asked for, (b) had sight of and (c) discussed the evidence used by the US Administration to declare genocide in Xinjiang.

Nigel Adams:

It is the long-standing policy of the UK Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court. The UK's approach, shared by many countries around the world, does not prevent us from taking action to address serious human rights violations, as we have done in the case of Xinjiang. The US has a different process that is not linked to a court decision. We regularly discuss the situation in Xinjiang and related questions of policy with the US.

■ **China: Import Controls**

Sir Iain Duncan Smith: [\[28048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to (a) his oral contribution of 16 June 2021, Official Report, column 287, (b) the oral contribution of the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of 12 January 2021, Official Report, column 162, (c) the Answer of 25 June 2021 to Question 16783 on Import Controls: China and (d) the Answers of 5 July 2021 to Questions 24880 and 24881, whether import controls are in place on goods made in China, believed to be the product of forced labour.

Nigel Adams:

As set out in our response of 5 July, the Foreign Secretary announced on 12 January a review of existing export controls as they apply to Xinjiang to identify whether we can bring into scope any additional goods which could be used for internal repression or human rights violations in the region. This review is ongoing and the Government will report back to Parliament on the outcome. Import and export controls are governed by different processes and legislation, and the Foreign Secretary's announcement on 12 January referred only to export controls. The Government has serious concerns about the situation in Xinjiang and we keep our policy response under close review.

■ Cyprus: Turkey**Theresa Villiers:**[\[28123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Turkey on the incursion into the Cyprus Exclusive Economic Zone by Turkish drilling ships.

Wendy Morton:

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.

Theresa Villiers:[\[28125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will have discussions with his Turkish counterpart on the importance of securing a negotiated settlement in Cyprus which is consistent with UN resolutions supporting a bizonal, bicomunal, federal state with a single sovereignty, a single international personality and a single citizenship.

Wendy Morton:

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

At the meeting, the Foreign Secretary continued to urge all sides to demonstrate flexibility and compromise to find a solution to the Cyprus Issue within the UN Security Council parameters of a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation which we believe

are broad enough to meet the objectives of all sides. Most recently, I reiterated the UK's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue in my conversation with Deputy Foreign Minister Faruk Kaymakci on 28 June during my visit to Turkey.

■ Developing Countries

Sarah Champion: [\[28204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his planned timetable is for the publication of the Government's international development strategy.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary is leading work on the new International Development Strategy, which will be cross-government in scope. We intend to publish the strategy later this year.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon: [\[27155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government has taken to support covid-19 vaccine rollout in developing countries.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are supporting the COVAX Facility as the best mechanism to deliver this, and have committed £548 million to its Advance Market Commitment, making the UK one of its largest donors. Through match funding, this commitment encouraged other donors to commit \$1 billion by the end of 2020. Our commitment will contribute to the supply of at least 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by early 2022 for up to 92 low and middle-income countries. The UK will also share 100 million doses, 80% of which will go to COVAX to accelerate support for countries in need.

The UK is working closely with international partners such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and UNICEF to support COVAX's vaccine rollout. The UK's support and contribution to COVAX has helped it reach its milestone to supply vaccines to over 100 countries and economies.

■ Development Aid: Education

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[29011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance has been spent on education in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021.

Wendy Morton:

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is reported on a calendar year basis and includes sectoral breakdowns such as education. The FCDO National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development' includes this information. Provision ODA spend for 2020 will be published in the autumn. The UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset, will be published in 2022.

FCDO publishes regular open data through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). This operational data covers current live programmes, and will include 2021 spend once business planning is concluded. The raw data can be accessed at the IATI Registry, and is shown on the Development Tracker website: <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>

■ EU Countries: Press Freedom**Catherine West:**[\[28280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to help support and protect press freedoms in Europe.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO remains committed to the Global Media Freedom campaign launched in 2018. Through the UK's co-chairing of the Media Freedom Coalition we are working to improving media freedom domestically and internationally. Many European countries are members of the Coalition. The Coalition is taking action to defend media freedom including through statements on the deteriorating situation for media in Belarus. We also support, and encourage our European partners to support, the Global Media Defence Fund, managed by UNESCO, to which we pledged £3 million over five years. The Fund has already supported over 1600 journalists globally, including in Europe, where projects have run in Latvia, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This year during our Presidency of the G7, we secured strong commitments through the Foreign Ministers' Communique, including commitments to support the Global Media Defence Fund, to coordinate action through diplomatic networks to address violations of media freedom, and to work together to address the financial crisis facing media across the world.

The UK's diplomatic network also champions media freedom, including in Europe, with Missions hosting and advocating on media freedom issues on a regular basis in those countries where media freedom is under attack.

■ Famagusta: Turkey**Theresa Villiers:**[\[28124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will have discussions with his Turkish counterpart on the importance of respecting the provisions in UN Security Council resolution 550 on Famagusta.

Wendy Morton:

The UK strongly supports the numerous Security Council Resolutions covering the issue of Varosha, notably 550 (1984) and 789 (1992), and the 9 October UN Security Council Presidential Statement calling for Turkish actions to cease and be reversed.

We are monitoring the situation closely and are urging the sides to refrain from actions which could undermine the chances of a Settlement. Most recently, I reiterated this point in my conversation with Deputy Foreign Minister Faruk Kaymakci on 28 June during my visit to Turkey.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: EU Countries**Catherine West:**[\[28278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many staff of his Department work on European issues and relationships.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO works to reinforce the UK's position as a reliable neighbour and partner in Europe, as set out in the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. There are over 2000 FCDO UK Based and Country Based members of staff in Europe Directorate. In addition to this, many colleagues across the FCDO in the UK and around the world work to deepen our relationships with European allies and to amplify our global influence and achieve shared goals.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Human Rights**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[28134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's reorganisation and the Government's commitments set out in the Integrated Review of Foreign, Development and Defence policy to promote open societies and advance its force for good agenda, what steps he is taking to develop a more strategic approach to his Department's work with human rights defenders globally.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government strongly supports Human Rights Defenders worldwide to enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear. In 2019, the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders' which was drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International, and which sets out how the UK Government engages with Human Rights Defenders to advance the human rights agenda globally.

Following the FCDO's reorganisation and publication of the Integrated Review, the UK remains strongly committed to this agenda and will continue to support and work in partnership with Human Rights Defenders to promote open societies and the UK's force for good agenda. We will reflect these commitments in the various strands of strategic planning which will flow from the Integrated Review.

The FCDO also monitors repression of HRDs in its annual Human Rights and Democracy Report, the most recent of which was published earlier this month. That report paid tribute to the courageous work of HRDs and listed support for them as a UK international policy priority.

■ Georgia: LGBT People

Catherine West:

[\[28274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made representations to his Georgian counterpart on far-right attacks on LGBT+ organisations in that country.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is fully committed to the promotion and protection of LGBT+ rights globally. Ahead of Tbilisi Pride, our Embassy met representatives of LGBT+ groups to offer our support and representatives of the Government of Georgia to call for the safety of those attending Pride events. During Pride, our Ambassador opened the first event of Tbilisi Pride week - the screening of a British-Georgian film about Pride's "March of Dignity" in Tbilisi in 2019. The UK Embassy also flew the rainbow flag on Monday 5 July, the day of the planned "March for Dignity", in support of the LGBT+ community.

The UK is very concerned about the violence which occurred in response to the planned Pride "March for Dignity". Through our Embassy we issued a joint statement with partners including the US and the EU, condemning those attacks and calling on the Government of Georgia to prosecute those responsible and to protect those exercising their Constitutional rights to freedom of expression and assembly. We continue to monitor developments, alongside our continuing support for the Georgian LGBT+ community.

■ Global Partnership for Education

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[27337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what objectives he plans to pursue as co-chairman of the Global Partnership for Education's Replenishment Summit in July 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The primary objective of the Global Education Summit (GES) is to raise as much as possible of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)'s \$5 billion over five years. At the G7 Summit, the Prime Minister announced the UK pledge of £430 million to GPE, which is our largest ever pledge, and an uplift of 15 per cent from our current position as top bilateral donor. This significant pledge meant we were able to secure commitment from G7 partners of at least \$2.7 billion to GPE ahead of the GES.

The UK intends to support the GPE in diversifying its funding base with new sovereign and private donors, and is working closely with our co-hosts, Kenya, to galvanise domestic financing to education from developing nations. At the Summit, we hope to secure up to \$4 billion, which is 80 per cent of GPE's \$5 billion 5-year

target, providing the single biggest ever boost to children's education opportunities around the world.

■ Hong Kong: British National (Overseas)

Craig Whittaker:

[\[28142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports that the British National (Overseas) visa is not being recognised by the Hong Kong Government as valid proof of permanent departure from Hong Kong and that people holding that visa and seeking to leave Hong Kong for the UK are being denied early withdrawal of their pension savings as a result.

Nigel Adams:

The right of people to leave Hong Kong is guaranteed under the Basic Law and should be upheld. It is unacceptable for Hong Kong's Mandatory Provident Funds (MPF) Schemes Authority to declare that they will not accept the BN(O) visa as evidence in support of an application for early withdrawal of the MPF.

Craig Whittaker:

[\[28143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will take steps in response to reports that financial institutions headquartered in the UK are preventing early withdrawal access of pension savings held by British Nationals (Overseas) who are seeking to leave Hong Kong and resettle in the UK.

Nigel Adams:

The right of people to leave Hong Kong is guaranteed under the Basic Law and should be upheld. It is unacceptable for Hong Kong's Mandatory Provident Funds (MPF) Schemes Authority to declare that they will not accept the BN(O) visa as evidence in support of an application for early withdrawal of the MPF.

■ Human Rights

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[28998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps (a) he and (b) his Department is taking to help support and protect from harm human rights defenders working on (i) climate change and environmental rights and (ii) land rights and forced displacement to protect (A) indigenous peoples, (B) LGBT communities and (C) other marginalised groups and (iii) investigating corruption and the misuse of public funds.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government strongly supports Human Rights Defenders worldwide to enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear. In 2019, the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders' which was drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International, and which sets out how the UK Government engages with Human Rights Defenders to advance the human rights agenda globally.

Following the FCDO's reorganisation and publication of the Integrated Review, the UK remains strongly committed to this agenda and will continue to support and work in partnership with Human Rights Defenders to promote open societies and the UK's force for good agenda. We will reflect these commitments in the various strands of strategic planning which will flow from the Integrated Review.

The FCDO also monitors repression of HRDs in its annual Human Rights and Democracy Report, the most recent of which was published earlier this month. That report paid tribute to the courageous work of HRDs and listed support for them as a UK international policy priority.

■ Integrated Activity Fund

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[28991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 23 October 2020 to Question 106362 and with reference to his Department's management of the Integrated Activity Fund (IAF) from 2016-18, how many projects delivered through the IAF) (a) were and (b) were not subject to an Overseas Security and Justice Assistance assessment in each of the (i) 2016-17 and (ii) 2017-18 financial years.

James Cleverly:

I refer the Honourable Member to my response to question 113154 on 12 November 2020.

■ Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser and Mohammad Said Hamayel

Caroline Lucas:

[\[26099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 20364, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the deaths of Mohammad Said Mohammad Hamayel and Islam Wael Fahmi Dar Nasser.

James Cleverly:

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we urge the Government of Israel to conduct swift and transparent investigations. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

■ Jerusalem: Armed Conflict

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his international counterparts on the situation in East Jerusalem.

James Cleverly:

The ongoing violence across Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories is deeply concerning and must stop. We call on all sides to reduce tensions, restore calm and avoid provocation. The Prime Minister has called for an urgent de-escalation of tensions. The Foreign Secretary delivered a message of de-escalation in his calls to Israeli Foreign Minister Ashkenazi on 16 May, and with Palestinian Prime Minister Shtayyeh on 12 May. We have also engaged the UN Security Council, calling for measures to reduce further violence.

As the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made clear, this cycle of violence must stop, and every effort must be made to avoid loss of life. We urge all sides to refrain from any kind of provocation so that calm is restored as quickly as possible. The UK will continue to support that goal.

Jerusalem: Palestinians**Julian Sturdy:**[\[25192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to safeguard the human rights of Palestinian households (a) threatened with or (b) undergoing eviction in the Silwan area of East Jerusalem.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to engage with the Israeli government on human rights issues in the context of the occupation. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The UK regularly raises the issue of forced evictions from their homes with the Government of Israel. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We monitor the situation in Silwan closely, and officials regularly visit and attend related court hearings. We continue to urge Israel to cease such actions.

Kashmir: Riot Control Weapons**Afzal Khan:**[\[28321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of reports of the use of pellet guns on Kashmiri children; and if he will make representations to his Indian counterpart in response to those reports.

Nigel Adams:

We are concerned by reports of pellet gun use and in particular reports that children have been injured by pellet guns. We have raised concerns with the Indian Government. We call on all states to take preventive measures to protect children.

■ Myanmar: Overseas Aid

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[25774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department plans to spend more than £58.4 million on aid to Myanmar as set out on his Department's Development Tracker for the 2021-22 financial year.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 9 July 2021]: FCDO's 21/22 planned country allocations (budgets) will be published in our Annual Report later this year alongside our audited 20/21 accounts. HMG's final 2021 ODA spend, including country data will be published in the 'Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend' in autumn 2022.

We will continue to publish our spend information by project on DevTracker as always (updated monthly).

■ Overseas Aid

Catherine West:

[\[29117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's ability to support freedom organisations promoting democracy and the rule of law in Europe and the Americas.

Wendy Morton:

The UK will spend £10 billion on overseas development assistance in 2021, making us the third largest aid donor in the G7, as a percentage of GNI. The move from spending 0.7% to 0.5% of our GNI on ODA was taken in response to extreme economic and fiscal circumstances. We have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world. Open Societies was one of seven core priorities for the aid budget this year, as set out by the Foreign Secretary, and was also a key theme in the Integrated Review. The Government intends to return to the 0.7% ODA target when the fiscal situation allows.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[29124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which relevant experts the Government plans to consult on its international development strategy.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[29125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he is planning an open consultation as part of the formation of his international development strategy.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary is leading work on the new International Development Strategy. We look forward to engaging with experts, partners and stakeholders, including from academia, civil society and Parliament,

over the coming months. This will build on the extensive engagement and call for evidence that was undertaken to inform the Integrated Review.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[29126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the international development strategy will be published.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary is leading work on the new International Development Strategy, which will be cross-government in scope. We intend to publish the strategy later this year.

■ Overseas Aid: Press Freedom

Catherine West: [\[29118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's ability to support organisations and projects promoting press freedom.

Nigel Adams:

Official Development Assistance (ODA) allocation decisions were 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. Ministers were appraised of qualitative analysis, sectoral analysis of thematic trends, and further quantitative analysis of draft business plans to assess the impacts of ODA reductions. Ministers also considered the impact on supply partners, drawing on FCDO programme managers' advice on how best to manage reductions to specific programmes.

Defending media freedom is a top priority for the UK. Reductions to spending on media freedom and media development have been less severe for this important area. For example, our support for UNESCO's Global Media Defence Fund remains unchanged. We engaged closely with partners that were affected by reductions to prioritise their activities to ensure the best outcomes for their programmes. Our ODA support is further strengthened through our extensive diplomatic network, which engages with counterparts to defend media freedom around the world.

■ Palestinians: Children's Rights

Fleur Anderson: [\[29143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of children's rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[29144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress he has made with his international counterparts on helping to support children's rights in (a) Gaza and (b) the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to engage with the Israeli government on human rights issues in the context of the occupation, including the treatment of children. We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. We also continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children.

■ Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[25014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress he has made on implementing recommendation 6 of the Truro Review in accordance with the Government's Manifesto commitment to (a) establish suitable instruments and roles to monitor and implement his Department's approach to freedom of religion and belief, taking into consideration other international approaches, (b) establish permanently the role of Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, (c) provide that Special Envoy with appropriate resources and authority to work across his Department and (d) appoint a Director General level champion for freedom of religion and belief; and what work on that recommendation remains outstanding.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 9 July 2021]: The UK Government has committed to implementing in full the recommendations in the Bishop of Truro's review, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022.

On Recommendation 6, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, and Rehman Chishti MP previously served as the Special Envoy. In December 2020 the Prime Minister appointed Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy for freedom of religion and belief. The Special Envoy works with Lord (Tariq) Ahmad, and through the Foreign Secretary to the Prime Minister. The Envoy also works closely with FCDO Ministers in promoting FoRB in their respective geographic areas, and through her Private Secretary in the FCDO, with support from the FCDO FoRB team and other officials on specific aspects of her role, as well as the FCDO media office and Special Advisers. In addition and furthering the establishment of instruments and roles, a DG-level Board Sponsor for FoRB was appointed, replacing the FCO FoRB Board Champion.

■ Prisoners: Torture**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[27272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department last commissioned an independent review of the (a) effectiveness of its torture policy and (b) approach to protecting British citizens from torture in overseas detention.

Nigel Adams:

The UK takes all allegations and concerns about torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment very seriously. The Torture and Mistreatment Reporting Guidance of 2011 sets out the process for FCDO staff and other staff working in Her Majesty's diplomatic missions and offices for reporting information about torture and mistreatment.

■ Russian: Money Laundering**Catherine West:**[\[28279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment the Government has made of the level of illicit Russian finance in the UK.

Wendy Morton:

We continue to bring our full capabilities to bear against illicit finance in the UK, whether through legislation, or a strengthened law enforcement response led by the National Crime Agency. Our work tackling illicit finance was supported by £63 million of additional funding in 2020/21. Further details of the Government's assessment of illicit financing can be found in the 2020 National Risk Assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-assessment-of-money-laundering-and-terrorist-financing-2020>

■ Tigray: Armed Conflict**Neil Coyle:**[\[28216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to bring together all sides in the Tigray conflict in Ethiopia to a negotiating table to help find a lasting political solution to that conflict.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the conflict in Tigray that has gone on for more than eight months and which has taken a terrible toll on the people of Tigray. It is more apparent than ever that there can be no military solution to this crisis. Political negotiation is the only way to resolve this and other conflicts in Ethiopia. So we urge, and have been urging, all parties to the conflict to begin an inclusive political process that can foster national reconciliation and consensus.

The UK endorses the views of African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Faki that a comprehensive and all-encompassing permanent ceasefire is necessary to pave the way for sustainable peace in Tigray. We support the efforts of the AU in this regard.

■ **Tigray: Sexual Offences**

Neil Coyle:

[\[28215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has sent any experts from the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative to the Tigray region in Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We have deployed an expert from the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative UK Team of Experts. Recommendations from an initial scoping mission by them will outline options for supporting the Government of Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and other key stakeholders to safely collect and preserve evidence, and bring the perpetrators of sexual violence to justice. The UK fully supports the joint investigation involving the UN Office of the High Commission for Human Rights.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[27145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will work with the Department for Transport to ensure that travel lists issued by that Department are in-line with the covid-19-related guidance for travel issued by his Department.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO Travel Advice and the Traffic Lights System are two independent processes based on different risk analyses. FCDO travel advice considers the risk to British nationals travelling overseas, while the Traffic Light System assesses and aims to mitigate the overall risk to UK public health of inbound travel to the UK. At present, Travel Advice advises against all but essential travel to all countries on the 'Red' list and does not advise against travel to any country on the 'Green' list.

The traffic light system is currently signposted across all FCDO Travel Advice pages: firstly, at the top of the page, where the 'should not travel to Amber or Red list countries' message is emphasised; and, secondly, within the country page where the Traffic Light status of that country is given.

■ **Ukraine: Overseas Aid**

Catherine West:

[\[29115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's bilateral relationship with Ukraine.

Wendy Morton:

The UK enjoys strong and growing cooperation with Ukraine, across a broad range of political, security and economic matters. As the Prime Minister made clear in his 14 June call with President Zelenskyy, the UK remains steadfast in its commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

ODA 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. The 2021-22 ODA allocations will focus our investment and expertise on issues where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will now work through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities we have identified. Over the last year the UK provided a total of £40 million to support Ukraine's reform programme alongside broader UK conflict prevention and management objectives.

■ West Papua: Human Rights**Alex Sobel:**[\[27295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he had with the Indonesian President and Foreign Minister relating to human rights in West Papua during their visit in April 2021.

Nigel Adams:

During the Foreign Secretary's visit to Jakarta on 6-7 April he attended the Third Indonesia - UK Partnership Forum. The joint statement from this dialogue highlighted both countries' commitment to promoting international law and the Rules Based International System, including democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Foreign Secretary discussed the UK's position on Papua with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi. The UK fully respects the territorial integrity of Indonesia and regards the provinces of Papua and West Papua as an integral part of Indonesia.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:**[\[25816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people (a) over 60, (b) between 50 and 60 and (c) under 50 have been infected by covid-19 in each of the last two months.

Jo Churchill:

The following table shows the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in people aged over 60 years old, between 50 and 60 years old and under 50 years old in England in May and June 2021.

AGE	MAY 2021	JUNE 2021
Over 60 years old	3,551	9,385
50 to 60 years old	4,835	15,837
Under 50 years old	46,942	201,566

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports>

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Children

Navendu Mishra: [29180]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the increase in the number of children presenting at A&E with infections on A&E waiting times.

Edward Argar:

The Department continues to monitor data on accident and emergency (A&E) waiting time standards.

The National Health Service plans for a wide range of scenarios ahead of winter and will continue to adapt plans in line with any further advice from Public Health England.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Lancashire

Damien Moore: [28317]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the provision of children's A&E services in (a) Southport and (b) Lancashire.

Edward Argar:

Children's accident and emergency (A&E) services are provided at Ormskirk District General Hospital. The six-week average performance at Ormskirk A&E is 97% with the majority of children treated, admitted or discharged within the four hour standard. The Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust is currently undertaking a strategic service review to deliver sustainable health and care services which includes care for children.

■ Arthritis: Coronavirus

Paula Barker: [25974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make post-covid-19 vaccination screening available to patients who were prescribed anti-TNF medication to ascertain whether those patients have developed a suitable response to the vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 6 July 2021]: For patients on immunosuppressive treatment such as anti-tumour necrosis factor medication, all vaccines should offer some level of protection. Post-vaccination testing may be considered, though it should be noted that low or absent antibody levels does not mean a vaccinated immunosuppressed patient has no protection.

As there is limited evidence on the immune response generated by COVID-19 vaccine in immunocompromised individuals, it is too early to assess what additional approaches, if any are needed to best support this group. The OCTAVE study will examine the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in clinically at-risk groups. Results of the study are expected shortly.

■ Cancer**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[25764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many sarcoma patients were diagnosed at stage I and II by (a) soft tissue sarcoma excluding GIST, (b) bone sarcoma, (c) Gastro-Intestinal Stromal Tumours (GIST) in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

Data on the number of patients diagnosed with sarcoma at stage I and II by each of these cancer cell types is not available in the format requested. Statistics on sarcoma are not published by stage at diagnosis because the subdivision of the small numbers of cases leads to unreliable estimates of incidence rates and trends.

■ Cancer: Waiting Lists**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[28157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people waiting for cancer treatment in (a) England, (b) London and (c) the Royal Free London NHS Trust area.

Edward Argar:

The Department has not made a formal estimate as the data is not held in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Martin Vickers:**[\[18511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Government plans announce its choice of British lateral flow test after the signing of contracts in March 2021 with Omega Diagnostics and Global Access Diagnostics in order to meet the target of having the majority of UK lateral flow tests produced in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

The Government continues to explore different operating models to make best use of the capacity created in the United Kingdom diagnostics manufacturing industry.

There are a number of ongoing conversations between Global Access Diagnostics, Omega and third party test developers which we hope will provide opportunities to further increase UK manufacturing output of lateral flow tests.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[26163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure long-term immune monitoring of people who have received different covid-19 vaccines for each dose.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The National Institute for Health Research has commissioned the National Immunisation Schedule Evaluation Consortium to undertake the Com-CoV trial. This trial is gathering data on the long-term immune response of using different COVID-19 vaccines for the first and second dose. Public Health England has also undertaken follow up on people given mixed schedules as part of routine care to monitor self-reported side effects and antibody response. The results will be published in due course. Current guidance recommends every effort should be made to complete the course with the same vaccine unless there are specific circumstances in which this is not appropriate.

Sarah Owen:

[\[27330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people without an NHS number are able to be certified as vaccinated against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: A National Health Service number is needed for individuals to demonstrate their COVID-19 vaccination status via the NHS App, through the NHS website or via letters from the NHS, which can be requested by calling 119. Anyone can register with a general practitioner (GP) practice to get an NHS number. It is free to register and proof of address or immigration status, ID or an NHS number is not needed. A registration letter will arrive in the post containing an NHS number.

Individuals who do not have an NHS number or are not registered with a GP are still entitled to free COVID-19 vaccinations.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[28057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it the policy of the Government that any (a) care home and (b) hospital in England may make it a prior condition of admission of any person that they shall have been fully vaccinated against covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

We have no plans to do so.

Catherine West:

[28275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to prioritise potential covid-19 booster vaccinations for (a) people living with asthma and (b) unpaid carers.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on a potential COVID-19 booster vaccination programme on 30 June, 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>

The JCVI advises a two staged approach, with individuals in stage one offered a booster vaccine and flu vaccine as soon as possible from September. Individuals in stage two should be offered a booster vaccine as soon as practicable after stage one, with equal emphasis on deployment of the flu vaccine where eligible. The JCVI suggests those aged 16 to 49 years old who are in an influenza or COVID-19 at risk group which includes some sufferers of chronic respiratory disease and asthma, are currently included in stage two.

Based on the JCVI's interim advice, those eligible in phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme are likely to be offered a booster which includes unpaid carers. Final decisions on the timing, scope and cohort eligibility, of any booster programme will be confirmed once the JCVI has provided their final advice.

Sarah Owen:

[28345]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK residents vaccinated against covid-19 whilst abroad are able to be certified as so vaccinated in the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Work is ongoing to determine which non-United Kingdom vaccines can be recognised in this country.

Kate Osborne:

[28348]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to prioritise people with (a) asthma and (b) other respiratory conditions for the covid-19 booster vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on a potential COVID-19 booster vaccination programme on 30 June, 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>

The JCVI advises a two staged approach, with individuals in stage one offered a booster and flu vaccine, as soon as possible from September. Individuals in stage

two should be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine as soon as practicable after stage one, with equal emphasis on deployment of the flu vaccine where eligible. The JCVI suggests those aged 16 to 49 years old who are in an influenza or COVID-19 at-risk group, such as sufferers of chronic respiratory conditions and asthma are included in stage two.

Final decisions on the timing and scope and cohort eligibility, will be confirmed once the JCVI has provided their final advice.

Rachael Maskell:

[29085]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the covid-19 transmission rates for people who have had (a) one vaccine and (b) two vaccines for each of the different vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The following table shows the latest summary of evidence on vaccine effectiveness against different outcomes, including transmission, for Pfizer/BioNTech and University of Oxford/AstraZeneca as of 1 July 2021.

Vaccine Effectiveness

Outcome	Pfizer/BioNTech		Oxford/AstraZeneca	
	1 dose	2 doses	1 dose	2 doses
Symptomatic disease	55-70%*	85-95%*	55-70%*	70-85%**
Hospitalisation	75-85%*	90-99%**	75-85%*	80-99%***
Mortality	70-80%**	95-99%**	75-85%**	75-99%***
Infection	55-70%**	70-90%***	60-70%***	No data
Transmission (secondary cases)^	45-50%***	No data	35-50%***	No data

Source: Table 3, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-surveillance-report>

Notes:

1. *High Confidence - Evidence from multiple studies which is consistent and comprehensive.
2. **Medium Confidence - Evidence is emerging from a limited number of studies or with a moderately level of uncertainty.

3. ***Low Confidence - Little evidence is available at present and results are inconclusive.
4. ^effectiveness in reducing symptomatic secondary cases in households of a symptomatic index case.

Public Health England plans to publish vaccine effectiveness data for Moderna when more evidence becomes available.

■ Counselling: Children

Barbara Keeley: [\[27107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Appendix A of Transforming children and young people's mental health provision: a green paper, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of counselling services in addressing mild to moderate mental health conditions among children.

Barbara Keeley: [\[27108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government Response to the Consultation on Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper and Next Steps, published July 2018, what steps he is taking to support high-quality counselling services in schools.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: We have not made a formal assessment.

The guidance sets out a strong expectation that, over time, all schools should make counselling services available to their pupils. However, the Government has not made the provision of access to counselling in schools and colleges mandatory, as it is important for schools and colleges to have the freedom to decide what support to offer to students.

We are implementing the proposals of the children and young people's mental health Green Paper, including mental health support teams, which will support the mental health needs of children and young people in primary, secondary and further education and use an evidence-based approach to provide early intervention on some mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, such as mild to moderate anxiety. There are over 280 mental health support teams in operation or in training, with a further 112 teams planned to be established in 2021/22. We are accelerating the roll-out of Mental health support teams will so that they support approximately 35% of pupils by 2023.

■ Dental Health: Pupils

Rachael Maskell: [\[17895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of mandating NHS England to commission services so all schools provide (a) annual or (b) six monthly dental checks for pupils.

Jo Churchill:

Screening all children for dental disease is not currently recommended by the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC). The evidence and recommendations for this policy were last assessed by the UK NSC in December 2019 and are set to be reviewed again in 2022/23.

■ Dental Services**Sir Peter Bottomley:**[\[16782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to restore full NHS dentistry services in (a) England and (b) West Sussex; and what the planned timescale is for ensuring that new patients can be registered across West Sussex.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England has set a threshold of 60% of normal activity volumes for the first six months of 2021/22. Dental practices have been asked to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. There are also 718 urgent dental centres continuing to support the provision of services across England. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided a flexible commissioning toolkit to local commissioners to help focus the available capacity on those that need it most and to reduce oral health inequalities.

In Sussex, NHS England has offered practices additional funding for delivering appointments during evenings or weekends to patients who do not have a regular dentist. Two practices will be offering these sessions and NHS England are in the process of arranging additional services. There is no longer a requirement for registration in order to receive care.

Rachael Maskell:[\[17897\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) providing free emergency dental checks to people who have not been able to see a dentist during the covid-19 outbreak and (b) enabling those appointments to be booked through the same systems that are used for booking a covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

We have no plans to do so. Almost half of all courses of treatment are delivered to patients who are fully or partly exempt from paying National Health Service dental charges.

NHS dental practices have been asked to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. There are 718 urgent dental centres across England to support the provision of care during the pandemic. Patients are able to access urgent care from NHS dental practices or via NHS111.

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[19604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of routine dental appointments that have been missed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; what assessment he has made of the impact of missing regular dental check-ups on oral health in those areas; and what steps his Department is taking to increase access to routine dental appointments during the covid-19 outbreak in those areas.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 June 2021]: No estimate has been made as this data is not collected in the format requested.

Dental practices have been asked to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. NHS England has also provided a flexible commissioning toolkit to local commissioners to help focus the available capacity on those that need it most and to reduce oral health inequalities. In the Midlands extra capacity was commissioned by the local National Health Service from 8 January to 31 March 2021, through additional sessions at weekends with further commissioning being considered to increase access.

■ Dermatology: Children

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[29067\]](#)

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 average waiting times for NHS paediatric dermatology services in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England; and what steps his Department is taking to tackle the backlogs for those services in those areas.

Edward Argar:

There has been no formal assessment.

The Department is taking steps to tackle the backlogs and long waiting times as a priority, across all elective healthcare services. This includes £1 billion for National Health Service systems across the country to increase activity and tackle backlogs. It also includes encouraging innovation, as seen in the NHS's accelerator programme, including extra clinics at weekends and virtual assessments at home. This type of innovation will help develop a blueprint for elective recovery across all services.

■ DNACPR Decisions

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[28267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2021 to Question 6381 on DNACPR Decisions, what decisions were made at the

first meeting of the Ministerial Oversight Group on 8 June 2021 on the publication of the terms of reference and minutes of that group.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The terms of reference were agreed by attendees and will be published, along with meeting summaries, in due course.

■ **Eating Disorders: Health Services**

Sir George Howarth:

[\[24899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Eating Disorders' report: Short-changed, published on 11 May 2021, how the Government plans to ensure that money allocated to clinical commissioning groups for eating disorders services is spent on such services.

Sir George Howarth:

[\[24900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the Government plans to ensure that eating disorder services are sufficiently funded in the event that more power is devolved to clinical commissioning groups; and what plans he has to maintain ring-fenced funding for eating disorder services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The funding and provision of health services, including mental health services, are the responsibility of local clinical commissioning groups which have the flexibility to reallocate funding according to local need.

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work with mental health leads from local systems, Health Education England, and other partners across the health system to support local services and help ensure the funding flows to these services as intended.

■ **Food: Advertising**

Ben Bradley:

[\[27296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 April 2021 to Question 179491 on Food: Marketing, what his timeframe is for the laying before Parliament of secondary legislation on restrictions on the promotion and placement of foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar; whether his Department plans to introduce those restrictions in April 2022; and what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the food and drink industry on those timeframes.

Jo Churchill:

We are awaiting confirmation of a date for laying this secondary legislation.

We have engaged closely with industry on the detail of the policy and to ensure the regulations are practical and fit for purpose. We have been careful to consider the views of stakeholders and experts as we develop our plans for implementing our obesity strategy and we will continue to listen. This includes feedback from

stakeholders and a wide range of experts in response to our public consultations on specific policy proposals.

■ Hospitals: Consultants

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[28197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of consultant physicians who are expected to retire in the next five years.

Helen Whately:

The Department has made no such estimate.

■ Integrated Care Systems

Rachael Maskell: [\[27231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on healthcare provision of NHS reconfiguration through the creation of Integrated Care Systems during a period of high level demand for primary and secondary care.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: Integrated care systems in their non-statutory form are already in existence and helping system working. Placing them on a statutory basis will remove barriers to joined up approaches and support recovery from the pandemic. The reforms were originally proposed by NHS England and have been further developed with system partners, including the Local Government Association. They will be implemented in a manner designed to ensure the minimum amount of disruption. A full impact assessment will be published in due course.

■ Maternity Services

Navendu Mishra: [\[27361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans for the roll-out of the midwifery-led continuity of carer model to be completed and made available in all NHS trusts in England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to midwifery-led continuity of carer, so that it becomes the default model of care for women using maternity services across England by March 2023.

Sarah Olney: [\[28286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the transition to a midwifery-led continuity of care model is adequately resourced and supported.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to the provision of midwifery-led continuity of carer, so that it becomes the default model of care for women using maternity services across England by March 2023.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided local maternity systems with £90.05 million from 2018 to 2021 to fulfil transformational objectives, including implementing continuity of carer models. An additional £96 million was announced earlier this year in response to the emerging findings from the Ockenden Report, the majority of which will be invested in additional midwives and obstetric capacity.

Medicine: Education**Mr Barry Sheerman:**[\[27013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of medical students that remain within the medical profession in the long term.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: A study conducted by Michael Goldacre and Trevor Lambert, commissioned and funded by the Department, on participation in medicine by graduates of medical schools in the United Kingdom estimates that 90% of all UK medical school graduates remain within the medical profession after 25 years.

Members: Correspondence**Robert Largan:**[\[29163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 11 March 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak, referenced RL17500.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 2 July 2021.

Robert Largan:[\[29164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 13 April 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak, referenced RL21590.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 28 June 2021.

Robert Largan:[\[29166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 14 May 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak, referenced RL21940.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 8 July 2021.

■ Mental Health Services: Finance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to provide additional support for primary care in response to increasing demand for mental health care from (a) adults and (b) children and adolescents.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: This year, £24 million is being invested into the Quality and Outcomes Framework in general practice to strengthen the severe mental illness physical health check indicator set. This includes an indicator on the percentage of patients with schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychoses who have a comprehensive care plan documented in their records, in the preceding 12 months.

NHS England and NHS Improvement announced in June 2021 that an extra £40 million has been allocated to address the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and enhance services across the country. Funding of £79 million has already been made available to support children and young people's mental health in the community, including via increased access to crisis and eating disorder services and new mental health support teams. By April 2023, there will be around 400 such teams.

■ Mental Health: Children and Young People

Helen Hayes:

[\[28272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on children and young people's mental health.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

On March 27, we published our COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan, funded by £500 million in 2021/22. This includes an additional £79 million for children and young people's mental health services. This will allow around 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services, 2,000 more to access eating disorder services and a faster increase in the coverage of mental health support teams (MHSTs) in schools and colleges. MHSTs will cover approximately 35% of pupils by 2023.

The NHS Long Term Plan also committed an extra £2.3 billion a year for mental health provision by 2023/24, allowing 345,000 more children and young people to access these services.

■ NHS: Drugs

Peter Dowd:

[\[27182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve the administration of medicines in NHS trusts.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department has established the Medicine Safety Improvement Programme, as part of the national NHS Patient Safety Strategy, to co-ordinate the work on reducing the burden of errors related to medication.

The Medicine Safety Improvement Programme is working to meet the World Health Organization's Medication Without Harm Challenge. The programme will look at a number of areas to support the improvement of safe medication administration in National Health Service trusts including better use of technology, guidance and support and how best to educate and inform patients about their medicines.

Peter Dowd:[\[27183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential cost savings to the NHS of having automated medicines cabinets made mandatory in every NHS trust.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department has made no such assessment. This year 83% of National Health Service trusts have implemented the electronic prescribing and medicines administration (EPMA) systems in hospitals. Once fully implemented, the EPMA will have significant impact on the safety of administration of medicines. Individual trusts are determining their requirements for technology such as automated cabinets and are introducing as required locally.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that evidence on the impact of automated dispensing cabinets on safety is inconclusive. If future research provides evidence of a consistent positive impact on safety, their cost effectiveness can then be assessed.

■ NHS: Quarantine**Rachael Maskell:**[\[28260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of (a) trends in the number of outstanding appointments and treatments in secondary care and (b) the effect of NHS staff having to self-isolate on those trends.

Edward Argar:

We have made no official assessment.

■ Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust: Maternity Services**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[28161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to meet hon. Members representing Nottinghamshire constituencies to discuss maternity safety at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

A meeting will be arranged in due course.

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[28162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he, Ministers of his Department or officials of his Department last met with representatives of Nottingham University Hospitals Trust to discuss maternity safety.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Ministers and officials have not yet met with Nottingham University Hospitals Trust. However, we have committed to meeting hon. Members representing Nottinghamshire constituencies to discuss maternity safety at Nottingham University Hospitals Trust. A meeting will be arranged in due course.

■ **Pregnancy: Coronavirus**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[29137\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data on the number of pregnant and breastfeeding women who have had covid-19 vaccinations.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The data is not held centrally in the format requested.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Ben Lake:

[\[28293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has received confirmation from EU counterparts that UK citizens who are fully vaccinated against covid-19 will not find their travel to EU countries affected as a result of their having received a dose of the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine from batch numbers 4120Z001, 4120Z002 or 4120Z003.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Serum Institute of India (SII) manufactures both Vaxzevria and Covishield, branded vaccines which are the same as the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. All SII-made doses approved by the United Kingdom regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and administered in the UK were branded as the 'COVID-19 vaccine AstraZeneca' which is now known commercially as 'Vaxzevria'. The MHRA has not approved doses branded as 'Covishield' and none have been administered in the UK. All AstraZeneca vaccines given in the UK are the same product and appear on the NHS COVID Pass as Vaxzevria.

The European Medicines Agency has authorised the Vaxzevria vaccine and it is therefore recognised by the European Union.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[29059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his officials are having with their counterparts in the European Commission on potential travel restrictions for UK citizens who have had the AstraZeneca vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government continues to engage the European Union on certification to ensure that travel between the United Kingdom and the EU is unhindered and supported by a common approach.

The Serum Institute of India (SII) manufactures Vaxzevria and Covishield and both branded vaccines are the same as the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. All SII-made doses approved by the UK regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and administered in the UK were branded as the 'COVID-19 vaccine AstraZeneca' which is now known commercially as 'Vaxzevria'. The MHRA has not approved doses branded as 'Covishield' and none have been administered in the UK. All AstraZeneca vaccines given in the UK are the same product and appear on the NHS COVID Pass as Vaxzevria. The European Medicines Agency has authorised Vaxzevria vaccine and it is therefore recognised by the EU.

HOME OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mhairi Black:**[\[902522\]](#)

What plans she has to bring forward proposals to review the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government currently has no plans to review the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. We keep drug controls under review, in consultation with the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.

Drugs Legislation forms part of our wider approach to preventing drug misuse alongside prevention and education, supporting treatment and recovery, and tackling the supply of illicit drugs.

Sarah Owen:[\[902524\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the effect of the Prevent duty on freedom of speech in (a) higher education, (b) further education and (c) schools.

Kit Malthouse:

The Department for Education and the Home Office work closely together to ensure the threat of terrorism is addressed appropriately through our education system.

The Prevent Duty should not suppress or limit lawful free speech and is only relevant where there is a risk that someone may be drawn into terrorism.

As a Government, we are committed to protecting freedom of speech. This will be strengthened with the Freedom of Speech in Higher Education Bill that was recently introduced to Parliament.

Mark Menzies:

[\[902525\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to reduce levels of burglary and theft.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government recognises the devastating impact crimes such as burglary and theft have on our communities and businesses.

That is why we are recruiting 20,000 extra police officers and why we have introduced the Safer Streets Fund to prevent these crimes from happening, supporting the deployment of solutions such as home security and increased street lighting in high crime areas.

Alun Cairns:

[\[902527\]](#)

What plans she has to support police forces in coastal communities.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is supporting all forces, including those in coastal communities, by providing 20,000 extra police officers; with 8,771 already in place.

We are also providing targeted investment to help high-crime areas. The Safer Streets Fund funds crime prevention activity in a range of areas, including coastal ones.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[902528\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to help protect police officers from harm in the line of duty.

Priti Patel:

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that our brave police receive the support and protection they deserve.

The Policing, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will enshrine in law a Police Covenant and double the maximum sentence for assaults on emergency workers.

We also continue to invest in direct support to police through the National Police Wellbeing Service.

Stephen Hammond:

[\[902529\]](#)

What estimate she has made of the total number of police officers (a) recruited by the Metropolitan Police in 2020 and (b) due to be recruited by that force in 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

We are increasing the number of police officers across England and Wales by 20,000 by March 2023.

In the calendar year 2020, the Metropolitan police recruited 3,121 police officers. This figure includes officers recruited as part of the Government's national uplift programme as well as those recruited to backfill leavers. From January to March 2021 the force recruited 598 officers.

David Simmonds:

[\[902530\]](#)

What recent progress her Department has made on implementing the new National Transfer Scheme.

Chris Philp:

We are working towards implementing the new, fairer national voluntary rota on 26 July. The package of support we have put in place for local authorities includes £20m of additional funding and expert support on age assessment.

This will encourage more local authorities to step up and play their part in this shared national responsibility of supporting vulnerable unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Mr David Davis:

[\[902531\]](#)

What recent progress she has made with the Secretary of State for Defence on implementing the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

Kevin Foster:

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy was implemented on 1 April this year.

We are working closely with the Ministry of Defence to accelerate the relocation of locally employed staff, and their families, from Afghanistan. A charter flight carrying 117 individuals arrived safely at the end of June, with more to follow this month.

Angela Crawley:

[\[902532\]](#)

What plans she has to bring forward proposals to review the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government currently has no plans to review the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. We keep drug controls under review, in consultation with the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs.

Drugs Legislation forms part of our wider approach to preventing drug misuse alongside prevention and education, supporting treatment and recovery, and tackling the supply of illicit drugs.

Jeff Smith:

[\[902537\]](#)

What the average length of time is for her Department to process asylum applications.

Kevin Foster:

Calculating an average length of time does not take into account the numerous factors that contribute to the decision-making process. Nor does it consider our prioritisation of children and the most vulnerable.

We are working to improve the speed of decisions and reduce the number of outstanding claims; but there will always be complex cases, and it is right we take time to work through them carefully, not rush to meet an arbitrary deadline.

Tim Farron:

[\[902539\]](#)

What progress her Department has made towards establishing a target for annual refugee resettlement places.

Chris Philp:

The number of refugees we resettle every year depends on a variety of factors including local authorities' capacity and the extent to which Community Sponsorship continues to thrive.

This year the recovery from the pandemic will be a significant factor affecting capacity. We continue to work closely with our partners to assess their capacity for resettlement in the months ahead.

Judith Cummins:

[\[902540\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to help police forces tackle road traffic offences.

Kit Malthouse:

How road traffic offences are enforced and how resources are deployed are operational matters for the individual Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables in conjunction with local policing plans.

The police have a range of powers available to them in road traffic legislation and will in each case decide what the most appropriate enforcement action is.

Steven Bonnar:

[\[902542\]](#)

What steps she is taking to meet the UK's international obligations on refugees and asylum seekers.

Chris Philp:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those in need. Since 2015, we have resettled more than 25,000 people – more than any other EU country – and we have a new global UK Resettlement Scheme running.

The Nationality and Borders Bill, which was introduced last week, will fix the broken asylum system in the UK and ensure that access to the UK's asylum system is based on need, not on the ability to pay people smugglers.

■ Antisocial Behaviour: Sports

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[28380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the use of sport to tackle anti-social behaviour in communities.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government introduced a range of flexible tools and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The powers are deliberately local in nature. Home Office [statutory guidance](#), which was updated in January 2021, supports local agencies to work together to prevent

and respond to anti-social behaviour in a way that takes account of the needs of the victim, the perpetrator and the wider community.

The Home Secretary regularly meets her Cabinet colleagues to discuss government priorities, which include crime and anti-social behaviour.

■ Asylum

Helen Hayes:

[\[28271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on support given to local authorities to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office engages regularly with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, as well as other Government departments, on the provision of support to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

For refugees resettled through the UK Resettlement Scheme, local authorities are provided with funding to support the welcome and integration of refugees. Through our New Plan for Immigration we will strengthen this safe and legal route to the UK, including with an enhanced integration package to help refugees thrive in the UK.

Asylum seekers who are destitute in the UK are provided with housing and financial support while their claim is being decided. In addition, all asylum seekers have access to a 24/7 AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) service provided for the Home Office by Migrant Help where they can raise any concerns regarding accommodation or support services, and they can get information about how to obtain further support.

We have recently announced an additional £20m funding for local authorities supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK as part of the new National Transfer Scheme.

The Home Secretary recently announced the Refugee Transitions Outcomes Fund (RTOF), a £14m cross-Government initiative that aims to increase the self-sufficiency and integration of newly granted refugees, helping them to move into work, learn English, access housing and build links in their local communities. The RTOF has been designed in collaboration with a number of Government departments, including MHCLG.

■ Asylum: Housing

Helen Hayes:

[\[28270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of initial accommodation for asylum seekers.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office contracted an independent organisation, Human Applications, to conduct a rapid review of initial accommodation for single adult asylum seekers,

including hotels and the former military barracks. This was to provide assurance of compliance with public health guidelines to prevent the transmission of Covid 19.

Human Applications completed their visits, and they have now submitted a report with their findings and recommendations. We have already shared a report summary with our partners, including non-Government Organisations and Strategic Migration Partnerships. We have also held workshops with our accommodation providers to allow them to action specific findings.

■ Forensic Science: Private Sector

Dawn Butler: [\[28120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will list the private sector companies which have delivered forensic science services to police forces in England and Wales since 1 April 2012.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold this information. Procurement of forensic science services is a matter for forces and PCCs.

Dawn Butler: [\[28121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of forensic science services for police forces have been carried out by private sector companies in England and Wales, in each year since 2012.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold this information. Procurement of forensic science services is a matter for forces and PCCs.

■ Fraud: Mobile Phones

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[28971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle the increase in the number of sophisticated scam text messages being received and resultant financial losses by the victims of those scams.

Kevin Foster:

Fraudsters will use any means they can, including through highly deceptive and sophisticated techniques such as text messaging scams, to trick people into handing over their hard-earned money.

This Government is committed to protecting people from all types of fraud and pursuing those who perpetuate these crimes wherever possible. It is for this reason as part of the 2020 Spending Review, the Government committed a further £63m to the Home Office to tackle economic crime, including fraud. In May, we published a Statement of Progress on the Economic Crime Plan which committed to developing a comprehensive Fraud Action Plan.

We are working closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) and the telecommunication industry to tackle fraud carried out through texts and calls and close those vulnerabilities criminals too easily exploit. We are also engaging with the banking sector to ensure victims are not left out of pocket through no fault of their own. Certain banks are subject to the Contingent Reimbursement Model; a voluntary code signed up to by some banks, which commit them to reimbursing victims of fraud. More information on this can be found here:

www.lendingstandardsboard.org.uk/contingent-reimbursement-model-code/.

We continue to encourage the public to forward suspicious text messages to 7726 (which is free of charge) and anyone who has been targeted by fraud to report it. Action Fraud is the national reporting service for all victims of fraud and cybercrime and can be contacted by phone on 0300 123 2040 or through their website:

http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud.

All of this information is being used by the City of London Police, the National Cyber Security Centre, and the National Crime Agency to identify, disrupt and stop fraudsters.

■ Hate Crime: Ethnic Groups

Navendu Mishra:

[\[28353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether each police force collected information on the race or ethnicity of victims of hate crime prior to the collection of that information under the Government's experimental pilot to disaggregate religious hate crime data under its 2016-2020 Hate Crime Action Plan.

Victoria Atkins:

Information on the race or ethnicity of hate crime victims has not previously been collected centrally by the Home Office but will be during 2021/22. Individual police forces will collect a range of data for operational reasons.

■ Immigration: Afghanistan

Neil Coyle:

[\[28214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure Afghan nationals who have worked (a) with and (b) for the British (i) diplomatic or (ii) military effort in their country will be supported to flee persecution by the Taliban or other militia.

Kevin Foster:

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was launched on 1 April 2021. It acknowledges and reflects the changed situation in Afghanistan and with it, the potential risk to current and former locally employed staff who worked for the UK Government over the past twenty years.

Under the ARAP, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served.

We are significantly accelerating the pace of relocations in parallel with the military withdrawal, but our commitment to those who are eligible under the ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited.

■ **Immigration: EU Nationals**

Dame Diana Johnson: [28130]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of children and young people in the care of local authorities who were eligible to apply for the EU Settled Status Scheme.

Dame Diana Johnson: [28132]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of children and young people in the care of local authorities and who were eligible to apply for the EU Settled Status Scheme who had not applied to that Scheme by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

Dame Diana Johnson: [28133]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that all children and young people in the care of local authorities, who were eligible to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme and where no application was made, can have their stay regularised.

Kevin Foster:

Starting in 2018 the Home Office recommended Local Authorities (LAs) and, in Northern Ireland, Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT), with existing statutory duties towards looked after children (LAC) and care leavers, conduct a review of their existing cohort of LAC and care leavers to identify those eligible to apply to the EUSS.

The Home Office have been working closely with LAs and HSCT to monitor their progress in making applications to the EU Settlement Scheme on behalf of their looked after children and care leavers and carried out a survey of local authorities earlier this year.

This survey indicated, as of 23 April 2021, 3660 looked after children and care leavers had been identified as eligible to apply to EUSS. At that stage applications had already been submitted by or for 2,440 (67 per cent) of those. Further information on the survey is available at: [EU Settlement Scheme: looked-after children and care leavers survey 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eu-settlement-scheme-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers-survey-2020).

In line with the Citizens' Rights Agreement, there remains scope, indefinitely, for a person eligible for status under the EUSS to make a late application to the scheme where there are reasonable grounds for their failure to meet the deadline

applicable to them. We have now published guidance for caseworkers on reasonable grounds for making a late EUSS application.

The guidance, which reflects our engagement with stakeholders on this issue, is not exhaustive and all cases will be considered on a flexible and pragmatic basis in light of their particular circumstances. Examples of reasonable grounds will include, but are not limited to:

- where a parent, guardian or local authority has failed to apply on behalf of a child;
- where a person had a serious medical condition, which meant they were unable to apply by the relevant deadline;
- if someone is a victim of modern slavery or is in an abusive or controlling relationship;
- someone who is isolated, vulnerable or did not have the digital skills to access the application process;
- where a person was unable to apply by the relevant deadline for compelling practical or compassionate reasons, including in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can find the guidance at pages 26-44 of the main EUSS caseworker guidance: see 'Making an application: deadline' in 'EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members' at:

[EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-and-asylum/eu-settlement-scheme/eu-settlement-scheme-eu-other-eea-and-swiss-citizens-and-their-family-members)

Dame Diana Johnson:

[28131]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications her Department received to the EU Settled Status Scheme by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office already publishes such data relating to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) online. It can be found at: [EU Settlement Scheme statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics)

■ Immigration: Hong Kong

Craig Whittaker:

[28144]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a means-tested visa fee and immigration health surcharge waiver in response to financial obstacles being put in the way of British Nationals (Overseas) seeking to leave Hong Kong and come to the UK.

Kevin Foster:

There are no plans to introduce a fee waiver or immigration health surcharge waiver on the British Nationals (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

The cost of the BN(O) visa has been set at a lower level than many other routes to the UK. In setting the fee, we have looked at analogous routes, the principles for

determining fees set out in the Immigration Act 2014 and the overall design of the new immigration system.

Like others coming to the UK, applicants to this route should contribute towards the cost of the NHS services they will be relying on when in the UK.

Sarah Owen: [\[28343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to waive the Immigration Health Surcharge for holders of Hong Kong BNO visas.

Kevin Foster:

There are no plans to introduce a waiver for the Immigration Health Surcharge on the British Nationals (Overseas) (BN(O)) route.

Like others coming to the UK applicants to the route should contribute to the cost of the NHS Services they will be using, rather than these costs fall to UK taxpayers more widely.

Sarah Owen: [\[28344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that police and intelligence services have adequate funding and training to ensure the safety of Hong Kong people living in the UK on Hong Kong BNO visas.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office have announced a police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion for 2021/22. This is a total increase of up to £600 million on 2020/21 for the policing system.

Police Officers continue to receive training and updates throughout their career. This can include to address specific changes in law, to deal with emerging issues and continued professional development.

■ Migrants: Detainees

Paul Blomfield: [\[29034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 12 March 2021 to Question 165514 on Migrants: Detainees, on what date she plans to publish the Action Access evaluation report.

Chris Philp:

We are working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Action Access and they have appointed the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to independently evaluate the pilot. NatCen will be publishing the evaluation on their website.

■ Police

Mr Richard Holden: [\[29150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Government's commitment to providing an additional 20,000 police officers by 2023, what

recent estimate she has made of the total number of police officers in (a) Durham and (b) the police service nationally.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the number of officers recruited as part of the Police Officer Uplift Programme. The latest data are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-officer-uplift-statistics>

The latest data show that as at 31 March 2021, Durham Constabulary employed a total of 1,226 police officers and 137,704 across England and Wales. This represents an additional 86 officers recruited by Durham Constabulary as part of the Uplift Programme, and an additional 8,771 across England and Wales as part of the Programme.

These data are collected by Police Force Area. Lower levels of geography are not collected.

■ **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill**

Ian Byrne:

[\[28365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make available the equality impact assessment relating to Part 4 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

We will be publishing an equality impact assessment in relation to the Home Office provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, including Part 4.

■ **Primates: Animal Experiments**

Henry Smith:

[\[27126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans for her Department's policy to only allow non-human primates who are the offspring of those bred in captivity or who are sourced from self-sustaining colonies that do not trap monkeys in the wild to be used in scientific research in line with the EU policy due to be implemented in 2022.

Victoria Atkins:

The requirement of EU Directive 2010/63/EU that non-human primates cannot be sourced from the wild for breeding within a self-sustaining colony is already implemented for Marmosets, as stated in the UK legislation.

The UK legislation presently requires that all non-human primates used in research are bred specifically for research, so wild caught animals cannot not be used for procedures.

Establishments that have a licence to breed other primate species must have a strategy in place to increase the proportion of primates bred from primates bred in captivity.

■ Refugees: Resettlement**Marsha De Cordova:****[28323]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to introduce targets for resettling refugees under the new global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) that will commence on completion of the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes, announced in March 2021.

Chris Philp:

The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) commenced in March 2021 following the successful completion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme through which 20,000 refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria were given sanctuary in the UK. Through the UKRS we continue to welcome vulnerable refugees in need of protection to the UK.

The number of refugees we resettle every year will depend on a variety of factors including local authorities' capacity for supporting those we resettle and the extent to which Community Sponsorship continues to thrive. This year, the recovery across Government from the pandemic will be a significant factor affecting capacity, along with levels of illegal immigration. We are working closely with our partners to assess the capacity for resettlement in the months ahead and will continue to welcome those in need in the years to come.

Paul Blomfield:**[29033]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many refugees have come to the UK through the UK Resettlement Scheme in each month since February 2021.

Chris Philp:

The UK Resettlement Scheme commenced in March 2021, immediately following the successful completion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. The UK Resettlement Scheme continues to successfully resettle refugees, as local authority and community sponsor capacity allows, and as we recover from the pandemic.

Statistics under the scheme are published through official statistics at quarterly intervals. The next set of statistics will be published in July and will include the number of people resettled since March. These are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>.

■ Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships: Welsh Language**Hywel Williams:****[28078]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of including a Welsh-only option for people receiving registration documents from the General Register Office.

Kevin Foster:

The Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 requires all events to be registered in the registration district in which they take place. The forms which are used are prescribed in secondary legislation.

Where an event takes place in Wales, the information to be recorded in the registration can be provided and recorded in English only, or in both English and Welsh.

The General Register Office (GRO) has made no assessment of including a Welsh-only option for people receiving registration documents.

Hywel Williams:

[28079]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent review her Department has conducted of the format and provision of the Welsh language on registration documents provided by the General Register Office in Wales.

Kevin Foster:

The Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 requires all events to be registered in the registration district in which they take place. The forms which are used are prescribed in secondary legislation. Where an event takes place in Wales, the information to be recorded in the registration can be provided and recorded in English only, or in both English and Welsh.

The General Register Office (GRO) has not conducted a recent review of the format and provision of the Welsh language on registration documents.

■ **UK Border Force: Boats**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[28091]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, from which country and which location in that country each boat in the service of Border Force was procured from.

Chris Philp:

Cutters - HMC Seeker, Searcher, Vigilant and Valiant were procured from Holland and HMC Protector was procured from Finland.

Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPVs) – Active, Alert, Eagle, Nimrod, Hunter and Speedwell were procured in the UK.

RHIBs – All 5 current RHIBs in service were procured in the UK.

■ **UK Border Force: Finance**

Margaret Ferrier:

[25848]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the recommendations of the Global Travel Taskforce report, published in April 2021, whether the Government plans to increase the budget for UK Border Force.

Chris Philp:

The budget for the Home Office, including Border Force, will be reviewed as part of the forthcoming Spending Review 2021 to be commissioned by the Treasury. An announcement on the Spending Review plans is expected in due course.

The Home Office will always ensure Border Force has the necessary resources to keep the border secure

■ Visas: Turkey**Peter Grant:** [\[29074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ensure that people who have been granted Turkish businessperson visas can request a national insurance number without having to provide evidence which has already been provided for their visa application.

Kevin Foster:

The arrangements for processing National Insurance number (NINo) requests are the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions. It no longer requires a face-to-face interview as part of the process and will accept the Biometric Residence Permit of Turkish business persons as evidence of self-employment.

It is not mandatory for Turkish business persons to provide a NINo as part of their immigration application and the Home Office will ensure they are not penalised for any previous delays in issuing one.

■ Windrush Generation: Compensation**Vicky Foxcroft:** [\[26151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 3065 on Windrush Generation: compensation, for what reasons the number of claimants to the Windrush Compensation Scheme that have demonstrated no impact on life is not held centrally.

Priti Patel:

The system at this time does not allow us to extract this information without doing a manual trawl of all case records and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ All Party Groups: Finance****Navendu Mishra:** [\[27355\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what steps the Commission plans to take to help improve the transparency of the funding of All-Party Parliamentary Groups.

Sir Charles Walker:

The Commission is aware that the Committee on Standards is currently undertaking a wide-ranging inquiry into the rules relating to All-Party Parliamentary Groups. The Committee has announced that its inquiry will cover the "transparency and appropriateness of funding of APPG activities and secretarial support". The inquiry will also cover other subjects including financial governance and controls, use of passes, the role of external secretariats and the risk of APPGs being used for access by lobbyists, other organisations or foreign governments, and who should be accountable for ensuring that APPGs comply with the rules.

The Committee has taken written evidence in this inquiry, which is available on its website, and plans to announce a series of oral evidence session after the summer recess and making a report to the House as soon as possible. The Commission looks forward to receiving the Committee's recommendations on this important matter.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Antisocial Behaviour

Steve Reed:

[29057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to help local authorities to tackle noise complaints and antisocial behaviour.

Eddie Hughes:

The Social Housing White Paper sets out proposals to tackle anti-social behaviour by highlighting the responsibilities that police, local authorities and social landlords have in tackling anti-social behaviour. This includes information we will be publishing clarifying the role local authorities specifically have in tackling noise complaints disseminated through bodies such as the LGA.

■ Building Safety Fund

Hilary Benn:

[28066]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether blocks with unsafe cladding incorporating zinc panels are eligible for funding from the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

The eligibility criteria of external wall systems for the Building Safety Fund are set out in Annex A - Technical Information to the Building Safety Fund Prospectus which is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887231/Annex_A_-_technical_information.pdf. If a zinc panel is part of an external wall system that meets the criteria in Annex A then, subject to the building meeting the other Building Safety Fund criteria such as height, it could be eligible for funding.

■ Community Ownership Fund

Douglas Chapman:

[28221]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to issue a prospectus for the Community Ownership Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

My Department will issue the prospectus for the Community Ownership Fund shortly. In most cases, community groups will be able to make the case for up to £250,000

match funding which communities have raised themselves. The prospectus will set out detailed advice on how to structure a bid, what activity will support this, what information to include, and the criteria by which bids will be assessed.

■ **Community Ownership Fund: Community Ownership Fund: Devolution**

Douglas Chapman:

[\[28224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the devolved Administrations on the Community Ownership Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is determined that community groups who want to save assets at risk in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can benefit from this Fund

To ensure this, my officials have engaged counterparts across the devolved administrations, as well as stakeholders from the voluntary and community sector across the UK to inform the design of the Fund.

■ **Community Ownership Fund: Scotland**

Douglas Chapman:

[\[28223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether applications for the Community Ownership Fund which originate in Scotland will be processed by his Department.

Eddie Hughes:

The Community Ownership Fund is a UK Government initiative to support community groups across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland save assets at risk

All applications from eligible community groups will be processed by my Department.

■ **Environmental Health: Recruitment**

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[26084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to encourage recruitment in the environmental health profession.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[26085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the scope for increasing the numbers of Environmental Health apprenticeship schemes.

Luke Hall:

The Department has convened the Regulatory Services Task and Finish Group to help coordinate central government's expectation of 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 is now focussed on developing a suite of recommendations, including measures that could support the attraction and recruitment of environmental health officers and increase the number of regulatory apprentices in local authorities.

■ Hate Crime

Navendu Mishra: [\[28352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16970 on Hate Crime and the statement in that Answer that the Government is now considering a range of options to tackle hate crime beyond the current action plan, what range of options is the Government considering.

Luke Hall:

It is not yet possible to share the options for tackling hate crime beyond the Hate Crime Action Plan as these are under development.

■ Housing: Insulation

Shabana Mahmood: [\[26094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with banks, building societies and mortgage lenders on encouraging the adoption of the revised Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors guidance on EWS1.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[26096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what impact assessment his Department has undertaken of the potential risks of associated with 20 per cent of banks, building societies and mortgage lenders not adopting the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors EWS1 guidance.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[26097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on improving the adoption rates of the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors EWS1 guidance throughout the mortgage providing industry.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[26098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the impact on the housing market of mortgage providers that have not adopted the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors EWS1 guidance.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is assured that most major lenders, about 80% of the mortgage market, have adopted the approach in the RICS EWS1 guidance or already take a significantly less risk averse approach. The Government has not said that 20% of lenders have not adopted the RICS EWS1 guidance: our efforts have been focussed on the lenders with the largest share of the market, so this does not necessarily mean that the remaining 20% of market share, made up of much smaller lenders, are not using the RICS guidance.

The Department frequently engages with the industry and will continue to challenge them on the use of the EWS1 process, as well as pressing for more data transparency on how the RICS guidance is being applied, and the effect of the process on mortgage applications. We already know, via data from one major lender, that an EWS1 already exists for 50% of mortgage applications where one is requested, and we are working with industry to ensure this picture only improves.

We will continue to work with lenders to enable them to understand and accept other forms of assurance such as a comprehensive fire risk assessment which includes the external walls or post 2018 building control sign off for high rise blocks.

Housing: South of England**Damian Hinds:****[26100]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of (a) an ageing population, (b) average household size, (c) net immigration and (d) other relevant factors on housing demand in the south of England.

Christopher Pincher:

A number of different factors influence housing demand, and officials monitor a wide variety of indicators to assess trends in housing demand, both at a national and sub-national level. We have previously published analysis on the determinants of house price changes which shows the scale of the effect of, for example, household growth: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/699846/OFF_SEN_Ad_Hoc_SFR_House_prices_v_PDF.pdf My officials regularly liaise with the Office for National Statistics, who provide estimates of population and household formation which take account of factors such as population demographics.

Immigration: Hong Kong**Craig Whittaker:****[28145]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that British Nationals (Overseas) who are arriving in the UK are protected from intimidation and hostility from groups in the UK.

Luke Hall:

On 8 April, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced a new UK-wide Welcome Programme to support Hong Kong BN(O) status holders with a package worth £43.1 million.

The Government's ambition is for Hong Kong BN(O)s to feel welcomed and supported and that is why, as a part of the integration package for Hong Kong BN(O) status holders, we have committed £300,000 to set up a new third party hate crime reporting service.

■ Kingspan Group: Insulation**Shabana Mahmood:****[26095]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what further steps his Department has taken, in addition to writing an open letter to building control companies, in response to Kingspan Insulation Ltd withdrawing the three test reports on the safety of its K15 insulation.

Christopher Pincher:

On 10 March 2021 we issued a letter to fire safety professionals and building control bodies reminding them that Kingspan has retracted three test reports. The letter is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-building-control-bodies-on-the-retraction-of-three-tests-carried-out-on-kingspan-k15-insulation> The letter recommends that fire safety professionals and buildings control bodies review their records to check that any assessments they have carried out using these tests are identified and revisited in light of the information highlighted during the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The content of this letter is not new and is simply a reminder of the steps they should take in light of this information. On 5 July 2021, the Government introduced the Building Safety Bill which set out the biggest reforms to building safety regulation for a generation, including provisions to strengthen and extend the scope of the powers available to the Government to regulate construction products. The Bill will require manufacturers to ensure that their products are safe before putting them on the United Kingdom market. It also paves the way for a national regulator for construction products being set up within the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) to oversee the new regime. The regulator will have robust inspection, market surveillance and enforcement capability so unsafe products can be removed from the market.

■ Local Government Services: Noise**Steve Reed:****[28209]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what data his Department holds on the number of local authorities that provide a 24-hour noise complaints service in England.

Christopher Pincher:

Local authorities are responsible for investigating noise complaints which unreasonably and substantially interfere with the use or enjoyment of a home or other premises, or which injure health or be likely to injure health, under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Local authorities can decide what level of service they provide to deal with noise complaints, for example, whether to have officers on call at night. MHCLG does not hold information on the types of noise complaint services offered by different local authorities in England.

■ Migrant Workers: Hong Kong**Sarah Owen:****[29142]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that employers are aware of the Hong Kong BNO visa scheme.

Luke Hall:

On 8 April, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced a new UK-wide Welcome Programme to support Hong Kong BN(O) status holders with a package worth £43.1 million.

MHCLG has been working across departments to discuss ways to ensure BN(O) status holders are able to access appropriate employment and business opportunities, including the recognition of qualifications. The Secretaries of State for MHCLG and BEIS have written a joint letter to all the Chief Executives of UK regulators and professional bodies, encouraging a unified way of assessing qualifications from BN(O) status holders in the UK.

There is also advice for employers on employing those on LOTR and the BN(O) route available on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/employing-bno-citizens-in-the-uk>)

■ Permitted Development Rights**Steve Reed:****[29058]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16126, on Permitted Development Rights, if he will publish the referenced impact assessment before the proposed new permitted development right, to enable the change of use from the new Class E to residential use, comes into force on 1 August 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

As we stated in our previous responses, we aim to publish a full Regulatory Impact Assessment on the measures as soon as possible.

■ Private Rented Housing: Housing Benefit

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[26152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 11595 on private rented housing: housing benefit, whether the Government plans to bring forward proposals to amend legislation to ensure that landlords of private housing assess tenants fairly.

Eddie Hughes:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN 11595 on 15 June 2021. We have no current plans to bring forward additional legislation.

■ Public Lavatories: Disability

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[29010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent disabled toilets and changing places being used for other purposes.

Christopher Pincher:

Building owners, including local authorities, have the responsibility to maintain and oversee their toilets. To ensure buildings are safe, we are undertaking a programme of work to upgrade statutory guidance supporting the Building Regulations. The Government is undertaking a full review of Part M (access to and use of buildings) which includes a review of guidance on new accessible toilets and wider inclusive design for new buildings. We also recently carried out a call for evidence to establish the best way to deliver the right mix of toilets for everyone as a priority. We want to make sure that women can expect a sense of dignity, security and safety when using toilet facilities.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites

Navendu Mishra:

[\[28354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16972 on Travellers: Caravan Sites, if he will publish the programme that the Planning Advisory Service used for its recent series of events it provided for local authorities to enhance their understanding of planning for Gypsies, Roma and Traveller communities to support the future site provision for those communities; and how many local authorities took part in those events.

Christopher Pincher:

Details of the main topics covered in recent events held by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to support authorities in planning for gypsies and travellers are published on the PAS website (under past events). Any further details can be obtained by contacting PAS directly.

A total of 102 local authorities registered to attend one or more of the six events that were held.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Correspondence**

Kevin Brennan: [28084]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many items of written correspondence from hon. Members sent to Ministers of 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 of her Department.

Greg Hands:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to the answer I gave on 28 May 2021 to Question UIN: 6456.

■ Department for International Trade: Treaties

Emily Thornberry: [28135]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what legal services her Department has procured from Fieldfisher LLP to advise on the territorial application of treaties; and in respect of which treaties those services will be required.

Greg Hands:

The Department has procured a contract for legal support in relation to the possible extension of its free trade agreements to territories for whose international relations the UK is responsible.

The contract will be published on the Government's Contracts Finder website in accordance with Government Transparency Requirements. The Contracts Finder website is available on GOV.uk at: <https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>

■ Overseas Trade: China

Ms Nusrat Ghani: [28243]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 4244 on Overseas Trade: China, whether her Department plans to progress trade discussions with China while that country maintains sanctions on hon. Members, lawyers and academics.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government has no plans to negotiate a trade deal with China.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Neil Parish: [28180]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Trade and Agriculture Commission will be involved in the final stages of negotiating the Australia-UK free trade agreement prior to signature.

Greg Hands:

The Commission will scrutinise the signed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Australia to inform Parliamentary scrutiny. The role of the Trade and Agriculture Commission is not to advise on negotiations. Its role will be as debated and approved during the passage of the Trade Act 2021 and the Agriculture Act 2020.

The Department has increased engagement with key agricultural stakeholders during FTA negotiations through its dedicated agri-food Trade Advisory Group, which meets at least three times a year, or as required by developments in the free trade negotiation process.

■ TRIPS Agreement**Clive Lewis:**[\[27257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the World Trade Organisation's Agreement for the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), what the Government's policy is on (a) the proposed WTO TRIPS Waiver and (b) allowing other governments to use a waiver in their domestic contexts.

Greg Hands:

I refer the Hon. Member for Norwich South to the answer given to the Hon. Gentleman for Birkenhead on 17 May 2021: UIN: 448.

Clive Lewis:[\[27258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if the Government will publish its statements made on the proposed TRIPS Waiver during the open-ended negotiations on (a) 30 June and (b) 6 July 2021.

Greg Hands:

The UK has engaged regularly in debates at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council and other international institutions to promote affordable and equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines for all. The Government respects the informal format of WTO discussions and does not publish proceedings from those meetings. However, at the informal TRIPS Council on 30 June and 6 July, the UK sought to further understand the parameters of the proposed waiver and the European Union proposal by asking for clarifications. This remains consistent with the Government's approach to encourage evidence-based discussions between WTO Members to find solutions to present issues within the multilateral Intellectual Property framework.

Clive Lewis:[\[27259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment the Government has made of the implications for its policies of the European Commission communication to the World Trade Organization Council for Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (IP/C/W/680) on the 4 June 2021.

Greg Hands:

The United Kingdom is currently assessing the proposal submitted by the European Union to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council. The Government welcomes alternative proposals for the TRIPS Council's consideration. It is important to find an effective, balanced, and targeted outcome. The Government will continue to engage in IP discussions and review the merits of any proposal submitted to the TRIPS Council, but the UK must continue to push ahead with pragmatic action now, including voluntary licensing and technology transfer agreements for vaccines, support for Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access, and solutions for production bottlenecks and supply chain issues.

■ **World Expo: United Arab Emirates****Emily Thornberry:**[\[27065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the (a) total cost is of and (b) forecast financial benefits are from the UK's participation in the Dubai Expo from October 2021 to April 2022.

Graham Stuart:

The total cost to HM Government is £36.5m. This is funded from existing budgets within the GREAT Campaign, the Department for International Trade and five Government Departments with an additional cash and value in kind sponsorship from industry worth £7.5m.

UK companies have already won contracts with Expo 2020 Dubai worth £1.2bn. UK companies will be provided with opportunities to connect and develop new partnerships with other businesses from across more than 190 participating nations to continue developing global relationships and trade.

JUSTICE■ **Downview Prison****Tonia Antoniazzi:**[\[28288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will place a copy of the HMP Downview E Wing Policy in the Library.

Tonia Antoniazzi:[\[28289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the HMP Downview E Wing Policy is under review.

Alex Chalk:

Local policies (such as HMP Downview 'E Wing Policy') must be consistent with the policy framework 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender,' which is available here: [The care and management of individuals who are transgender - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-care-and-management-of-individuals-who-are-transgender)

HMP Downview's 'E Wing Policy' is a local prison policy and, as is usual practice for such a policy, it is not published more widely. This is because local policies like this one are subject to change at short notice at the discretion of prison governors. Like all local policies this policy remains under regular review.

■ Drugs: Crime

Crispin Blunt:

[R] [26079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been subject to immediate custody for offences committed under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 since that legislation came into force, broken down by (a) year, (b) offence type including (i) production, supply and possession with intent to supply a controlled drug by Class A, B and C, (ii) unlawful importation by Class A, B, C and unknown class, (iii) possession of a controlled drug by Class A, B, C and unknown class and (iv) permitting premises to be used for unlawful purposes by Class A, B, C and unknown class.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on immediate custodial sentences for specific offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, in England and Wales, up to December 2020, in the 'Principal Offence Proceedings and Outcomes by Home Office Offence Code' data tool, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987731/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020.xlsx

As the data tool above does not cover the full time series requested, please see the attached table with details of immediate custodial sentences given for offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 from 2005 to 2020. 2005 is the earliest year that the level of detail required is available within the Courts Proceedings Database.

Attachments:

1. Table [\[PQ 26079 final table .xlsx\]](#)

■ Family Proceedings

Dan Jarvis:

[28192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support his Department provides to litigants when filling forms as part of complex family law proceedings.

Chris Philp:

Access to justice is a fundamental right and the Government is committed to ensuring that everyone can get the support they need to access the justice system across England and Wales.

Litigants can get access to accessible versions of all HM Courts and Tribunals forms. If a litigant has a disability, then they can have dictation support to complete forms by HM Courts and Tribunals staff (as a reasonable adjustment).

HM Courts and Tribunals Service has a Memorandum of Understanding with Support Through Court, who offer practical and emotional support to litigants in person. This

memorandum is supported by senior judiciary. Support Through Court is based at 16 courts locations in England and Wales, also offering a national helpline.

In April 2020 we launched the new, two-year, £3.1m Legal Support for Litigants in Person Grant, which is designed to fund services provided at local, regional and national levels with the aim of understanding more about how they can combine to help people. This new grant funding is in addition to the more than £9m that the Ministry of Justice has invested in support for litigants in person since 2015 through our existing Litigants in Person Support Strategy.

The HM Courts and Tribunals Service reform programme is improving the practice and administration of the family justice system by making the system easier to understand and navigate so that it better meets the needs of users.

■ Judiciary: Training

Dan Jarvis:

[28191]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training is provided to members of the judiciary to recognise victims of (a) domestic abuse and (b) domestic violence.

Kit Malthouse:

The Lord Chief Justice (LCJ), the Senior President of the Tribunals, and the Chief Coroner have statutory responsibility for judicial training, under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, and Coroners and Justice Act 2009 respectively. These responsibilities are exercised through the Judicial College. The judiciary and professional staff in the Judicial College are responsible for the design, content, and delivery of judicial training.

Judicial training in domestic abuse, including domestic violence, is included in family law and criminal courses run by the Judicial College. It is prioritised for induction and continuation training for judges. All judges must complete their induction training before they can hear such cases. During the 2020/21 training year all judges newly appointed to sit in crime and family received this training. The training is undertaken by judges of all levels, and speakers and tutors range from district judges to judges from the Court of Appeal and always includes lectures from academics and experts in psychiatry, psychology and other professions and agencies working to address domestic abuse.

The training reflects the wide nature of domestic abuse and domestic violence and covers all areas recognised by the Government as abuse, ranging from serious sexual and other assaults, emotional abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, including financial coercion and control. Training is kept under constant review and is regularly updated to reflect latest developments.

■ Legal Aid Scheme: Domestic Violence

Dan Jarvis:

[28193]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications for legal aid have been unsuccessful where the applicant is a (a) domestic abuse and (b) domestic violence victim in each of the last 10 years.

Alex Chalk:

The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Prosecutions

Alex Cunningham:

[28183]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people were prosecuted under the single justice procedure in each month of 2021 to date by type of offence; and what the plea rates were for offences charged under the single justice procedure in each of those months.

Chris Philp:

Data showing the number of defendants dealt with via single justice procedures (SJP) notices at the magistrates' courts by plea and offence in England and Wales from January to March 2021 (latest available) can be found in the attached table.

The data supplied is a subset of published information relating to the timeliness of defendants dealt with by SJP notice which is available in Table 1 of the Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly, latest to March 2021.

Attachments:

1. Table [\[PQ 28183 - table.xlsx\]](#)

■ Sex Offender Treatment Programme: Gender Recognition

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[28290]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what provision exists for biologically male sexual offenders housed in the female estate (a) with and (b) without a Gender Recognition Certificate to access Sex Offender Treatment Programmes.

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[28291]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that Sex Offender Treatment Programmes are (a) open and (b) welcoming for biologically male transgender prisoners convicted of sexual offences who are held in the male estate.

Alex Chalk:

Accredited sexual offender (SO) programmes are not currently available in the women's estate. However, bespoke interventions are provided where required to ensure that we properly manage the risk posed by all offenders.

In the male estate, the accredited SO programmes are open to individuals who are legally male but identify as female.

A strategic review of all HMPPS designed accredited programmes is underway and will include consideration of the interventions available for transgender individuals.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Government

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[28974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he plans to publish the Government's proposals on tackling the legacy of Northern Ireland's past.

Mr Robin Walker:

The current system for dealing with the legacy of the past is failing to bring satisfactory outcomes for families and placing a heavy burden on the criminal justice system. It is not working for anyone and is leaving society in Northern Ireland hamstrung by its past.

On 24 June, the UK Government - along with the Irish Government - agreed to commence a process of intensive engagement with the Northern Ireland parties and all relevant stakeholders and civil society, including victims groups, with a view to making progress on this issue as soon as possible. This engagement process has now started, and the UK Government has committed to bringing forward proposals and to introducing legislation to address the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Ministers: Conduct

Mr Mark Harper:

[\[28995\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 25746 on the resignation of the former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to commission the Director General of the Propriety and Ethics Team in the Cabinet Office to investigate and report to him on matters on the conduct of Government Ministers.

Boris Johnson:

Paragraph 1.4 of the Ministerial Code sets out the process for investigating alleged breaches of the Code.

SCOTLAND**■ Scotland Office: Correspondence****Kevin Brennan:**[\[28081\]](#)

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

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (OSSS) has received 122 items of correspondence from honourable Members since 1 April 2020.

In that period, OSSS Ministers answered 104 items, OSSS officials answered five items and one item was transferred to another UK Government department. Six items of correspondence are yet to be answered.

A further six items did not require a response or were answered by way of discussion.

TRANSPORT**■ Bridges: Northern Ireland and Scotland****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[28085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe is for publishing an update on the viability of the construction of a bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Rachel Maclean:

As part of the Union Connectivity Review, Sir Peter Hendy CBE is assessing the feasibility of such a link. Outputs of this study are due to be published this summer.

■ Bus Services: Highlands of Scotland**Jamie Stone:**[\[29129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to work with the Scottish Government to encourage an increase in bus services in the Highlands as part of a UK wide environmental strategy ahead of COP26.

Rachel Maclean:

Responsibility for bus services is a devolved matter. The Department engages with the devolved administrations, including Scotland, on issues such as bus services.

■ Car Sharing**Geraint Davies:**[\[26994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on publishing best

practice and guidance for local authorities on how they should interact with car club operators.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities are responsible for entering into agreements with car club operators to allow car club vehicles to be parked in their area. Guidance for local authorities is available from organisations representing car clubs.

In addition, the Department for Transport is working closely with the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government to understand the ways in which future planning reforms can reduce car dependency, including the role car clubs can play, to provide genuine modal choice for journeys and ultimately make walking cycling and public transport the first choice for journeys.

The Future of Mobility Urban Strategy was published in March 2019 and sets out in its Principles that "mobility innovation must help to reduce congestion through more efficient use of limited road space". We will soon be publishing our Transport Decarbonisation Plan to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport which represents the biggest piece of work we have ever done to tackle greenhouse gas emissions from transport. Car clubs and shared mobility will be considered within the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

■ **Cycling: West Yorkshire**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[27245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage cycling over other modes of transport for short length journeys in West Yorkshire.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In 2020/2021 West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) was awarded £12,566,000 from the Active Travel Fund to aid delivery of safe walking and cycling routes in the area, such as protected space for cycling, widened pavements, safer junctions and cycle and bus-only corridors.

In June 2021 the Department invited WYCA to bid for active travel capital funding for the current financial year, with decisions to be made in the autumn. Announcements on local authority revenue funding for behaviour change activities this year will be made shortly.

■ **Department for Transport: Electric Vehicles**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[28986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department on Government business are electric vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport (DfT) consists of a central Department (DfTc) and four Executive Agencies:

- Driver Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA)
- Driver Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
- Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA)

The Government Fleet Commitment (GFC) commits 100% of central government car fleets to be Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) by 2030, with an interim target of 25% by 2022. The central Department with its Agencies have already exceeded the interim GFC target for 2022, having 31% ULEV cars (383 of 1,233).

In total, the central Department with its Agencies has 1,927 vehicles, of which 20% (388) are ULEVs and 2% (36) are fully electric vehicles.

■ Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency: Standards

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[28935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications for provisional driving licences the DVLA has been in possession of for more than seven days; how many of those applications the DVLA has been in possession of for more than three months; and what the timescale is for tackling that backlog.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[28936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications to the DVLA for the renewal of driving licences have been awaiting processing for more than (a) one month, (b) two months and (c) three months; and what the timescale is for tackling that backlog.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[28937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to temporarily extend the validity of driving licences awaiting renewal by the DVLA whilst the backlog of those applications remains outstanding; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) online services have been available throughout the pandemic and are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application for a driving licence. The DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day which must be dealt with in person. Ongoing industrial action by members of the Public and Commercial Services union, leaves fewer operational staff on site to allow for social distancing in line with Welsh Government requirements and as increased demand for its services has led to delays in dealing with paper applications. The DVLA has leased an additional building to accommodate more operational staff.

The number of paper applications awaiting processing fluctuates daily as driving licences are issued and new applications received. Currently, paper applications are

likely to take between six and ten weeks to process. There may be additional delays in processing more complex transactions, for example, if medical investigations are needed as part of a driving licence application. The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found [here](#).

There are no plans to temporarily extend the validity of driving licences awaiting renewal.

■ Driving Tests: Large Goods Vehicles

Mike Amesbury: [\[27300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps his Department has taken to re-introduce HGV and LGV driver testing provision in Halton.

Rachel Maclean:

Driver testing has restarted and the DVSA is conducting around 3,000 vocational tests per week. DVSA is increasing the number of tests available through extended operating hours and ensuring all staff who can conduct a driving test are doing so.

DVSA continue to work with the driver training industry to understand demand, respond to geographical peaks, and identify issues in booking tests. DVSA has recruited 300 new car examiners which will ease the demand on examiners who are able to conduct vocational tests. They are also looking at other options for increasing vocational resource.

■ Dual Carriageways and Motorways

Mr Richard Holden: [\[28357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the number of miles of (a) dual carriageway and (b) motorway in each (i) parliamentary constituency and (ii) local authority area in (A) 1979, (B) 1997, (C) 2010 and (D) 2021.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department publishes National Statistics on Road Length in Great Britain. Data is available by (a) dual carriageway and (b) motorway in each (ii) local authority area in (C) 2010 and 2020. Data for (D) 2021 will be published in Spring 2022. Data for the above can be found in the attached Annex A.

Data is not held by (i) parliamentary constituency or for (A) 1979 and (B) 1997. Statistics on Road Length are not available prior to 2005.

■ High Speed Two

Mr Steve Baker: [\[26107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish an assessment of the effect on (a) local prices and (b) local building site productivity of HS2 Ltd pre-purchasing stocks of stone and aggregates, steel, timber and other building materials and supplies; and if he will make a statement.

Andrew Stephenson:

We are aware of price fluctuations of key construction materials, fuelled by high demand from the construction sector as it recovers strongly from the pandemic combined with decreases in global supplies.

HS2 Ltd, the Department for Transport, and colleagues at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy are monitoring this closely, but do not have any information to suggest that HS2 is having a material impact on material availability or pricing at this time.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests**David Linden:**[\[29131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his comments of 7 July 2021 on HGV driver shortages, if he will (a) make a statement on the steps his Department has taken to increase the number of driving tests available, (b) publish figures on the number of HGV driving tests carried out each year since 2016 and (c) publish the geographical distribution of those additional HGV driving tests by region.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is doing it all it can to increase the number of vocational tests available and has put in place a number of measures to do this. These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing on public holidays and weekends. This has increased the overall number of vocational test slots made available to around 3,000 per week.

The DVSA will be launching a recruitment campaign to increase the number of HGV examiners. It will also continue its training programme to enable more examiners to conduct vocational tests.

The DVSA publish data for the number of large goods vehicle (LGV) practical driving tests and pass rates for each driving test centre on Gov.uk. DVSA continues to work with the driver training industry to understand demand, respond to geographical peaks.

Additional tests are added to each test centre as the resource becomes available and can vary on a daily basis. The number of tests conducted are published as Official Statistics.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Facilities**Dr Luke Evans:**[\[27336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage the development of high quality rest stops for the benefit of HGV drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

On the 24 July 2018, the Government issued a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework that now indicates that the need for sufficient overnight lorry parking should be considered in planning policies and decisions. My Department continues to work with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to enhance this further with Local Authorities and to highlight the criteria and consideration for HGV lorry parking applications.

I recognise that there are long standing issues around driver welfare, including adequate safe and secure HGV parking with acceptable facilities for drivers. We are committed to progressing work to support the strategic and long-term development of lorry parking provisions and are looking at both established and new approaches to increase the provision for improved overnight lorry parking in England. We are also keen to explore with the industry innovative alternative approaches to provide more parking capacity and better facilities to improve HGV driver welfare

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment**Conor McGinn:**[\[28241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on tackling the shortage of heavy goods vehicle drivers in the UK workforce.

Rachel Maclean:

The Secretary of State has engaged with the Home Secretary specifically on this issue. We have broadened the eligibility of Skilled Worker visas to include jobs skilled and lowered the salary threshold. Modelling by the Migration Advisory Committee suggest the new, lower thresholds strike a reasonable balance between controlling immigration and business access to labour. The Committee found the job of HGV driver does not meet this threshold, so it is not eligible to be added to the Shortage Occupation List or to be sponsored for a Skilled Worker visa.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Recruitment and Training**Conor McGinn:**[\[28240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to promote the (a) recruitment and (b) training of heavy goods vehicle drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

We are supporting apprenticeships, including to train lorry drivers. A revised standard will be available from 1 August 2021 attracting £7,000 in apprenticeship levy funding. There is also an incentive payment of £3,000 available for new apprentices of any age with an employment start date of 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

The Department for Work and Pensions is developing a scheme to train jobseekers in HGV driving. The Flexible Support Fund is available to help the unemployed or those in receipt of Universal Credit renew their Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC).

The Department has provided a grant for the non-profit initiative Road to Logistics to train military service leavers, ex-offenders and the long term unemployed to move into jobs in the logistics sector, including lorry driving.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Driving Tests

Conor McGinn:

[\[28239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding he has made available to increase capacity at heavy goods vehicle testing centres to compensate for driving test slots lost during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

Driver testing has restarted and the DVSA is conducting around 3,000 vocational tests per week. DVSA is increasing the number of tests available through extended operating hours and ensuring all staff who can conduct a driving test are doing so.

DVSA continue to work with the driver training industry to understand demand, respond to geographical peaks and identify issues in booking tests. DVSA has recruited 300 new car examiners which will ease the demand on examiners who are able to conduct vocational tests. They are also looking at other options for increasing vocational resource.

■ Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Boats

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[28092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency was procured from.

Robert Courts:

The Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV) the levoli Black is the only vessel procured by MCA. This procurement was conducted under an 'Open Procedure' via the Official Journal to the European Union. The current vessel has been procured from an Italian organisation.

■ Motor Vehicles: Speed Limits

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[28381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what (a) funding and (b) resources his Department has provided to local authorities to support efforts to reduce incidents of speeding cars.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government believes that any form of dangerous or inconsiderate driving behaviour is a serious road safety issue. All available research shows a link between excessive speed and the risk of collisions.

We expect all drivers to observe the speed limit, and enforcement is a matter for the police. Policing of our roads, and how available resources are deployed, is the responsibility of individual chief officers, taking into account the specific local issues.

Last July, the Department for Transport launched a Call for Evidence, as part of a wider Roads Policing Review, a thorough examination of roads policing in England and Wales and its relevance to road safety. Responses to the Call for Evidence have been analysed and the Government response is currently being prepared for publication this summer. The response will address the key points raised by respondents, including feedback on speed enforcement.

The Department is providing £260 million in 21/22 to local highways authorities in England, outside London, through the Integrated Transport Block for small scale transport schemes, including road safety measures. The Integrated Transport Block is not ring-fenced, allowing authorities to spend their allocations according to their own priorities. It is therefore for each authority to decide how it allocates its resources and which transport improvement projects to support.

■ Musicians: EU Countries

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[29110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the three-stop limit for hauliers on those working with touring musicians and events across the EU.

Rachel Maclean:

Under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the UK and the EU UK hauliers can undertake up to 2 additional laden journeys within the EU after a laden international journey from the UK, with a maximum of 1 cabotage movement outside Ireland.

The TCA ensures that the vast majority of haulage operations will continue as they did before the end of the transition period.

■ Railway Stations: Disability

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[27243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to increase disability access at train stations in (a) Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) West Yorkshire.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Several stations across Yorkshire were selected for the *Access for All* Main Tier programme, including Menston, Todmorden and Garforth stations. Works are due to be completed at these stations by 2024 at the latest.

We will shortly be commissioning accessibility audits of all mainline stations that will allow us to prioritise future investment in station accessibility.

■ Railways and Trams

Mr Richard Holden:

[28356]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an estimate of the number of (a) miles of track and (b) stations for (i) railways and (ii) metro, tram or tube in each (A) parliamentary constituency and (B) local authority area in (1) 1950 and (2) 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Office for Rail and Road (ORR) publish National Statistics on track length covering recent years. In 2020, total mainline track length was 19,398 miles (31,218 kilometres). The Department nor ORR publish statistics relating to track length at parliamentary constituency or local authority level. Nor does the ORR publish data for 1950.

ORR publish National Statistics on railway stations, but the data only goes back to 1985. In 2020, there were 2,567 total railway stations in Great Britain. Table 1410 provides a list of stations by parliamentary constituency and local authority in 2020:

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>

The Department for Transport publish National Statistics on track length and stations by system for the tram and tube. In 2020/21, there were 228 miles of tram track and 264 miles of underground track in Great Britain. There were 426 tram stations and 285 underground stations. This data is published in Tables LRT0204 and LRT0201 respectively:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/light-rail-and-tram-statistics-lrt#light-rail-and-tram-fleet-and-infrastructure-lrt02>

The Department does not hold this data for 1950.

■ Roads: Batley and Spen

Kim Leadbeater:

[28382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding has been allocated from the National Roads Fund towards the repair of potholes in the Batley and Spen constituency.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport is providing over £36 million to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for local road maintenance during 2021/22. It is entirely for the Combined Authority to decide how much of this to allocate to Kirklees Council as the highway authority for the local road network in the Batley and Spen constituency.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance

Lilian Greenwood:

[28160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what proportion of steel used by Highways England in the construction and repair of the strategic road network is manufactured in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

Highways England cannot currently determine what proportion of steel used in the construction and repair of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) is manufactured in the UK. Steel is purchased within the supply chain and not by Highways England directly.

Highways England is working with its suppliers to obtain deeper visibility of raw material sourcing and manage its supply pipeline effectively.

■ Shipping: Exhaust Emissions**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[28972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to review the Clean Maritime Plan by May 2024.

Robert Courts:

Launched in 2019, the Clean Maritime Plan is the environmental route map of the Maritime 2050 Strategy. As stated in the Plan, the Government will publish a review of its implementation by 2022.

■ Transport: Coronavirus**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[27280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will provide additional sector specific support to workers in the transport sector to tackle the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on that sector.

Rachel Maclean:

The Aviation Skills Retention Platform is being delivered in partnership with the Talent Retention Solutions. The Platform was launched on 10 February 2021 for industry registrations, followed by individual registrations in early March. It allows former and current aviation sector workers who are currently out of work to register their skills, so they can be notified of relevant job opportunities, advice and upskilling opportunities. This platform is a tool for the future, which will aim to retain vital skills within the industry and help address the skills gap that existed prior to the pandemic. To date the Department provided £387,377 funding for this programme.

During the pandemic, the Government has provided over £1.5bn in emergency support for bus and light rail operators. This has provided funding to ensure that vehicles and staff were provided with the correct PPE and ensured that operators did not make significant reductions in staff numbers.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**Mr Steve Baker:**[\[R\] \[28175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the full scientific advice that the Government has received to support the current Government advice against travel to amber list countries for leisure purposes.

Robert Courts:

The Government has always been clear that we are taking a cautious approach in restarting international travel in order to protect public health and our domestic COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Evidence shows that transmissibility of COVID-19 variants of concern and the virus is significantly lower for people who have had both doses of the COVID-19 vaccination. Consequently, the success of our vaccination programme means that the blanket message for people not to travel to amber countries will be removed from 19 July.

Travel Restrictions: Pakistan**Afzal Khan:**[\[28320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to review Pakistan's red list travel status under the Government's covid-19 travel restrictions.

Robert Courts:

The allocation of countries to the traffic light system, including the allocation of Pakistan, will be reviewed every three weeks, unless concerning evidence means we need to act faster to protect public health.

The next review will take place in the week commencing 12th July 2021.

Travel: Coronavirus**Julian Sturdy:**[\[27144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will work with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs to ensure that covid-19-related guidance for travel issued by that Department is in-line with the guidance issued by his Department via its travel lists.

Robert Courts:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice, and the "traffic light" country allocation system are two independent processes based on different risks.

FCDO travel advice considers the risk to British nationals travelling overseas, while measures at the UK border aim to mitigate the overall risk to UK public health of inbound travel to the UK.

Passengers are advised to check foreign travel advice for the country or territory they wish to travel to and the rules for testing and quarantine on return to England before they book any foreign travel.

Travel: Cyprus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[28109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of moving Cyprus to the covid-19 green list for international travel.

Robert Courts:

The allocation of countries to the traffic light system, including the allocation of Cyprus, will be reviewed every three weeks, unless concerning evidence means we need to act faster to protect public health.

The next review will take place in the week commencing 12th July 2021.

■ **Vehicle Number Plates****John Spellar:**[\[28058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's regulations are for GB stickers and vehicle licence plates for travel abroad; and if he will publish the impact assessment that preceded the recent change of that designation from from GB to UK.

Rachel Maclean:

We have made no changes to the regulations on number plates which continue to allow motorists of vehicles registered in Great Britain to display:

UNITED KINGDOM, United Kingdom or UK

GREAT BRITAIN, Great Britain or GB

ENGLAND, England, ENG or Eng

SCOTLAND, Scotland, SCO or Sco

CYMRU, Cymru, CYM or Cym

WALES or Wales

All options remain available to motorists. A UK sticker or identifier is only needed for those travelling abroad.

As there were no changes to regulations, an Impact Assessment has not been prepared.

Sir Greg Knight:[\[28071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the distinguishing sign for display on vehicles registered in the UK during international travel is being changed from GB to UK; what (a) consultation and (b) discussion took place with (i) number plate suppliers and (ii) motoring organisations before the decision on that change was made; what notice those organisations were given of the Government's plans on that matter; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Changing the national identifier from GB to UK symbolises our unity as a nation and is part of a wider move towards using the UK signifier across government.

Discussion were held with representatives of the number plate manufacturers and stakeholders were notified of the change when the notification was deposited with the UN, providing a 3 month notice period before the changes come into force. We will continue to work with industry to support them in implementing this change.

TREASURY**■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[28086\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2021 to Question 22225 on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud, how many (a) employers and (b) employees have received payments under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme; and how many investigations into fraudulent abuse are underway but have not yet reached the stage of being considered for potential prosecution.

Jesse Norman:

A total of 1.3 million employers have claimed under the furlough scheme (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, CJRS) and 11.6 million employments have been put on furlough for at least part of the duration of the scheme. These figures are based on CJRS claims received by HMRC up to 14 June 2021.

Employees may be on furlough from more than one employment, in which case they would appear in these statistics for each job from which they are on furlough.

HMRC have opened 6,150 inquiries into suspected overpayments due to error or fraud as of 30 June. This figure refers to any cases open where HMRC believe there has been fraud or an error which requires HMRC intervention.

■ Corporation Tax**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[28089\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential benefits to the UK of introducing an international minimum corporation tax rate of 15 per cent.

Jesse Norman:

Reaching a two-pillar solution on global tax reform which reallocates taxing rights and introduces a global minimum tax has been a long-standing priority for the UK.

The Government is delighted that the G7 agreement secured on this in June has formed the basis for an historic agreement among over 130 members of the OECD Inclusive Framework. The Government looks forward to continuing discussions with its global partners in the coming months with a view to finalising the details by October.

Securing and implementing a final agreement on this will help stabilise the international tax framework and ensure multinational businesses pay their fair share, with the right companies paying the right amount of tax in the right place.

If final agreement is reached and both pillars are implemented in the UK, they would be subject to standard tax policymaking process, with their impacts formally assessed through the OBR forecast process.

■ Gift Aid**Ms Harriet Harman:** [\[28045\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of temporarily increasing the rate of Gift Aid from 20 per cent to 25 per cent for a period of two years.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is fully committed to supporting charities through the Gift Aid regime. This relief is tied to the basic rate of tax paid by donors, currently at 20%, so would change if the personal basic tax rate changes.

The Government recognises that the sector is experiencing significant pressures and has made available an unprecedented package of economic support, including a £750 million package specifically for charities.

■ Net Zero Review**Mr Steve Baker:** [\[R\] \[28165\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether an independent estimate of the economic cost of the Net Zero policy is being prepared as part of the Net Zero Review; if he will publish the underlying assumptions and calculations of that estimate; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Net Zero Review is an analytical review that uses existing data to explore the key issues and trade-offs as the UK decarbonises. Against a backdrop of significant uncertainty on technology and costs, as well as changes to the economy over the next 30 years, it focuses on the potential exposure of households and sectors to the transition, and highlights factors to be taken into account in designing policy that will allocate costs over this time horizon. The final report will follow on from the interim report published in December 2020 and set out the key findings from the research and analysis carried out as part of the Net Zero Review.

The Net Zero Review final report will be published in due course, and in advance of COP26

■ Pensions: Terminal Illnesses**Jessica Morden:** [\[28137\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with insurance companies on improving early access to pension pots for people diagnosed with terminal illnesses.

John Glen:

An individual cannot usually access their pension pot before normal minimum pension age, currently age 55. However, the Government allows members to access their pension earlier than this age on the basis of ill-health.

In 2016 the Government made changes to enable people with less than a year to live to take any pension savings up to the value of the lifetime allowance as a tax-free lump sum. Dependent on pension scheme rules, if an individual is seriously ill and expected to live for less than one year, they may be able to take their entire pension pot as a tax-free serious ill-health lump sum.

Further, dependent on pension scheme rules, people who have more than a year to live but are medically incapable of continuing their current occupation as a result of injury, sickness, disease or disability may access their pension early and not be subject to an unauthorised payment charge.

There are no plans to change these tax rules, but all aspects of the tax system are kept under review in the context of the wider public finances. The Treasury continues to have discussions with a variety of stakeholders about different parts of the tax regime.

■ **Social Enterprises: Government Assistance**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[26165\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent fiscal steps he has taken to support businesses in the social enterprise sector.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises the important social and economic contribution that social enterprises are making across every industry in this country.

Last year, the Government made available an unprecedented £750 million package of support, specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector, along with an additional £150 million from dormant bank and building society accounts. This funding has helped over 13,000 organisations continue to deliver vital services for those most affected by the pandemic.

In addition, at Budget 2021 the Chancellor extended the Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) for two years until April 2023. This ensures the scheme will continue to incentivise individuals to invest in social enterprises, while also allowing more time for the Government to assess the most effective way to support the social investment sector sustainably. Since SITR was launched in 2014-2015, social enterprises have raised funds of £15.8m through the scheme, with £3.3m raised in 2019-2020.

■ **Treasury: Electric Vehicles**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[28988\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department for Government business are electric vehicles.

Kemi Badenoch:

The vehicles used by ministers of HM Treasury are supplied under contract by the Government Car Service and this is therefore a matter for the Department of Transport.

■ UK Trade with EU: VAT**Sarah Olney:****[28284]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the VAT rules introduced in the EU on 1 July 2021 on the ability of (a) SME and (b) micro retailers based in the UK to export to EU member states.

Jesse Norman:

The UK does not provide an impact assessment of policy measures that are introduced by jurisdictions outside of the UK.

The changes to EU VAT rules introduced on 1 July 2021 include the withdrawal of a VAT relief for low value imports into the EU and introduce a system that non-EU businesses selling into the EU can opt to use. This system (the Import One Stop Shop) provides a simplified means of registering and paying VAT on low value consignments. The EU has published guidance about this at https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/vat/iooss_en.

WALES**■ Wales Office: Correspondence****Kevin Brennan:****[28082]**

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

Simon Hart:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales has received 90 items of correspondence from honourable Members since 1 April 2020; 69 of these items were responded to by Minister David TC Davies and myself, and 19 were answered by other Government Departments. Two items of correspondence are yet to be answered.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**■ Gay Conversion Therapy****Ms Diane Abbott:****[25713]**

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with her counterparts in Canada and Australian on the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to ban conversion therapy.

Kemi Badenoch:

Officials in the Equality Hub are in discussion with international policy counterparts, to fully understand the detail and impact of other jurisdictions' measures and to inform

the Government's next steps. However, we must ensure a ban on conversion therapy works here and that is why we have committed to launching a consultation in September. We want to hear from a wide range of voices on how best to protect people from conversion therapy while ensuring the medical profession can continue to work in line with best practice, defending freedom of speech, and upholding religious freedom. This will be vital for ensuring the action we take is informed, effective and proportionate.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[25922\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the comments of the Prime Minister reported in an article entitled Boris Johnson pledges ban on gay conversion therapy, published by BBC News on 20 July 2020, what plans her Department has to publish the study on conversion therapy undertaken in 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

We have undertaken research to understand practices, experiences and impacts associated with conversion therapy and will publish this in due course. We will consider the findings alongside the responses to the consultation on our conversion therapy proposals that we will launch in September.

Dawn Butler:

[\[27048\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to Canada's House of Commons passing a bill criminalizing LGBTQ+ conversion therapy and the passage of a similar ban by the Australian state of Victoria, what steps his Department is taking to work with national and state legislators in those nations to ensure a ban on conversion therapy reflects international best practice.

Kemi Badenoch:

Officials in the Equality Hub are in discussion with international policy counterparts, to fully understand the detail and impact of other jurisdictions' measures and to inform the Government's next steps. However, we must ensure a ban on conversion therapy works here and that is why we have committed to launching a consultation in September. We want to hear from a wide range of voices on how best to protect people from conversion therapy while ensuring the medical profession can continue to work in line with best practice, defending freedom of speech, and upholding religious freedom. This will be vital for ensuring the action we take is informed, effective and proportionate.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[28054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff are employed in processing and deciding applications made by people vaccinated against covid-19 for

compensation under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979; and how many of those applications are being decided on each week.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department for Work and Pensions currently has four members of staff who are responsible for the administration of the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS). This team supports the administration of Child, Adult and COVID 19 Vaccine Damage applications.

Regarding the number of applications that are decided each week. All customers who submit a Vaccine Damage Claim are having their claim acknowledged by the Department. Work is ongoing to understand potential causal links between Covid-19 vaccination and levels of disability.

■ **Employment and Income: Young People**

Catherine West:

[28283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on levels of (a) employment and (b) income of young people.

Mims Davies:

(a) Employment levels of young people are published and available in Office for National Statistics Table A06 at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/datasets/educationalstatusandlabourmarketstatusforpeopleagedfrom16to24seasonallyadjusteda06sa>

(b) Family Resources Survey based data on incomes is only available up to financial year 2019/20. More recent trends in median earnings for younger people are published and available from ONS Real Time Information at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/realtimeinformationstatisticsreferencetableseasonallyadjusted>

■ **Industrial Health and Safety: Batteries**

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [29036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the exclusion of lithium-ion batteries for grid storage from the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015.

Mims Davies:

The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH) apply to dangerous substances as classified by the Classification, Labelling and Packaging Regulations 2008. Lithium-ion batteries are considered to be articles, rather than substances, and are therefore outside of the scope of the COMAH.

The Health and Safety Executive considers that the current regulatory framework is sufficient and suitably robust in relation to lithium-ion batteries and battery energy storage systems.

Of particular relevance are the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations which set minimum requirements for the protection of workers and others from fire and explosion risks; the Electricity at Work Regulations which require precautions to be taken against the risk of death or personal injury from electricity in work activities; and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations which require risks to be assessed and appropriately managed. In addition, for large scale battery storage, there are statutory requirements to notify the Fire and Rescue Service to inform their emergency response planning.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Afzal Khan:

[\[29132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 23 June 2021 on Mr David Foulkes.

Guy Opperman:

A Department for Work and Pensions Complaint Resolution Manager has spoken with Mr David Foulkes on 9 July 2021 confirming his State Pension claim has been finalised and arrears issued the same day. A full response has also been provided to the Hon. Member to confirm the position.

■ **National Insurance**

Peter Grant:

[\[29073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that requests for National Insurance numbers are processed in an efficient and timely manner for people who have been granted a Turkish Businessperson visa.

Guy Opperman:

We recently reviewed the National Insurance number process for Turkish Businesspersons and introduced a more streamlined process for this group on 9th June 2021. The new process accepts the Biometric Residence Permit as evidence of their self-employment, removing the previous need for them to provide evidence that they were gainfully self-employed.

■ **Occupational Health**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[28266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 11 May 2021 to Question 368 on Occupational Health, what further progress her Department has made towards publishing (a) in full the survey entitled, Sickness absence and health in the workplace: understanding employer behaviour and practice employers relating to

workplace health following the publication of the interim report of that title in June 2019 and (b) her Department's response to the consultation entitled Health is everyone's business.

Justin Tomlinson:

The government remains committed to supporting disabled people and those with health conditions to thrive at work. Further to our response to [Question 368](#), we continue to work with stakeholders to develop the proposals set out in the Health is Everyone's Business consultation. The forthcoming government response to the consultation draws

on evidence in the 'Sickness absence and health in the workplace' report. It is therefore our intention for the research report to be published alongside the consultation response which we anticipate will be published shortly.

■ **Pension Credit: Wales**

Jessica Morden:

[\[28136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the pension credit take up is in (a) Newport East constituency and (b) each Welsh constituency.

Guy Opperman:

The information requested is not available.

The DWP publishes annual take-up statistics for income-related benefits, including Pension Credit, at Great Britain level. The latest data was published in October 2020 and provides take-up estimates up to financial year 2018/19:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/income-related-benefits-estimates-of-take-up--2>(opens in a new tab)

■ **Pensions**

Patricia Gibson:

[\[28236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will take steps to deploy additional staff to her Department's Retirement Services Centre to help improve response times to pensions enquires.

Guy Opperman:

Between 5 July and 9 August 2021, DWP Retirement Services are recruiting 183 new members of staff to enhance our resources to work on our State Pension teams. This will enable us to continue to deliver the very best level of service to our customers.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

Mark Tami:

[\[28073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people and what proportion of people who have been awarded a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) by the first tier tribunal are not entitled to PIP at the end of their award.

Mark Tami:

[\[28074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people who have been granted an award of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) by the first tier tribunal are due to stop receiving PIP after their award ends.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

A claimant can lodge an appeal at the First-tier Tribunal (FtT) either for disallowance decisions, or when they have been awarded and continue to appeal for a higher award.

Mark Tami:

[\[28075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason it is not her Department's policy to send all claimants with an award of PIP from a First Tier Tribunal a PIP2 form six months before the end of their award to minimise the possibility of a gap in their payments.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants with an award without a review date have always been able submit a renewal claim up to six months prior to their existing award ending. Prior to 15 May 2021 the Department had been reminding claimants 14 weeks before their existing award was due to end that they could submit a new claim if they considered that they still have needs arising from their health condition or disability. From 15 May 2021 we have been sending the reminder to claim 26 weeks prior to the existing award ending.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Long Covid

Drew Hendry:

[\[28245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the inclusion of covid-19 as a registrable cause for a long term health condition when applying for personal independence payment (PIP) since March 2021, what discussions his Department has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on developing a system of monthly published reporting of PIP application numbers to allow for additional tracking of the economic impact of long covid.

Justin Tomlinson:

Entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is assessed on the basis of the needs arising from a health condition or disability, rather than the health condition or disability itself.

PIP statistics are published on a quarterly basis and include breakdowns by month. From March 2021, the published statistical series that include low level disability breakdowns (clearances, PIP cases with entitlement, MR registrations and clearances, Award Review & Change of Circumstance clearances) include the additional category "Coronavirus covid-19". This reflects an operational change

implemented in March 2021 to include this code on the PIP Computer System. This will allow us to track the volume of clearances with Coronavirus covid-19 as a primary disability and the corresponding volume/proportion of the PIP caseload. There are currently no plans to publish the PIP statistics on a monthly basis.

There are regular, ongoing discussions between the Secretary of State and Cabinet colleagues.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[29136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of legacy benefit payments in meeting the costs of living for disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

This Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, including those who claim legacy benefits, and has delivered an unprecedented package of support; injecting billions into the welfare system.

We continue to monitor the impact on disabled people, while ensuring that they are able to access the support they need.

■ Universal Credit

Dan Jarvis:

[\[28194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason (a) statutory maternity pay is treated as earned income and (b) maternity allowance is treated as unearned income for the purposes of calculating universal credit.

Guy Opperman:

Universal Credit is a means tested system of support and where an individual claims Universal Credit, their award is adjusted to take account of any other financial support that the claimant is already receiving – including earnings, income and benefits.

Maternity Allowance is a benefit paid by the State which is unearned income for Universal Credit purposes. Unearned income that is available to help meet daily living costs is taken fully into account in determining the amount of Universal Credit that an individual can be paid. As such, in determining the amount of Universal Credit that is available, Maternity Allowance is deducted pound for pound from the total value of the award. This principle applies to other benefits, such as new style Jobseeker's Allowance and new style Employment and Support Allowance.

Maternity Pay (SMP) is more akin to earnings and is treated as a form of earnings in common with other statutory payments paid by employers. As a result, when adjusting the Universal Credit award, as with other earnings SMP is subject to the work allowance and tapering rules that are built into Universal Credit. Claimants retain 37p for every pound of earnings (or more if they are entitled to a work allowance).

■ Universal Credit: Lone Parents

Jamie Stone:

[29130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has plans to review the universal credit policy that means single parents under the age of 25 claim universal credit at a lower rate than those aged 25 or over.

Will Quince:

The rates for claimants under 25 years reflect the fact that they are more likely to live in someone else's household and have lower living costs and lower earnings expectations. It also reinforces the stronger work incentives that Universal Credit creates for this age group.

Universal Credit offers excellent employment support for this age group, including the Department's £2bn Kickstart scheme which is already creating thousands of high-quality jobs for young people.

For claimants who live independently, Universal Credit already includes separate elements to provide support for housing costs, children and childcare costs and support for disabled people and carers.

■ Universal Credit: Newport East

Jessica Morden:

[28138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many families are in receipt of universal credit in Newport East constituency; and how many of those families are in receipt of the £20 uplift for that benefit.

Will Quince:

The available information on the number of households with Universal Credit in payment by parliamentary constituency is published and can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The £20 uplift applies to all Universal Credit claimants.

■ Work Capability Assessment

Jessica Morden:

[29002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of bringing forward proposals to reduce the number of face-to-face assessments for disabled benefits claimants.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are committed to improving the experience of accessing health and disability benefits. The Health and Disability Green Paper is an opportunity to understand how

we can best improve the health assessment system, including the frequency of reassessments, and will inform our plan for change.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ English Votes for English Laws

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove):

[\[HCWS169\]](#)

Today, I am informing the House that the Government intends to bring forward a motion for the House of Commons to consider whether to amend the Standing Orders to remove the English Votes for English Laws procedure from the legislative process in the House of Commons.

The English Votes for English Laws procedure, which was introduced in 2015, amended the legislative process for the purpose of providing MPs representing English constituencies (or those representing English and Welsh constituencies) the opportunity to have an additional say on matters that applied to England (or England and Wales) only.

It also applies to legislation introducing a tax measure that affects only England, Wales and Northern Ireland, which must be approved by a majority of MPs representing constituencies in those areas.

The English Votes procedure does not apply to the legislative process in the House of Lords although it is the case that amendments made in the Lords which apply to England (or England and Wales) only are subject to a double majority vote in the House of Commons.

The procedure was introduced as more powers were being devolved to the Scottish Parliament and Senedd but does not reflect the unique nature of the UK Parliament and the principle that all parts of the UK should be, and are, represented equally in the UK Parliament.

The introduction of the procedure in 2015 added additional stages to the legislative process in Parliament and in doing so introduced complexity to our arrangements and has not served our Parliament well. This Standing Order reform is a sensible change that will ensure the effective operation of the legislative process.

Removing English Votes for English Laws does not change the fact that MPs with constituencies in England (and indeed MPs who represent constituencies across the UK) have a strong voice and role in the UK Parliament.

It is a fundamental principle that all constituent parts of the United Kingdom should be equally represented in Parliament, and Parliament should deliver for the whole UK. The operation of this procedure (and the constraints on the role of certain MPs) does not support this aim.

Rather than maintain this procedure, the Government shall on 13 July bring forward a motion in the House of Commons so that MPs can debate whether the English Votes procedure should be removed from the legislative process.

EDUCATION

■ Education Update

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):

[[HCWS170](#)]

Qualifications and assessments in 2021/22

Today, Ofqual and the Department for Education published joint consultations outlining detailed proposals for alternative arrangements for awarding general qualifications in 2022 and vocational and technical qualifications in academic year 2021/22.

These consultations, outlined in '[Proposed changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022](#)' and '[Arrangements for the assessment and awarding of Vocational and Technical Qualifications and Other General Qualifications in 2021 to 2022](#)', will end on 1 August for GCSEs, AS and A levels and on 26 July for vocational and technical and other general qualifications. These changes will be for one year only.

The government has made clear its intention that exams and other assessments should go ahead in the academic year 2021/22. In order to ensure that they can go ahead fairly, however, we must recognise that students in the 2021/22 cohort have experienced significant disruption to their education, and we are proposing that exams and assessments in 2021/22 should be adapted to take this into account.

For GCSEs, AS and A levels we are proposing a package of measures that includes four elements: in those GCSE subjects where it is possible to do so without undermining the assessment, a choice of topics on which students will be assessed; advance information about how exams will be focused for the majority of GCSE, AS and A level subjects; reducing the burden of non-exam assessment in some subjects; and allowing students to have access to support materials in the exam room in a small number of subjects.

For vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications, the consultation sets out a suite of proposed measures for those qualifications that are included in performance tables including adaptations such as streamlining assessment, early banking of assessments and providing revision guidance. The consultation focuses on the impact of the measures proposed and updating the existing Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework to reflect our aim that exams and assessments should go ahead in 2021/22.

The consultation seeks the views of students, parents and carers, teachers, school and college leaders, FE colleges and universities, employers and others before decisions are made on final arrangements. We intend to announce decisions for GCSEs, AS and A levels early in the autumn term and for vocational and technical qualifications and other general qualifications in early August.

As well as these proposed adaptations, Ofqual is considering how best to grade qualifications in 2022 in a way that is as fair as possible to students in that year, those who took qualifications in previous years, and those who will take them in future. Ofqual has statutory responsibility for the maintenance of standards and for public confidence in

qualifications, while taking account of government policy. Ofqual will make a decision once 2021 results are known, and will announce its decisions in the autumn.

We are also continuing to work with Ofqual on contingency plans in case it does not prove possible for exams to go ahead safely and fairly in 2021/22.

TREASURY

■ Treasury Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak):

[\[HCWS172\]](#)

The government has acted on a scale unmatched in recent history in responding to the twin health and economic emergencies, with over £400 billion of total support for the economy since the start of the pandemic to protect people's jobs and livelihoods, and to support businesses and public services.

But the damage inflicted on our economy and the public finances by Coronavirus has been immense. We have suffered the biggest recession in 300 years. Last year we borrowed nearly £300bn – equivalent to 14.3 per cent of GDP – the highest since World War II. Debt as a percentage of GDP reached nearly 100 per cent, the highest since 1962. This year we are forecast to borrow the second highest amount on record during peacetime – second only to last year. This is clearly unsustainable, and the economic damage of coronavirus cannot be fixed overnight.

That is why we have had to take difficult decisions to get borrowing down and restore the public finances – including by increasing corporation tax, freezing income tax personal thresholds and maintaining public sector pay at current levels.

As part of these difficult decisions, we took the decision last year to temporarily reduce the ODA budget to spend 0.5 per cent of gross national income on overseas aid in 2021. The International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 clearly envisages situations in which a departure from spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA may be necessary; for example in response to “fiscal circumstances and, in particular, the likely impact of meeting the target on taxation, public spending and public borrowing”.

Spending at 0.5 per cent of gross national income for this year means we will still spend more than £10 billion to improve global health, fight poverty and tackle climate change. In 2020 we were one of only two G7 countries to meet the 0.7% target, and the only one to do so each year since 2013. Based on the latest OECD data, spending 0.5% GNI as ODA in 2021, as we plan to do, would mean that the UK is still the third largest donor in the G7 as a percentage of GNI.

As we have made clear since that decision, this is a temporary measure and the government is committed to the 2015 Act and to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA once the fiscal situation allows. That is why we are today setting out the responsible fiscal circumstances under which we will return to 0.7%.

Consistent with the fiscal principles set out at March Budget 2021, and with the principles contained within the Conservative Party 2019 Manifesto, the government commits to

spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA when the independent Office for Budget Responsibility's fiscal forecast[1] confirms that, on a sustainable basis, we are not borrowing for day-to-day spending[2] and underlying debt[3] is falling, as explained in more detail below.

At the upcoming Spending Review the government will set the ODA budget for 2022-23 (and provisionally for later years) in line with these tests and the latest fiscal forecast.

Each year over this period, the government will review, in accordance with the 2015 Act, whether a return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA is possible against the latest fiscal forecast. If it expects to meet the fiscal tests described above in the following financial year, the government will increase overseas aid spending above 0.5% of GNI to 0.7% of GNI and such that these tests are still met. Once the government has spent 0.7% of GNI as overseas aid in a given year, these tests will no longer apply to overseas aid spending and the government will return to spending 0.7% of GNI on ODA year on year.

The government will continue to act compatibly with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015, under which accountability is to Parliament. The Secretary of State will lay a statement in Parliament in accordance with section 2 of the Act in relation to each calendar year in which the government does not spend 0.7% GNI on ODA.

A motion will be tabled by the government alongside this Written Ministerial Statement asking the House of Commons to consider this approach, for debate tomorrow. If the House approves the motion, recognising the need to manage the public finances responsibly and maintaining strong investment in domestic public services like the NHS, schools and police, then the government will continue with the approach set out in this Statement. However, if the House were to negative the motion, rejecting the government's assessment of the fiscal circumstances, then the government would consequently return to spending 0.7% of GNI on international aid in the next calendar year, and with likely consequences for the fiscal situation, including for taxation and current public spending plans.

[1] By fiscal forecast, we refer to the final post-measures official forecasts by the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) as published in their Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

[2] By "not borrowing for day-to-day spending", we mean when the fiscal forecast shows a sustainable current budget surplus. The current budget deficit counts all receipts and all current spending, but excludes spending on net investment.

[3] By "underlying debt" we mean public sector net debt (excluding the Bank of England) as a % of GDP. PSND ex BoE is the amount of debt the public sector owes to private sector minus the amount of cash and other short-term assets it holds excluding the liabilities and the liquid assets held on the Bank of England's balance sheet

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Justin Tomlinson):
[\[HCWS171\]](#)

I am pleased to confirm that the exercise to correct past Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) underpayments and pay arrears, following conversion from previous incapacity benefits is now complete. All cases have been considered, reviews completed where the information has been provided, and arrears paid where due ¹.

As set out in the [final statistical publication](#) published on GOV.UK, as of 1 June 2021:

- 600,000 cases have completed the review process; and
- 118,000 arrears payments totalling £613 million have been made.

1. Completion rate is 100%, rounded to the nearest 1%. Fewer than 100 cases were outstanding as at 1 June 2021.