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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ **Clean Steel Fund**

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[\[29753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what his timeframe is for the allocation of the Clean Steel Fund; and what steps his Department has taken to ensure the effective allocation of that funding.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Department announced the Clean Steel Fund (CSF) in 2019 and it is currently in development. This policy will take time to design in order to be delivered effectively.

Based on previous evidence, complex decarbonisation projects have long lead-in times and take time to set up. Due to this and other factors, the steel sector indicated in response to the 2019 Call for Evidence that their preference is for the CSF to be launched in 2023. Other schemes are available to support the sector and are live now, including the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund.

■ **Cobham: Intellectual Property**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[27039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the steps required to ensure that intellectual property previously held by Cobham will remain in the UK.

Amanda Solloway:

Intellectual property previously held by Cobham within the UK has transferred to new ownership following Advent International's sale of Cobham's UK businesses.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State has met with the new owners to secure assurances on their continued investment in the UK businesses and security controls remain in place under the new owners to protect security sensitive information.

■ **Compassionate Leave**

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[27195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce statutory bereavement leave for the loss of an immediate family member or partner.

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[27196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing statutory bereavement leave.

Paul Scully:

Since April 2020, parents who lose a child under the age of 18 have a right to take up to 2 weeks of paid leave in the 56 weeks following the death of their child. This right extends to parents of babies who are stillborn after 24 complete weeks of pregnancy. We have not assessed the potential merits of extending entitlements to bereavement leave and pay to other groups, and it is too early to conduct a formal evaluation of the Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay scheme.

We recognise that the death of a close family member, friend, or colleague can be deeply upsetting. The Government believes that individuals are best placed to understand their own specific needs and we encourage their employers to respond in an appropriate and sensitive way.

Although there is no statutory entitlement to bereavement leave for employees who lose a close relative who is not a child, all employees have a 'day 1' right to take unpaid time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. This entitlement can be used, for example, to make arrangements for the funeral.

Individuals who do not feel able to return to work following a bereavement may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay whilst they are off work. All employees are also entitled to 5.6 weeks of Annual Leave a year.

Many employers offer 'Compassionate Leave' in these circumstances and we encourage employers to respond sensitively to each individual's specific needs.

■ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme**Owen Thompson:**[\[29853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment has he made of the impact of repayment arrangements for Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme debt on businesses.

Paul Scully:

Many businesses have already begun paying off their Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) facility. While the Government covers the interest due on CBILS loans for the first twelve months of the loan, repayments of capital are required during this period unless the lender chooses to grant additional forbearance measures.

The Government have amended the CBILS rules to allow lenders to extend loan terms from six to a maximum of ten years where the borrower is in difficulty and where the lender judges that an extension would help their situation. CBILS term extensions are offered at the discretion of lenders, and any business concerned about their ability to repay their finance should discuss this with their lender in the first instance.

The British Business Bank is participating in the Government's evaluation of the Covid-19 loan guarantee schemes, which will include an assessment of delivery processes, impacts and value for money.

■ Coronavirus: Ventilation

Ben Bradley:

[27297]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 11649 and with reference to the advice given to the Government by the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group of 4 November 2020, what steps he is taking to support industry and consumers to ensure that they are selecting and using air cleaning technologies safely and effectively.

Ben Bradley:

[27298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 11648 and with reference to the advice given to the Government by the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group of 4 November 2020, what research is being undertaken to evaluate likely consumer response to the use of air cleaning technologies and understand their level of knowledge and potential behavioural actions.

Ben Bradley:

[27299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 11649 and with reference to the advice given to the Government by the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group of 4 November 2020, what steps his Department has taken to develop impartial guidance for consumers to allow them to identify appropriate air cleaning devices and technologies to combat SARS-CoV-2.

Paul Scully:

All products, including air cleaning devices, placed on the market must be safe and must not make untrue or misleading statements about their properties and performance. Consumer law requires traders to provide consumers with information on the main characteristics of goods and it must be accurate and not misleading. Consumers may also request information from the retailer when making a purchase and the retailer would be required to provide this accurately under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008. Consumers can seek free information and advice from the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133 (www.citizensadvice.org.uk/).

The Government publishes a wide range of information for businesses about product regulation and complying with product safety legislation on its GOV.UK website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/product-safety-for-businesses-a-to-z-of-industry-guidance>). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has issued guidance on keeping workplaces safe and disinfecting premises (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/disinfecting-premises-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>).

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has previously published consumer survey data outlining attitudes and behaviours to products related to COVID-19, including air cleaning technologies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opss-covid-19-consumer-survey>.

After the SAGE paper publication (4 November 2020), the OPSS collaborated with the SAGE Environmental and Modelling Group to review evidence gaps associated with consumer knowledge. The OPSS has since commissioned further consumer surveys and the findings will be published in due course.

Public Health England is responsible for providing advice on public health matters to the general public.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Industrial Health and Safety**

John McDonnell: [27003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that contractors working in its buildings adhere to health and safety requirements; and whether his Department has taken enforcement action against contractors in relation to that matter.

Amanda Solloway:

Where appropriate, the Department works closely with contractors on health and safety matters, including reviewing health and safety practices, such as risk assessments, reviewing training information and protocols for staff working within the BEIS demise of buildings. The Department would work closely with enforcement agencies where relevant.

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: ISS**

John McDonnell: [27002]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to address concerns around breaches of employment law by his Department's contractor, ISS.

Amanda Solloway:

The Department collaborates closely with the Government Property Agency (GPA) which manages the facilities management contract with ISS. With the support of GPA, the Department continuously works with ISS to ensure that its employment practices comply with employment legislation.

■ **Domestic Appliances: Visual Impairment**

Navendu Mishra: [27357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if she will consult with groups representing blind and partially-sighted people on the potential merits of reforming the safety information wording contained in household appliance instructions, previously governed by EU law, to make that information more inclusive.

Paul Scully:

The Office for Product Safety and Standards recently ran an open Call for Evidence, seeking views and evidence from a wide range of stakeholders about a review of the product safety framework in the UK. One of the core themes of the Call for Evidence was diversity and inclusion, which asked whether the current framework adequately protects all people in society, including vulnerable groups and those with particular needs. The Call for Evidence closed on 17 June and officials are currently analysing responses. The Office for Product Safety and Standards will continue to work with stakeholder groups over the course of the review, including engaging with specific groups as policy proposals are developed.

■ **Energy****Ben Lake:**[\[27289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps his Department has taken to progress the Energy White Paper published in December 2020.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Delivering the Energy White Paper's policy commitments is a key priority for the Department and subject to regular reporting as part of the implementation of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan.

Since the White Paper's publication, we have launched the Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy. Also, earlier this year, the Department announced up to £95 million of Government investment for two new offshore wind port hubs to be constructed on the Humber and Teesside. In addition, GE Renewable Energy have announced an investment in a major new offshore wind turbine blade manufacturing plant, the first investment at the Teesworks Offshore Manufacturing Centre. We will deliver other commitments in due course, including the publication of the Heat and Buildings Strategy. The Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan and Energy White Paper also confirmed our commitment to publish the UK's first ever Hydrogen Strategy, which we will bring forward soon.

■ **Energy: Meters****Ben Lake:**[\[27290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to evaluate the potential merits for wider society of smart meter infrastructure as part of the Smart Energy Savings Innovation Competition.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Smart Energy Savings (SENS) competition is supporting the development, trialling and evaluation of innovative products and services that use smart meters to help consumers to reduce their energy consumption.

As part of the SENS competition, the Government has commissioned a full evaluation of products and services supported by the project. This will be published in due course, following the conclusion of consumer trials in 2022.

■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [\[29751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of potential additional policy measures needed to support future clean steel production in the UK.

Angus Brendan MacNeil: [\[29752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of progress in Europe on trialling hydrogen-based steelmaking; and what steps he plans to take to ensure that the UK keeps up with international developments in clean steel production.

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 offers the forum for government, industry and trade unions to work in partnership on the shared objective of creating an achievable, long-term plan to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable and low carbon future. Hydrogen-based steelmaking, Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS), and electrification are some 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.

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Helen Hayes: [\[29855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to work with local authorities to reduce carbon emissions ahead of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognises that local government can drive progress towards our national climate change commitments, and we are committed to working closely with them to ensure their role in delivering net zero targets are promoted at COP26.

Since 2017, BEIS has invested almost £22m in the Local Energy Programme, which is designed to build local capacity, capability and encourage joined-up working between local areas, investors and central government on decarbonisation and clean growth. Further details of how we intend to work with local government to reach net zero will be set out in the Net Zero Strategy, to be published prior to COP26.

Marketing: Digital Technology**Rachael Maskell:**[\[27230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure the availability of digital marketing skills to businesses.

Paul Scully:

Through the 3-year Help to Grow: Digital scheme, a learning platform to help SMEs understand their technology needs and successfully adopt them into their business will be created, alongside support for eligible SMEs to receive a voucher worth up to £5000 and providing a 50% discount on e-commerce software, as well as CRM and accounting technology.

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport continues to support Digital Boost which is providing much-needed digital support for small businesses and charities in the UK that have been impacted by the Covid-19 crisis. The platform is building a community of skilled digital expert volunteers, who are providing free one-to-one mentoring to small businesses and charities to help them improve their digital capability, build sustainable incomes through digital channels, and stay competitive during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. Digital Boost is also providing free workshops, courses and content on all topics of digitisation to help small businesses and charities understand digital better. Digital Boost has conducted more than 2800 mentoring sessions on digital marketing related topics. They have also held many workshops on these topics, attracting more than 500 participants.

Digital skills are as important to employability and participation in society as English and maths, yet an estimated one in five adults lack basic digital skills.

In order to address this, from August 2020, alongside the existing legal entitlements to English and maths, the Department for Education introduced a new digital entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills to undertake specified digital qualifications, up to Level 1, free of charge. We also support the provision of basic digital skills training for adults in community settings through the Adult Education Budget.

The Government is also investing £138 million to fund in-demand technical courses for adults, and to expand the employer-led bootcamp training model, in high value areas such as digital and technical skills. The £138 million investment will come from

the £2.5 billion National Skills Fund, and will include £95 million funding for a new Level 3 adult offer and £43 million for Skills Bootcamps.

The Level 3 adult offer, available from April 2021, will support any adult aged 24 and over, who wants to achieve their first full level 3 qualification to access around 400 fully funded courses. The offer includes a range of qualifications that are valuable across the economy in multiple sectors. The qualifications list currently includes 33 digital qualifications in areas such as cyber security, coding, network architecture, systems support, and aspects of digital design for the creative industries. We will keep this list under review to ensure it adapts to the changing needs of the economy.

Complementing the Level 3 adult offer, Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks, giving people the opportunity to build up specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. Skills Bootcamps offer digital skills training in areas such as software development, digital marketing and data analytics, and also technical skills training. We have introduced the Skills Bootcamps in six local areas so far, and we are investing a further £43 million from the National Skills Fund to extend them across England.

We have also introduced the Skills Toolkit, an online platform providing free courses to help individuals build the skills that are most sought after by employers. People can now choose from over 70 courses, covering digital and coding, adult numeracy, employability and work readiness skills, which have been identified as the skills employers need the most. These courses will help people stay in work, or take up new jobs and opportunities.

■ Post Offices

Marion Fellows:

[\[27199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many of each branch type of Post Office are operating in (a) Scotland, (b) England, (c) Wales, and (d) Northern Ireland as at 5 July 2021.

Marion Fellows:

[\[27200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Post Office branches have closed in (a) Scotland, (b) England, (c) Wales, and (d) Northern Ireland in each of the last twelve months.

Paul Scully:

While Post Office Limited is publicly owned, it operates as an independent, commercial business. Therefore, details regarding the branch type and the number of closed Post Offices in (a) Scotland, (b) England, (c) Wales, and (d) Northern Ireland as of 5 July 2021, are an operational matter for Post Office Limited.

■ Post Offices: Conditions of Employment

Anneliese Dodds: [\[29884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed new contract for sub-postmasters on the provision of post office services.

Paul Scully:

Post Office Limited ran a six-week consultation to seek views from postmasters on the proposed changes to remuneration and supported postmasters in understanding what the proposed approach would mean for their business. This was the first time Post Office had run a consultation on this scale. Post Office are now reviewing and analysing all the comments received from postmasters and will communicate the final changes in September.

The Government continues to protect the branch network by setting minimum access criteria and protects services by setting minimum services to be provided at post offices across the country.

■ Renewable Energy: Cooperatives

Ben Lake: [\[27286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in (a) Ceredigion, (b) Wales and (c) the UK have joined Energy Local Clubs since 2019.

Ben Lake: [\[27287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in (a) Ceredigion, (b) Wales and (c) the UK receive their energy from an Energy Local Club.

Ben Lake: [\[27288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Energy White Paper published in December 2020, what recent steps his Department has taken to support the progress of Energy Local Clubs.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We do not have the specific information requested on the number of households involved in Energy Local Clubs. However, the Government recognises that community energy can play a role in supporting the UK's national net zero targets and the Net Zero Strategy will set out further information on how we intend to work with community groups to achieve net zero.

■ Shops: Empty Property**Stuart Anderson:** [\[27312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the number of high street shops which have been empty for more than twelve months.

Paul Scully:

BEIS does not hold this data but in 2019 the Local Data Company's report on Retail & Leisure Market vacancies put the 1 year+ vacancy rate at 7.4%. ONS data indicates that there were nearly 320,000 retail units in the UK in 2019 which suggests around 22,700 stores had been vacant for a year or more. This represents the most recent estimate available.

In order to mitigate against a rise in the number of vacant units, the Government has introduced a range of measures to protect businesses that are struggling to pay their rent due to Covid-19. We 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.

We continue to reduce the financial burden on retailers by providing eligible retail properties in England with 66% business rates relief for the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 March 2022, capped at £2 million per business for properties that were required to be closed on 5 January 2021, or £105,000 per business for other eligible properties.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Local Government**Helen Hayes:** [\[29856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment he has made of the role of local authorities in delivering the policy objectives of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recognises that local authorities can, and do, play an essential role in meeting national net zero ambitions. The Government has held Together for Our Planet round tables with Local Authorities and Community groups to receive their input in advance of COP26.

BEIS's Local Energy Programme continues to support Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), local authorities and communities in England to play a leading role in decarbonisation and clean growth. Further details of how we intend to work with local government to reach net zero will be set out in the Net Zero Strategy.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Urban Areas**Helen Hayes:** [\[29859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's objectives are for the cities and built environment theme for COP26; and

what steps he is taking to engage the UK's cities in delivering on those outcomes at COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave her on 7th June 2021 to Question UIN [7886](#).

■ Water Power

Ruth Jones:

[\[27308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Welsh Government on the potential merits of setting a target for marine energy ahead of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department regularly meets with the Welsh Government to discuss a range of issues.

Ruth Jones:

[\[27309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Scottish Government on the potential merits of setting a target for marine energy ahead of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department regularly meets with the Scottish Government to discuss a range of issues.

Ruth Jones:

[\[27310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has had discussions with the Northern Ireland Executive on the potential merits of setting a target for marine energy ahead of COP26.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department regularly meets with the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss a range of issues.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Electric Vehicles

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[28989\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department for Government business are electric vehicles.

Julia Lopez:

The Cabinet Office uses vehicles from the Government Car Service, alongside other providers.

The Government Car Service is already electrifying its vehicles, with nearly 50% of their fleet either full battery electric or plug-in hybrid.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Angela Rayner: [\[28210\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question HL236, whether the list of suppliers placed on the VIP fast-track for potential contracts related to the covid-19 pandemic will be provided to the public inquiry into the Government's response to the pandemic.

Julia Lopez:

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed that the public inquiry into COVID-19 will be established on a statutory basis, with full formal powers, and that it will begin its work in spring 2022. Further details, including terms of reference, will be set out in due course. The Government will of course cooperate with the inquiry fully.

■ **Good Law Project: Legal Costs**

Ruth Jones: [\[24328\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much was spent from the public purse on settling 75 per cent of the costs of Good Law Project vs Cabinet Office, case CO2437/2020.

Julia Lopez:

Final costs will be determined in due course.

■ **Government Departments: Contracts**

Angela Rayner: [\[27169\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many contracts were awarded without tender under the emergency procurement rules during the covid-19 outbreak; and what the total value was of those contracts.

Angela Rayner: [\[27170\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to prevent contracts being awarded under the emergency procurement rules to companies that have not submitted accounts to Companies House on time.

Julia Lopez:

Details of Government contracts above £10,000, and £25,000 in the wider public sector, should be published on Contracts Finder.

Being able to procure at speed has been critical in the Government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. However we have always made it clear that all contracts, including those designed to tackle coronavirus issues, must continue to achieve value for money for taxpayers, use good commercial judgement and the details of any awards made should be published in line with Government transparency guidelines.

■ Government Property Agency

John McDonnell: [\[27004\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government takes to resolve disagreements between the Government Property Agency (GPA) and Government departments occupying buildings run by the GPA.

John McDonnell: [\[28932\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has taken steps to facilitate discussions to try to resolve the industrial dispute involving the PCS Union in the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

John McDonnell: [\[28933\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department made at the time the Government Property Agency (GPA) was established of the effectiveness of the dispute resolution process relating to industrial disputes between the GPA, Government Departments and outsourced facilities management contractors.

Julia Lopez:

The GPA has Client Managers in place for the Departments they support. Any disagreements would typically be resolved through the Client Manager's regular framework of Client engagement meetings which includes a formal quarterly performance review.

As far as we know there was no assessment of the effectiveness of the dispute resolution processes at the time of the establishment of the Government Property Agency (GPA). Facilities management contracts were let by other Government Departments using Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework agreements and then novated to the GPA. These contracts were created using standard CCS contract forms and terms and conditions, including dispute resolution procedures, that were consistent with commercial good practice at that time.

■ Prime Minister: Press Conferences

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[28295\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason press conferences from his office are not offered with a British Sign Language translator; and if he will make a statement.

Julia Lopez:

As a matter of practice, the BBC has, since March 2020, provided BSL interpretation on its News Channel in respect of the vast majority of Covid media briefings, and continues to do so. A clean feed of the BSL interpretation has, since May, been made available for use on government social media channels.

In the relatively rare event that the BBC chooses not to provide BSL interpretation, we will be notified in advance of the briefing. We will then arrange for an independent organisation to provide BSL interpretation of the briefing in question, further to an arrangement that came into effect on 26 November. That BSL interpretation will be made available on government social media channels (including the No 10 YouTube channel). It will also be made available to broadcasters and other media outlets for TV and social media channels.

■ Public First: Contracts

Angela Rayner: [28211]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 6 October 2021 to Question 76729, what level of sign off by (a) officials and (b) special advisers was required for the award of the contract to Public First.

Julia Lopez:

Further to the answer given to PQ [76729](#) on 6 October 2020, all contracts are approved by senior officials who alone have the authority to do so. Special Advisers are not permitted to authorise the expenditure of public funds.

DEFENCE

■ Ajax Vehicles: Testing

Mr Kevan Jones: [29735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department made an agreement with Millbrook Proving Ground on liability for potential injuries to assessors during the independent assessment process for the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

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

Mr Kevan Jones: [29736]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date the Minister for Defence Procurement was first briefed on the potential effects on hearing identified by assessors of the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

My office was first informed on 9 November 2020 that AJAX trials had been paused for a safety reason relating to noise. I requested a formal submission which I received on 13 November 2020 which referenced hearing concerns. The Health and Safety review which Ministers requested from the Permanent Secretary is ongoing.

■ Armed Forces: Drugs

Dr Julian Lewis: [29721]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the rules are on dismissal of Service personnel for a single offence of drug abuse; if he will list the criteria for allowing a

second chance before dismissal; whether there is a consistent policy on dismissal for a first offence across all (a) units and (b) Services; what provision is made for personnel summarily dismissed to access a standardised, monitored and evaluated care pathway giving the individual time to find alternative (i) accommodation and (ii) employment; and if he will make a statement.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) deems substance misuse within the Armed Forces unacceptable. It threatens the efficiency and discipline of the Services, where individual responsibility and teamwork are essential to operate highly technical, expensive, and potentially lethal equipment. The Services campaign against substance misuse and have a comprehensive education programme to inform personnel of the dangers and consequences of substance misuse, including dismissal. This is complemented by the Compulsory Drug Testing programme that reinforces our stance that substance misuse is not be tolerated.

A standard tri-Service policy governing the handling of substance misuse is in place across the Armed Forces via Joint Service Publication (JSP) 835: Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Testing:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425401/20131101-JSP_835-V2_0-U.pdf

Personnel who misuse substances will be removed from the Services by disciplinary or administrative means following a single offence, except in exceptional circumstances where it is determined that the retention of an individual is desirable and achievable. There are no plans to change the current zero tolerance policy.

Personnel dismissed from Service for substance misuse are able to access pastoral and welfare support via their unit and retain access to their Service accommodation up to the point of dismissal. Unless there are individual circumstances which may mean the individual becomes a burden on the state once they are discharged, dismissal is swift. If an individual has particular health needs, including mental health needs, the process can be slowed to ensure smooth transition into NHS care. Access to Defence Transition Services, which provides tailored advice and support, is also retained following dismissal.

■ **Army**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[27041]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to remove any further army battalions once the 2nd Battalion Mercian Regiment has been amalgamated with the 1st Battalion Mercian Regiment.

James Heappey:

There are no plans to remove any further regular Army battalions beyond the the amalgamation of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the Mercians as already announced.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which facility will carry out depth maintenance of the UK's F-35 fleet.

Jeremy Quin:

'Depth' maintenance for the F-35 Lightning is split between 'medium' and 'heavy' level depot maintenance. All 'medium' depot maintenance for the UK fleet is undertaken within the purpose-built F-35 Maintenance and Finish Facility at RAF Marham, while 'heavy' level maintenance is undertaken within the F-35 Program Depot Facilities.

For all modifications and upgrades deemed to be 'heavy', the aircraft must be returned to one of the F-35 Program Depots either in the USA or the European F-35 Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul and Upgrade facility in Italy.

■ Military Aid

Alyn Smith: [\[29901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK provided police or military training to (a) Afghanistan, (b) Bahrain, (c) Bangladesh, (d) Belarus, (e) Central African Republic, (f) China, (g) Colombia, (h) Democratic People's Republic of Korea, (i) Democratic Republic of Congo, (j) Egypt, (k) Eritrea and (l) Iran in 2020.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence records information on International Defence Training (IDT) by financial year (FY), rather than by calendar year. During FY 2020/21, personnel from the following countries have received some form of UK defence education or training:

Afghanistan; Bahrain; Bangladesh; Belarus; Colombia; Egypt

No training was provided to the other countries listed.

Alyn Smith: [\[29902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK provided police or military training to (a) Iraq, (b) Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, (c) Libya, (d) Mali, (e) Myanmar, (f) Nicaragua, (g) Pakistan, (h) Russia, (i) Saudi Arabia, (j) Somalia, (k) South Sudan, (l) Sri Lanka, (m) Sudan, (n) Syria, (o) Turkmenistan, (p) Uzbekistan, (q) Venezuela, (r) Yemen and (s) Zimbabwe in 2020.

James Heappey:

The Ministry of Defence records information on International Defence Training (IDT) by financial year, rather than by calendar year. During FY 2020-21, personnel from the following countries have received some form of UK defence education or training:

Iraq; Israel; Occupied Palestinian Territories; Mali; Pakistan; Nicaragua; Saudi Arabia; Somalia; South Sudan; Sri Lanka; Turkmenistan; Uzbekistan

No training was provided to the other countries listed.

■ Ministry of Defence: Information

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[29021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what mechanisms are in place to audit information provided to his Department by (a) regulatory bodies and (b) non-departmental public bodies.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) does not sponsor or own any regulatory public bodies.

Each of the MOD non-departmental public bodies with executive functions has an Accounting Officer appointed by the MOD Permanent Secretary. Each is required to produce its own annual report and accounts which are audited by the NAO.

The annual report and accounts provide the sponsoring department with an assurance of the financial and non-financial performance of the non-departmental public body, including if the body has met key performance indicators as set out in their corporate and business plans. The report and accounts are laid in Parliament and are made available on the non-departmental public body's website.

■ Navy: Guided Weapons

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[27037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the extent to which the social value aspect of the procurement process will be adhered to in the future purchase of a Surface-to-Surface Guided Weapon for the Royal Navy.

Jeremy Quin:

As the procurement of a Surface-to-Surface Guided Weapon had not yet reached the stage of issuing Invitation to Tender or Invitation to Negotiate at the point that application of the Social Value Model became mandated. The procurement team will consider what Social Value criteria to include when the competition enters its next stage.

■ RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Waddington: Unmanned Air Vehicles

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[27206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has contacted local authorities and residents in the vicinity of RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Waddington to inform them about the planned arrival of SkyGuardian and its operations.

James Heappey:

Details on the SkyGuardian demonstrations are already being shared nationally through the RAF and Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) websites and via social media outlets. Both stations will engage with local authorities and residents through existing community engagement channels and social media prior to the arrival of the SkyGuardian aircraft.

■ RAF Waddington: Unmanned Air Vehicles**Stewart Malcolm McDonald:** [\[27202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment the Government has made of the impact of Protector military drone flights on local people in and around the area covered by the Airspace Change Proposal initiated for RAF Waddington.

James Heappey:

In developing its Air Change Proposal for the area around RAF Waddington, the MOD is following the CAP1616 process as mandated by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) with respect to any air space changes within the UK.

The CAP1616 process prescribes the information required by the CAA, including any potential impact on affected areas, and how stakeholder and public consultations are to take place.

The MOD expects to carry out a full consultation with communities within any potentially affected areas later this year. This will provide an opportunity for the public to understand any potential impact and offer their views on the proposal.

■ Saudi Arabia: Military Aid**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[29919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27328 on Saudi Arabia: Military Aid and with reference to the video published on Twitter on 26 June 2021 of the Armed Forces Minister referencing the number of British troops in Somalia; for what reason that published information was not included in that Answer on operational and personal security grounds.

James Heappey:

Each request for disclosing information related to deployed personnel is considered on its merits. In the case of the air defence deployment to Saudi Arabia, for operational and personal security reasons, we cannot disclose the number of those deployed.

■ UK Hydrographic Office: Boats**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[28096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of the Hydrographic Office was procured from.

Jeremy Quin:

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) do not own any boats or ships.

UKHO source data from the Royal Navy and a variety of other partners, all of whom operate their own ships and boats independently of the UKHO.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[27204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned flights of SkyGuardian are in 2021 in the UK; what routes those planned flights will be using; how long those planned flights will be operating for each day; and when those planned flights will (a) begin and (b) end.

James Heappey:

SkyGuardian will always operate in controlled airspace in agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and National Air Traffic Services (NATS), just like any other aircraft within UK airspace.

It will fly only in approved areas and it will not be flying at low altitude over any population centres.

The CAA will publish an airspace coordination notice covering all the above aspects in due course.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[27205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria were used by the Civil Aviation Authority in deciding whether to allow General Atomics to fly its SkyGuardian drone in the UK in summer 2021; and whether General Atomics or his Department submitted the request to the CAA to conduct those flights.

James Heappey:

During the deployment, SkyGuardian will always operate in controlled airspace in agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and NATS. Whilst flying in the UK, SkyGuardian will be governed by and will operate accordance with CAA regulations and guidance - primarily the Air Navigation Order and CAA Publication CAP722, *"Unmanned Aircraft System Operations in UK Airspace"*. SkyGuardian has previously flown in UK airspace in 2018 when it took part in the Royal International Air Tattoo.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[27207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans his Department has to undertake a public evaluation of the effectiveness of detect and avoid technology, including its safety implications, prior to any certification being given for the Protector military drone to be integrated into UK airspace.

James Heappey:

Detect and avoid technology standards are defined by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and Protector will be built and certified against those standards. Protector will be the first Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS) to be designed, built and certified against stringent NATO and UK Safety Certification standards as required for all aircraft.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Regulation

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[27208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking to create a regulatory regime for large drones flying in the UK operated by (a) the Ministry of Defence, (b) other Government agencies and (c) other operators.

James Heappey:

The Military Aviation Authority (MAA) is responsible for the regulation of all military Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) (which are divided into categories); the relevant Regulatory Articles (RAs) can be found on www.gov.uk and mandate that all RPAS contained on the UK Military Aircraft Register must be operated in a manner that minimizes the risk and hazards to other airspace users, ground crew and persons over which RPAS are flown.

As the operation of larger RPAS in the Certified Category presents Risk to Life similar to that of crewed aviation, these RPAS are subject to the same regulatory regime as crewed aviation.

The MAA is working closely with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) (who are responsible for the regulation of non-military RPAS) to ensure coherency and further develop policy and regulation that will meet the requirements of future RPAS/Unmanned Air System (UAS) operations in the UK to ensure that large RPAS/UAS are safe to operate and operated safely.

Further information on Categorization can be found in Regulatory Article (RA) 1600 - Remotely Piloted Air Systems. The RAs specific to RPAS can be found within the RA 1600 Series and RA 2000 Series.

■ Unmanned Air Vehicles: Surveillance

Stewart Malcolm McDonald: [\[27203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what safeguards and controls he is putting in place to regulate and oversee the use of the Protector military drone during any domestic surveillance operations it conducts in the UK.

James Heappey:

Protector will not conduct any domestic surveillance operations in the UK.

■ Veterans: Identity Cards

John Healey: [\[29729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much money his Department spent on developing a Veterans ID Card since 2019.

Leo Docherty:

Development costs prior to April 2019 cannot be disaggregated from wider budgets. The estimated cost of delivering the first phase of the Veterans' ID Card to Service leavers in the period from April 2019 to May 2020 was £376,000. From May 2020, a

contract change meant the costs of delivering ID Cards to Service leavers moved from a discrete budget to a core contract; it will take time to obtain accurate figures for the costs incurred by the first phase since May 2020 and I will write to the hon. Member in due course.

Delivery of the second phase of the scheme, to those who left the Services before December 2018, is delayed. The cost of development is entirely within core business and cannot be disaggregated from wider budgets.

■ **Warrior Armoured Vehicle**

Mr Mark Francois:

[28104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to replace the capability lost as a result of the cancellation of the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme.

Jeremy Quin:

Operational Analysis highlighted the requirement for the Army to reconsider how it creates the conditions for success in the close battle. Following the Integrated Review, two Armoured Brigade Combat Teams will be formed from the modernisation of two Armoured Infantry Brigades. It is intended that over the next decade these will be equipped with Ajax armoured reconnaissance, Challenger 3 Main Battle Tanks and Boxer mechanised infantry vehicles.

The Armoured Brigade Combat Team will be centred around a digitally connected nucleus of integrated capabilities, including Ajax, Boxer, Challenger 3 and AH64E. Modernised long-range effects, including precision weapons and surveillance, is intended to significantly improve the ability to deal with threats at long range, creating the conditions for success for the Armoured BCT and reducing risk in the close battle.

As part of this modernisation we intend to accelerate and enhance the Boxer programme. The new fleet of modernised wheeled APCs will replace the Warrior IFV fleet and Boxer will become the primary mechanised infantry platform for the Army as Warrior is retired from service.

Mr Mark Francois:

[28106]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost is of the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme to date.

Jeremy Quin:

The cost of the Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme to 31 March 2021 is £594.6 million (inc VAT). This figure is potentially subject to change due to ongoing commercial negotiations following the Integrated Review announcement.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Cultural Heritage: Romford****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[28985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to promote Romford's heritage as part of the Historic County of Essex.

Caroline Dinenage:

Through its Arms Length Bodies, DCMS has taken steps to promote and protect Romford's historic environment. These bodies, including Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, have delivered funding and supported initiatives that have celebrated the area's rich local heritage.

Since 1994, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded more than £3.8m to 24 projects in the constituency of Romford. These awards have supported a diverse range of projects, including: the restoration of Raphael Park, an exploration of the lives of local WW1 soldiers, and a celebration of the history of the Rom, England's only listed skatepark.

Similarly, between 2010 and 2013 Historic England (HE) part-funded a Partnership Scheme which focussed on the regeneration of Romford Conservation Area – funding came to £107,000. Since 2013 HE has also funded the management and maintenance of the Moated Site at Dagnam Park (a scheduled monument), including the installation of an interpretation board, circa £6,500.

EDUCATION**■ Adoption****Bill Esterson:**[\[29783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the Adoption Support Fund being allocated on a yearly basis instead of a multi-year settlement; and what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the short-term funding announcements on families and adoption agencies accessing that Fund for therapeutic support services.

Bill Esterson:[\[29784\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of Adoption UK's recommendation in the Adoption Barometer Report 2021 on extending adoption support to at least age 26.

Bill Esterson:[\[29785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take in response to Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer 2021 finding that 71 per cent of newly placed adopters surveyed did not have a support plan in place; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendation by Adoption UK that

multi-disciplinary assessments be carried out for every child to be placed for adoption, and clear support plans put in place that anticipate future as well as current support needs.

Bill Esterson:

[\[29786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will work with regional and voluntary adoption agencies to create and implement quality standards for the journey of prospective adopters through preparation, approvals and matching.

Bill Esterson:

[\[29787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the (a) implications for his policies of the finding of Adoption UK's report entitled Adoption Barometer Report 2021 that only 45 per cent of respondents felt their child's teachers had a good understanding of the needs of care-experienced children and (b) potential merits of giving education and health professionals statutory training in early childhood trauma and associated conditions.

Vicky Ford:

Improving adoption is a manifesto commitment, and Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer report is a valuable resource for informing policy debate. We will be considering the report carefully as part of our planning for funding for future years.

We will also continue to work with regional adoption agencies and voluntary adoption agencies to ensure that services are delivered to the same high standard and quality across the country. Agencies are already working together closely to improve and standardise the front door service for prospective adopters.

With reference to the Adoption Support Fund, the department sets budgets through the Spending Review process. The 2020 Spending Review set departmental budgets for the financial year 2021-22. We will set out plans for future years funding in due course.

■ Education: Gender

Henry Smith:

[\[27128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 10325 on Education: Gender and with reference to the attainment gap between girl and boys, if he will design education policy to target pupils who are falling behind in their attainment to help close the attainment gap between boys and girls in education.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises, and continues to monitor, the educational attainment gap between girls and boys. We do not design education policy that exclusively targets certain groups of pupils based on gender. The Department is focused on providing world class education and training for everyone, whatever their background.

The Government recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education and is committed to helping pupils catch up. The Department has announced over £3 billion to support

education recovery and pupil premium is providing over £2.5 billion in the 2021/22 financial year targeted at disadvantaged pupils.

■ Family Hubs

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[27192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how his Department plans to fund the forthcoming family hub network.

Vicky Ford:

There are already many family hubs up and running across the country. Local areas are using their existing funding pots to move to a family hub model.

We are strengthening support for families by championing family hubs to help families access the crucial services they need. The government is investing a further £14 million in family hubs, including a new National Centre for Family Hubs to provide expert advice and guidance, an evaluation innovation fund to build the evidence base, and data and digital products to support the practical implementation of family hubs by helping local early years professionals to provide joined up planning and support for families.

■ Free School Meals

Daisy Cooper:

[\[27317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that students who are entitled to free school meals and are transitioning from secondary school to further education continue to receive that provision during the summer 2021 holidays.

Vicky Ford:

Schools provide free school meals for eligible pupils during term time. Beyond that, billions of pounds of welfare assistance is in place to support families, young people and children.

The COVID Local Support Grant, established by the Department for Work and Pensions and operated through local authorities in England, is there to support the hardest hit families and individuals with food and essential utility costs. This grant has been extended for a final time, with a further investment of £160 million, to cover the period up to 30 September 2021.

This grant is further to the £269 million invested since the scheme (previously known as the COVID Winter Grant Scheme) launched in December 2020.

The funding remains ring-fenced, with at least 80% targeted to assist with food and bills, and at least 80% for families with children. Local authorities have discretion to decide how to allocate government funding in their areas, recognising that they are best placed to understand local needs.

■ Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[28129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the evidence his Department has collated through the provision of its Holiday Activities and Food Programme pilots.

Vicky Ford:

We commissioned Ecorys UK to undertake an independent evaluation of the 2019 holiday activities and food (HAF) programme, which was published last year.

It highlighted a range of benefits for young people who took part, including increased knowledge, skills, socialisation, and wellbeing.

We have commissioned an independent evaluation of our newly expanded HAF programme, to take place over this summer. Findings will be published later this year.

Our expanded £220 million programme will continue in this summer holiday. Our support contract with Childcare Works is in place, and we are working with local authority HAF co-ordinators across the country to help them prepare to build up a programme of activity across the summer holidays.

■ National Tutoring Programme: Standards

Daisy Cooper:

[\[27318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to his Department's recent announcement that Randstad will be the new supplier of the National Tutoring Programme from September 2021, if he will publish the guidance his Department has provided to Randstad on tutoring partner quality standards and accreditation standards.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[27320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many tutors within the National Tutoring Programme are based outside of the UK.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has recently laid out quality and accreditation standards for tutoring providers to be accredited in delivering tutoring through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP). We will be publishing the quality and accreditation standard as part of the launch of open access, where tutoring organisations will then be able to apply to be accredited. The Department is still finalising the website, and this will be released in due course.

There are currently over 26,000 tutors supporting over 186,000 pupils across England access tutoring provision.

The Department does not hold data on how many tutors we have outside the UK. Ensuring that tutors are suitably qualified, knowledgeable, and trained is key to the delivery of high quality tuition, and it is the responsibility of individual tuition partners to set their own suitability and eligibility criteria for tutors working on the NTP. There is an expectation that stringent suitability criteria are in place across all tuition

partners which not only appropriately reflects the provision offered but also meets schools' expectations.

The Department sets high standards for the NTP. Tuition partners must follow all applicable laws and regulations, pay their tutors fairly, and make sure high minimum standards of tutor qualifications are in place. Ongoing monitoring of all organisations involved in the programme is in place to make sure tutoring is of high quality.

■ Nature Conservation: Education

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[29730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to ensure that more school pupils, especially those from urban and inner city areas, are taught about and encouraged to take an interest in wildlife conservation; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Topics related to climate, the environment and sustainability, including wildlife conservation issues, are covered in the science and geography National Curriculum and in GCSEs. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils are taught about seasons and habitats, as well as climate zones and how environments can change. Secondary school pupils are taught in geography how human and physical processes interact to influence and change landscapes, environments and the climate.

As the National Curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the Department expects schools to cover in each subject, we expect teachers to use the flexibility and freedom they have to determine how they deliver the content in the way that best meets the needs of their pupils. If teachers wish, they can choose to cover particular topics, such as wildlife conservation, in greater depth.

■ Overseas Students: Hong Kong

Sarah Owen:

[\[28342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions he has had with (a) representatives of universities and (b) Cabinet colleagues on reducing the cost of UK university study for holders of Hong Kong BNO visas.

Michelle Donelan:

To qualify for home fee status in England, a person must have settled status or a recognised connection to the UK. This includes persons who are covered by the EU Withdrawal Agreement, have long residence in this country or who have been granted international protection by the Home Office. There are also requirements associated with ordinary residence in the UK. Subject to meeting the normal eligibility requirements, Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) (BN(O)) status holders will be able to qualify for home fee status once they have acquired settled status in the UK.

Universities are autonomous institutions and are responsible for setting their own fees within the limits of regulations. As such, we would generally expect universities to treat Hong Kong BN(O)s with settled status the same as any other student with settled status.

Officials continue to engage with the Cabinet Office and other government departments on entitlements for Hong Kong BN(O)s and the support that individual departments can offer.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[27193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to provide for the early years in its covid-19 education recovery plan; and how play will be (a) encouraged, (b) supported and (c) facilitated in that plan.

Vicky Ford:

On 2 June 2021, as part of the government's announcement on providing an additional £1.4 billion for education recovery, we announced a £153 million investment for high-quality professional development for early years practitioners. This includes new programmes focusing on key areas such as speech and language development, and physical and emotional development for the youngest children, of which play is an important part. This is in addition to the £18 million announced in February and the £9 million announced in June 2020 to support early language development for children in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The package will build on our Early Years Foundation Stage reforms, which support more effective early years curriculum and assessment, and reducing unnecessary assessment paperwork so that practitioners and teachers can spend more time engaging children in rich activities, including through play, to support their learning.

■ Reading

Afzal Khan:

[\[27301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the annual Summer Reading Challenge run by The Reading Agency in maintaining standards in reading; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing financial support to local authorities to enable them to increase the reach and effect of the Summer Reading Challenge in deprived communities.

Nick Gibb:

The Department welcomes the Summer Reading Challenge and is supportive of the work of The Reading Agency.

The Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards, ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding. In 2018, the Department launched a £26.3 million English Hubs Programme dedicated to improving the teaching of reading. This focuses on supporting children making the slowest progress in reading, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The 34 English Hubs in the programme are primary schools which are outstanding at teaching early reading. The Department has since invested a further £17 million in this school to school improvement

programme, which focuses on systematic synthetic phonics, early language, and reading for pleasure. In the 2020/21 academic year, the programme is providing intensive support to over 875 partner schools.

■ Schools: Finance

Navendu Mishra:

[27351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the National Audit Office's report of 2 July 2021, School funding in England, and the finding that between 2017-18 and 2020-21 the average per-pupil funding in the most deprived fifth of schools fell in real terms by 1.2 per cent, while per-pupil funding in the least deprived fifth increased by 2.9 per cent, whether his Department has plans to increase the funding of education in disadvantaged areas.

Nick Gibb:

In the 2021/22 financial year, the National Funding Formula (NFF) is providing a total of £6.4 billion (17%) targeted at schools with higher numbers of pupils with additional needs, including deprivation. A further £2.5 billion of pupil premium funding, which has a specific focus on raising the attainment of deprived pupils, is provided on top of that.

In setting the NFF, the Department was careful to consider funding for deprivation, both the deprivation funding channelled through the NFF, and the funding provided through the pupil premium. It is right that schools with more pupils with additional needs, such as those indicated by measures of deprivation, low prior attainment, or English as an additional language, should receive extra funding to help ensure that schools are supported to meet the needs of all their pupils. For example, a primary school pupil who is eligible for free school meals will attract a total of £2,380 for their school, through the NFF and pupil premium combined; and a secondary pupil £2,255.

Further information about the NFF and allocations for the 2021/22 financial year can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2021-to-2022>. The NFF for the 2022/23 financial year will be published shortly.

■ Schools: Mental Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[29089]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to provide additional mental health support in schools for children and young people from September 2021.

Vicky Ford:

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is a priority for this government. While education settings cannot provide specialist clinical care, the support schools and colleges are providing to their pupils following the return to face-to-face education should include time devoted to supporting mental health and wellbeing, which will play a fundamental part in supporting recovery. We want schools to have the freedom to decide what wider pastoral and extra-curricular

activity to put in place, based on the needs of their pupils and drawing on evidence of effective practice.

We have provided a package of support which schools will continue to be able to access from September 2021. In June 2021, we announced £1.4 billion of additional funding for education recovery. This is in addition to the £1.7 billion already committed, bringing total investment announced for education recovery over the past year to over £3 billion. The package provides support to children aged 2 to 19 in schools, 16-19 providers and early years. It will expand our reforms in two areas where the evidence is clear our investment will have significant impact: high quality tutoring targeted at those that need it most and high-quality training for teachers.

The one-off Recovery Premium for state-funded schools, for the 2021/22 academic year, will help provide disadvantaged pupils with a boost to the support, both academic and pastoral, that has been proved most effective in helping them recover from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. This is in addition to the £650 million catch-up premium shared across state-funded schools over the 2020/21 academic year, which is also supporting education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. The Education Endowment Foundation have published a COVID-19 support guide to support schools, which includes further information about interventions to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/eef-support-for-schools/covid-19-resources/national-tutoring-programme/covid-19-support-guide-for-schools/>.

Our Mental Health in Education Action Group has been looking further at what more can to be done to help education settings support mental wellbeing as part of recovery, supported by our Youth Mental Health Ambassador, Dr Alex George. The department has recently brought together all its sources of advice for schools and colleges into a single site, which includes signposting to external sources of mental health and wellbeing support for teachers, school staff and school leaders:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-and-wellbeing-support-in-schools-and-colleges#mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>. It also includes guidance to support relationships, sex and health education curriculum planning, covering the key issues children and young people have been concerned about throughout the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-mental-wellbeing>.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, we announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. This includes £9.5 million for up to 7,800 schools to train a senior mental health lead in the next academic year, and £7 million in additional funding for local authorities to deliver the Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme. This builds on Wellbeing for Education Return in the 2020/21 academic year, which offered schools in every local authority and reached up to 15,000 schools with free expert training, support and resources for staff dealing with children and young people experiencing additional pressures from the last year, including trauma, anxiety, or grief.

We have also increased funding to specialist services. In March, we announced a £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support, which will include increasing the number of Mental Health Support Teams. The support teams - which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges - will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. This increase means that millions of children and young people will have access to significantly expanded mental health services.

In the long-term, through the NHS Long Term Plan, we are expanding children and young people's mental health services to support an additional 345,000 individuals by the 2023/24 financial year, backed by record investment of an extra £2.3 billion per year.

■ Schools: Ventilation

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[29757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve ventilation in the classroom to help ensure the safety of pupils during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

As the Department's guidance outlines, when a school is in operation, it is important to ensure that it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained. This can be achieved through a variety of measures, including using mechanical ventilation systems and/or natural ventilation, such as opening windows. In all cases, actions should be taken to encourage fresh air into the building, whilst striking a balance with thermal comfort.

The Department continues to review ventilation guidance, including considering whether monitoring carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels would be appropriate. The Department is working with Public Health England (PHE) and ventilation experts on a pilot project to measure CO₂ levels in typical classrooms and exploring options to help improve ventilation where needed. As new evidence or data emerges, the Government updates its advice accordingly to ensure that all schools, colleges and nurseries have the right safety measures in place.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and PHE to revise our guidance for schools, colleges and nurseries from Step 4 of the roadmap. The Department's aim is to balance the risks associated with COVID-19 whilst moving to a 'steady state' that minimises both the burden of implementing protective measures on staff and parents and the effect those measures have on young peoples' educational experiences.

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

The guidance can be found here:

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

■ Students: Finance

Sarah Owen:

[27335]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Government plans for its Takaful Alternative Finance product for Muslim university students to be made available.

Michelle Donelan:

I refer the hon. Member for Luton North to the answer I gave on 9 June 2021 to Question [10312](#).

■ Supply Teachers

Daisy Cooper:

[27319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of qualified supply teachers currently not working in the education sector.

Nick Gibb:

The requested information is not available.

The Department collects details of teachers working in state funded schools in England through the annual School Workforce Census. The census does identify those teachers who are employed via a service agreement, but not whether they are a supply teacher.

Teachers not currently working in state funded schools in England are not specifically identified as supply teachers. A teacher who has left a state funded school having been a supply teacher may subsequently return to employment as a permanent contracted teacher, and vice versa.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[27304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent guidance he has provided to universities on returning to face-to-face teaching for the 2021-22 academic year as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Michelle Donelan:

Following the announcement to move forward to Step 4 of the government's Roadmap, we can confirm there will be no further restrictions on the provision of in-person teaching and learning in the autumn term in higher education (HE) settings.

HE providers should continue to conduct risk assessments based around their particular circumstances and should implement sensible and proportionate control measures which follow the health and safety hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level. HE providers should have contingency plans to deal with any identified positive cases of COVID-19 or outbreaks.

We have updated our guidance to the sector in preparation for Step 4:

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

As COVID-19 vaccination is now being offered to everyone aged 18 and over, all students and staff should be encouraged to participate in the programme and take up the offer of both doses of the vaccine.

HE providers should communicate clearly to their students on what they can expect from planned teaching and learning, in current circumstances and in different scenarios, and the changes that might need to be made in response to changing public health advice, so that they are able to make informed choices.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Products: Imports

Sir Charles Walker:

[28122]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 25745 on Animal Products: Imports, what plans he has to incorporate the 2016 CITES resolution that well managed and sustainable trophy hunting is consistent with and contributes to species conservation, in any future domestic legislation on trophy hunting.

Rebecca Pow:

We are mindful of the importance of protecting our most threatened and endangered species and aware of the recommendations contained in CITES Resolution 17.9 on trade in hunting trophies of endangered species.

This Government is committed to halting and reversing global biodiversity loss and that is why we will ensure that our approach on hunting trophies will be comprehensive, robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide. We will set out our plans soon.

■ Beekeeping

Jim Shannon:

[27159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many bee keepers there are in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

On 6 July 2021, the number of current registered beekeepers on BeeBase is as follows:

England – 39475

Wales – 3706

Scotland – 2883

Northern Ireland - does not use BeeBase

Registration for beekeepers on BeeBase is not compulsory and therefore some beekeepers will choose not to sign up. The number registered, therefore, will be lower than the actual number of beekeepers.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell:

[26146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress has been made on testing cattle for Bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

TB surveillance and control measures in cattle herds are the foundations on which our TB eradication strategy is based. We have significantly reinforced our cattle measures over the last ten years and continually look for opportunities to enhance them further, while balancing the need to ensure we retain economically sustainable beef and dairy sectors.

A number of changes to TB testing have been, or will very soon be, introduced. From July 2021, most cattle herds in the English TB High Risk Area will be subject to routine surveillance for TB using the tuberculin skin test every six months instead of annually. Later in July 2021 the criteria for interferon-gamma (IFN- γ) blood testing of cattle in the HRA and parts of the Edge Area of England will be changing, with mandatory testing of herds that suffer a new TB breakdown within 18 months of the end of a previous incident. By the end of this year APHA will be opening a third IFN- γ testing laboratory to better cope with the projected increasing demand for this supplementary cattle TB test.

Further information about these two cattle TB testing policy changes can be found on the TB Hub:

<https://tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/refinements-to-the-interferon-gamma-testing-policy-in-the-high-risk-and-edge-area-of-england/>

<https://tbhub.co.uk/tb-policy/england/six-monthly-surveillance-testing-of-cattle-herds-in-the-high-risk-area/>

Further work to take forward the commitments in the March 2020 Government response to the Independent Bovine TB Strategy Review led by Professor Sir Charles Godfray are either in progress or are being planned, and were set out in a recent Call for Views exercise which can be found at

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/bovine-tb-2020/bovine-tuberculosis-call-for-views-on-possible-fut/>.

■ Climate Change

Navendu Mishra:

[27354]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take to support the UK to meet its climate change targets in

response to the recent finding by the Climate Change Committee that the UK is not keeping pace with other countries in meeting its climate change targets.

Rebecca Pow:

Tackling climate change and delivering our world-leading Net Zero target is a key priority for the Government. As the CCC recognise, we have made huge progress in cutting our emissions while growing the economy and we will continue this work.

Defra are considering a wide range of measures for how to reduce emissions from our sectors and increase the amount of carbon captured by the land. For example, our future Environmental Land Management schemes will play an important role in achieving net zero, including through supporting large scale tree planting, paying for actions that can help to reduce emissions from farming, and by encouraging the adoption of sustainable soil management practices that will enable soils to sequester more carbon.

In addition, on 18th May we launched our England Tree and Peat Action Plans, supported by the £640m Nature for Climate Fund. This fund will expand and enhance woodland cover and ensure that more peatland is restored, protected and better managed.

Further to this, we are seeking to make the UK a world leader in using resources efficiently and reducing the amount of waste we create as a society. We want to prolong the lives of the materials and goods that we use and move society away from the inefficient linear economic model of 'take, make, use, throw' to a more circular one.

A more detailed overview of our departmental plans to help the UK meet its climate targets will be set out in the Net Zero strategy, to be published ahead of COP26.

■ **Dogs: Animal Welfare**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that breeders selling puppies provide adequate protection for the (a) well being and (b) breeding of the dogs.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to protect domestic animals from cruelty through the on-line sales market.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the size of puppy farms in England and Wales.

Victoria Prentis:

This Government takes the issue of low-welfare and illegal supply of puppies very seriously. Significant steps have already been taken to improve and update the laws

on dog breeding in England to crack down on unscrupulous breeders who breed dogs purely for financial greed at the expense of animal welfare.

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the 2018 Regulations) anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs and/or who breeds three or more litters in a twelve-month period needs to have a valid licence from their local authority. Licences must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards, including provisions to protect dogs from being bred from too often or at an early age, which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue, refuse or revoke licences. Any licensee advertising dogs for sale will need to include their licence number in the advert and specify the local authority who issued the licence. Additional requirements placed on advertisements include that the age of the dog for sale must be displayed along with a recognisable photograph.

We banned the commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens in England from 6 April 2020. This ban aims to disrupt the low-welfare trade that supports puppy farming by preventing pet shops, pet dealers and other commercial outlets from selling these animals in England unless they themselves have bred them. It means anyone looking to get a puppy must buy direct from a breeder or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead.

The 2018 Regulations require Local Authorities to maintain a record of the number of licences in force for each activity in their respective area. Furthermore, as Local Authorities are responsible for enforcing animal related activities which are licensed, such as pet selling or dog breeding, they will hold details on the level of enforcement activity being undertaken in their area.

Meanwhile my department maintains a national communications campaign (Petfished) to raise awareness of issues associated with low-welfare and illegal supply of pets. This includes providing clear signposting on where responsible breeders and rehoming centres can be found and encouraging prospective buyers to research the seller thoroughly before they visit and decide to purchase. The campaign provides a list of red flags for buyers to look out for when searching for a pet online. More information can be found here:

<https://getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk/>

We have also endorsed The Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) which was created to combat growing concerns about the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale, rehoming and exchange and backed a set of Minimum Standards that PAAG developed which several of the UK's largest classified websites have agreed to meet.

Furthermore, the Government has a manifesto commitment to crack down on puppy smuggling and one of our key reforms in the Action Plan on Animal Welfare is to end this abhorrent, cruel practice and low-welfare pet imports. Through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill currently before Parliament, we will introduce new powers to tackle the unethical trade of puppy smuggling by reducing the number of pets (dogs, cats and ferrets) that can travel under pet travel rules. The Bill will also include powers for the Government to bring in further restrictions on the movement of pets on

welfare grounds, for example by increasing the minimum age of imported puppies and restricting the import of pregnant dogs and dogs with mutilations such as cropped ears and tails.

■ Game: Gun Sports

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will take further steps to reduce grouse moor shooting to support the replenishment of upland peat.

Rebecca Pow:

We have taken action to prevent further damage to our protected blanket bog habitat by bringing forward legislation that will limit burning of vegetation. The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2021 came into force on 1 May 2021.

The recently published England Peat Action Plan sets out further measures to restore, protect and manage England's peatlands as part of a package of measures to protect England's landscapes and nature-based solutions. The Plan includes ramping up current levels of peatland restoration through the Nature for Climate Fund, which will provide funding for the restoration of at least 35,000 hectares of peatland by 2025.

Shooting activities bring many benefits to the rural economy and we will continue work to ensure a sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship between shooting and our wider environmental goals including meeting net zero.

■ Hare Coursing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to ban hare coursing.

Rebecca Pow:

We set out in the Action Plan on Animal Welfare published on 12 May our intention to bring in legislation to crack down on the illegal practice of hare coursing. We aim to provide law enforcement with more tools to address the issue effectively. On 17 June I chaired a round table with the police and stakeholders to share our outline proposals and initiate detailed consultations with officials.

■ Hunting Act 2004

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Hunting with Hounds Act 2004; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to amend that Act to tackle incidences of continued hunting activity.

Rebecca Pow:

The Hunting Act 2004 makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal with dogs except where it is carried out in accordance with the exemptions in the Act. This Government does not intend to amend the Hunting Act, and therefore has not made any assessment of proposals to do so.

■ **Pets: Theft****Rachael Maskell:**[\[27222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholders on pet theft; and what steps he is taking to help protect pets from theft.

Victoria Prentis:

This Government is committed to acting to address the issue of pet theft. The Secretary of State has had regular discussions with cabinet colleagues about the work of the Government's Pet Theft Taskforce.

The Government's Pet Theft Taskforce has been set up to gather evidence to understand the factors that may be contributing to any rise in pets being stolen and will consider the issue from end to end, recommending any necessary measures to tackle the problem. The Taskforce has been engaging with relevant stakeholders, including experts and animal welfare groups throughout the review, and aims to report this summer and publish the outcomes of the review.

■ **Primates: Animal Experiments****Henry Smith:**[\[27124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many (a) wild-caught, (b) captive-born or F1 generation and (c) captive-bred long-tailed macaques were imported from Mauritius into the UK for the purposes of scientific research in 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

Between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2020, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) recorded 1142 live long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) as being imported into the UK from Mauritius. All were captive-bred (Source C) and were imported using purpose code M (bio-medical research).

APHA did not issue any import permits for wild (source W) or first-generation captive bred (source F) specimens in 2020.

A further 122 captive-bred live macaques were imported in early 2021 using Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species permits issued in 2020.

Henry Smith:[\[27125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's policy is on the importation by the UK for the purposes of scientific research of (a) the offspring of wild-caught non-human primates and (b) non-human primates from supply establishments that trap wild monkeys for breeding purposes and export.

Victoria Prentis:

Non-human primates are only used in research where absolutely necessary and where they are considered the most appropriate and scientifically justified species. They play an important role in the public safety testing of novel pharmaceuticals prior to human trials, fulfilling international guidelines and national regulatory requirements.

The import of non-human primates is controlled by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Captive-bred specimens may be traded under CITES rules, including first generation offspring bred in a controlled environment where at least one parent was sourced from the wild.

CITES allows for the introduction of wild sourced specimens into captive breeding facilities to reduce the effects of inbreeding in the captive population. Any introduction must be in line with CITES requirements, including having no detrimental impact on the species survival in the wild and being in line with any domestic laws. Where the UK Government is confident that these conditions have been met, imports will be permitted.

Henry Smith:[\[27127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will end the import of long-tailed macaques for the purposes of scientific research from Mauritius into the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

Non-human primates are only used in scientific research where absolutely necessary. Non-human primates play an important role in the public safety testing of novel pharmaceuticals prior to human trials, fulfilling international guidelines and national regulatory requirements. All imports of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) into the UK are controlled by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), by way of their listing on CITES Appendix II. To meet our obligations under CITES, all applications for import are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and only allowed for scientific research purposes where we are confident the imports will not have a harmful effect on conservation status of the species. The UK Government has no plans under CITES to end the import of long-tailed macaques for scientific research where they are the most appropriate and scientifically justified species.

■ Recycling**Hywel Williams:**[\[27021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed flat rate deposit under the Deposit Return Scheme on the drinks and container materials markets; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a variable rate of deposit under the Deposit Return Scheme.

Dr James Davies:

[\[27237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the market impact of a (a) flat rate and (b) variable rate of deposit within a deposit return scheme.

Rebecca Pow:

We have recently closed our second consultation on introducing a deposit return scheme in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and are analysing the responses with a view to publishing a government response later this year. We will be appointing a Deposit Management Organisation to run the DRS scheme. The recent consultation explored the potential for both a flat rate and variable rate deposit to be used in the scheme, and stated that the intention would be for the Deposit Management Organisation to have the power to set the deposit level within parameters set out in legislation by Government. This would include the ability to set either a flat rate or variable rate deposit. The government response to the consultation will include details on the agreed approach to setting a deposit level in the DRS.

I am acutely aware of the concerns that stakeholders have raised regarding the possible market distortions that could occur depending on the type and level of deposit set, and we will be keeping these concerns in mind when finalising the approach to setting and amending the deposit level.

■ Recycling: Paper

Daisy Cooper:

[\[27321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the announcement of 7 May 2021, New plans unveiled to boost recycling, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing guidance for all local authorities on the acceptance of recycling paper gift wrap that bears the recyclable logo.

Rebecca Pow:

As part of Government's Resources and Waste Strategy, published in 2019, we are introducing new measures through the Environment Bill to increase the quantity and quality of recycling. These measures will require local authorities to collect the following dry recyclable waste streams from all households in England: plastic, glass, metal, paper and card. The Bill includes powers to specify which materials local authorities should be required to collect in each of the recyclable waste streams (including paper and card). We intend to specify these materials in secondary legislation and may provide further detail in statutory guidance.

Wrapping paper is generally accepted for kerbside collection, however, it can often become unrecyclable due to contamination with sticky tape. Wrapping paper which contain foil or glitter are not recyclable. Recycle Now which is a part of the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), has produced guidance on the recycling of wrapping paper here:

[Wrapping paper | Recycle Now](#)

■ Wines: Manufacturing Industries

Mark Pritchard:

[27092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to support steps being taken by the UK wine-making sector to become resilient against climate change.

Victoria Prentis:

Adapting to current and predicted changes to our climate is vital across the economy. Through our statutory framework under the Climate Change Act 2008, Defra works across government to promote climate adaptation and the nation's resilience to a changing climate. The Act requires us to prepare, on a five-yearly cycle, a UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA), followed by a National Adaptation Programme (NAP), setting out actions to address the risks identified in the CCRA. To inform our third adaptation cycle, on 16 June the Climate Change Committee (CCC) published a new UK [Climate Risk Independent Assessment \(CRIA\)](#). It offers a detailed and up to date insight into the growing risks and opportunities to the UK from climate change and includes a technical chapter on the natural environment and natural resources, including coverage of opportunities for new crops and viniculture. It will inform our third UK CCRA, due for publication in January 2022.

The wine sector is excellent example of how our agriculture sector is already adapting to meet the demands of climate change and through this helping to build resilience in our rural landscapes and economies. One indication of this is the willingness of some famous champagne houses to invest in UK vineyards.

We work closely with the £18.7 million Strategic Priority Fund (SPF) UK Climate Resilience Programme, supported by UK Research & Innovation and the Met Office. This programme includes a project looking specifically at the risks and opportunities associated with climate change in the UK wine sector. A link to the project can be found here: [crews-uk-characterising-and-adapting-to-climate-risks-in-the-uk-wine-sector-climate-resilience-in-the-uk-wine-sector/](#)

A recent report produced by the South Downs National Park Authority indicates that 0.4% of land is currently dedicated to viticulture in the South Downs but that up to as much as 34% could be suitable for growing vines. This demonstrates significant scope to increase grape production both in the south and further north in the UK.

Mitigating and adapting to climate change remain one of this Government's key objectives.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Angola: Bomb Disposal****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[27139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding his Department has provided for mine clearance on contaminated land around Cuito Cuanavale in Angola.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government has provided £9.3 million for mine action in Angola since 2018. By March 2021, this funding had cleared and confirmed safe over 26.6 million square metres of land, the equivalent of 3,700 football pitches, and delivered risk education to 86,700 people. We do not hold data on the proportion of funding used for work around Cuito Cuanavale.

■ Arab States: Israel**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[29734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will hold discussions with his US counterpart on helping to further improve relations in the Middle East between Israel and other Arab nations.

James Cleverly:

The UK warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Sudan. These are historic steps which sees the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. The changing regional context and converging Arab and Israeli interests presents an opening to make progress on the Israel-Palestine issue. We need to build on this momentum through further dialogue and compromise to move towards a two state solution and a lasting solution to the conflict. We look forward to working with the US, alongside regional partners, and the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, to pursue that goal.

■ Colombia: Civil Liberties and Protest**Jamie Stone:**[\[29875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has made to work with his international counterparts to promote civil liberties and encourage the right to protest in Colombia.

Wendy Morton:

UK Ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully, and that the right to peaceful assembly and association must be guaranteed. We will continue to work closely with the UN Verification Mission and the UN Office of the High Representative for Human Rights in Colombia, as well as the wider international community, in support of their efforts to reduce tensions and promote dialogue.

■ Colombia: Police

Jamie Stone:

[\[29876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the Government's involvement in training Colombian police forces; and if he will publish the minutes of those discussions.

Wendy Morton:

We are not aware of such a meeting. The UK is committed to continuing its programming in support of peace, stability and security in Colombia to help implement the peace agreement and build a more peaceful and prosperous society.

The UK's CSSF-funded Colombia Peace and Stabilisation Programme launched the multiyear £2.1 million Police Innovations for Stabilisation in Colombia (SCIP) project in 2020. It is supporting the transformation of the Colombian National Police. The intervention aims to contribute to the modernisation of the police service by scaling up and improving police practices with a preventive approach, focusing on i) community-based police prevention; ii) transformation of large-scale social conflicts from a rights-based approach; and iii) gender mainstreaming. The project is being implemented through the International Organisation of Migration, which will design and deliver activities alongside the Colombian National Police at national and field level, with strategic support and advice from Police Scotland.

■ Education

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[27338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the UK has made as President of the G7 to remove barriers to education across the world.

Wendy Morton:

Meeting under the UK Presidency, G7 Foreign and Development Ministers endorsed two new global targets on girls' education in low-income and lower-middle income countries, which we are calling on the world to help deliver by 2026. Ministers also endorsed a girls' education declaration which specifically states that the G7 will work in collaboration with developing country partners, multilateral institutions, civil society, girl-led groups and youth leaders to remove the obstacles to education that stand in the way of girls. This includes addressing the social, environmental and institutional barriers to education such as reducing violence in and out of schools, reducing harmful cultural practices such as child marriage and FGM, and amending restrictive policies or legislation that prevent girls from thriving in school.

■ Ethnic Groups: Human Rights

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[27306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the OHCHR report entitled Agenda towards transformative change for racial justice and equality, published in June 2021, whether the Government supports the

proposals to establish a new international expert mechanism to further that agenda in the context of law enforcement globally.

Nigel Adams:

The United Kingdom is committed to combatting all forms of racism, including antisemitism, both at home and abroad. We believe that one of the most effective ways to tackle injustices and advocate respect among different religious and racial groups is to encourage all states to uphold their human rights obligations. We have received the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and are reviewing it, including the proposal for a new international mechanism.

■ **Halo Trust: Finance**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[27138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much funding the Government has allocated to the Halo Trust to undertake mine clearance work overseas.

James Cleverly:

The Government has allocated £52 million to the HALO Trust between April 2018 and March 2021. This funding has cleared deadly explosive devices so that people across the world need no longer live in fear of one wrong step.

In 2021/22 we will continue funding the HALO Trust to carry out this important work. UK-funded mine action will continue to save lives, limbs and livelihoods, while delivering UK commitments under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Cluster Munitions Convention.

■ **Kenneth Kaunda**

Ruth Jones:

[\[27307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the legacy of the late former President of Zambia, Dr Kenneth Kaunda.

James Duddridge:

The UK is mourning with Zambia the loss of their Founding Father, Dr Kenneth Kaunda, an African icon and respected statesman. He was someone who did so much for his country and for the region, and was renowned for bringing people together. Kaunda came to power following independence from the UK in 1964 and he stayed in power until 1991. He was a leading member of the Non-Aligned Movement and a tireless campaigner for Southern Rhodesian independence and against Apartheid. After retiring from politics Kaunda was active in raising awareness about HIV. As a leader of the "liberation struggle" (and the last survivor of the generation of Africans who led their countries to independence from Britain in the 1960s), his death will be mourned across southern Africa. To honour his legacy, I attended his state funeral on 2 July, meeting with his family beforehand at the family home, and I delivered a national address of condolences on behalf of HMG at the funeral. During

my visit, I also met with Zambian Church leaders who are helping to preserve Dr Kaunda's legacy in their call for unity and peace at this difficult time.

■ Overseas Aid: Women's Rights

Catherine West:

[\[29870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance spending on the UK's ability to support global women's rights.

Wendy Morton:

Our commitment to ensure gender equality and women's rights remain at the heart of the UK's ODA work enshrined in the Gender Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty. This was highlighted in the Integrated Review, the recent G7 Leaders' Communique and the joint US-UK statement following President Biden's visit to the UK. The UK is seizing the multiple opportunities of 2021 to advance women's rights, including the Global Education Summit, COP26, the Global Action Coalition on gender-based violence and the UK's G7 Presidency, which has prioritised action on gender equality at the centre of our COVID-19 response and recovery.

During the 2021/22 ODA allocation process, the FCDO considered risks and impacts to inform advice to Ministers and an overarching Equalities Impact Assessment analysed impacts across bilateral country spend. The FCDO will continue to champion inequality including the rights of women and girls central to creating a fairer, safer and more prosperous world.

■ Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[27019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings in the report on the ongoing conflict in Tigray by the acting humanitarian aid chief of the UN, entitled Tigray region humanitarian update, published on 24 June 2021.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and shares the concerns outlined in the report on 24 June by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The UK has led calls for a humanitarian ceasefire, joined by all G7 nations and the EU, along with a growing number of other nations. The G7 Summit Communique of 13 June also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and unimpeded humanitarian access. The Government of Ethiopia has since announced a unilateral humanitarian ceasefire in Tigray. We welcome this but continue to call for all parties to cease fighting, grant urgently needed unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray, respect international humanitarian law and prevent their forces from hindering the critical work of the UN and NGOs.

On 14 June I announced that the UK will allocate a further £16.7 million to the crisis in Tigray. This will support civil-military coordination to help aid get to those in need

and address famine risk through the provision of healthcare, sanitation, and nutritional support. This allocation is on top of the existing £27 million in 2020-21 already directed to the response, and an additional £4 million allocated to support nutrition and vaccinations in Tigray. This brings UK total funding to support response to the crisis to £47.7 million. As mentioned in my statement of 23 June, we urge all parties to the conflict to protect civilians and respect international humanitarian law.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Nickie Aiken:

[\[27311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the update on international travel published by his Department on 24 June 2021 and official correspondence on covid-19 and Israel between 2020 and 2021, for what reason Jerusalem is referred to in addition to Israel rather than being considered included in the naming of that state.

James Cleverly:

The position of the UK Government has remained constant since April 1950, when the UK extended de jure recognition to the State of Israel, but withheld recognition of sovereignty over Jerusalem pending a final determination of its status. We recognise Israel's 'de facto authority' over West Jerusalem. But in line with Security Council Resolution 242 (1967) and subsequent Council resolutions, we regard East Jerusalem as under Israeli military occupation.

A final determination of the status of Jerusalem should be sought as part of a negotiated settlement between Israelis and Palestinians. It must ensure Jerusalem is a shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states, with access and religious rights of both peoples respected.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Jim Shannon:

[\[28189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have acne in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 7 July 2021 to Question [25819](#).

Derek Twigg:

[\[902642\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure that patients can access a face-to-face consultation with their GP.

Jo Churchill:

Recent NHS England guidance confirmed practices must offer both face-to-face and remote appointments and must respect patients' preferences for care unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary, such as the presence of COVID-19

symptoms. We know many areas of the country are experiencing high COVID rates and receptions may be closed for good reasons. Prior to the pandemic, approximately 80% of appointments were face-to-face. In April, of the 1.2 million appointments, 55% were face to face and patients now have much more flexibility, with many preferring remote access.

Sir Robert Neill:

[\[902644\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to support stroke teams to deliver the objectives set out in the National Stroke Service Model.

Jo Churchill:

The National Stroke Service Model, published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in May 2021 articulates optimal stroke delivery based upon best evidence. There are, as of 1 April, 20 integrated stroke delivery networks, which are delivering joined-up stroke pathways. The model will ensure access to specialist rehabilitation on hospital discharge that is patient-directed, giving a needs-based approach rather than time. We are supporting stroke teams to ensure they have skilled and sustainable workforce.

Bob Blackman:

[\[902649\]](#)

When he plans to publish an updated Tobacco Control Plan.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's new Tobacco Control Plan will be published later this year.

It will set out a comprehensive package of ambitious policy proposals and supporting regulatory changes, to meet our ambition to be smoke free by 2030.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[902652\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help improve the quality of local GP practices.

Jo Churchill:

In January 2019 a five-year framework for general practitioner (GP) contract reform was agreed to implement the commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, including care quality and outcomes improvement.

In 2020 we also committed at least an additional £1.5 billion for general practice until 2023 to support our commitment to recruit 26,000 extra staff to support GPs and ensure patients have better access to a wider range of health professionals.

We have also made an additional investment of an extra £4.5 billion a year by 2023/24 in primary and community care.

■ Abortion: Drugs

Gareth Bacon:

[\[29145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to collect data on the number of women presenting in clinical settings as a result of

complications arising from (a) incomplete procedures and (b) retained products of conception following an early medical abortion at home; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Department is undertaking a project to review the system of recording abortion complications and we anticipate this work will be completed later this year. The review will cover all data on complications arising from abortion.

Gareth Bacon:

[\[29146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to issue guidance on abortion pill reversal services as part of a commitment to increasing choice for women on reproductive health in Women's Health Review; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not issue clinical guidance.

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[902657\]](#)

What assessment his Department has made of the future of the provision allowing both sets of abortion pills to be taken at home.

Helen Whately:

The Government has undertaken a public consultation on whether to make permanent the current temporary measure for home use of both pills for early medical abortion. We are considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year. The temporary measure will be kept in place until a decision has been made.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Children

Navendu Mishra:

[\[28385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will launch a strategy to tackle the reported rise of children presenting at accident and emergency departments with viral infections outside of winter time.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Children attending accident and emergency departments are usually seen in dedicated facilities by specialist staff trained in children's medicine. Children are protected by the National Health Service constitution in the same way as adults and should receive care and be admitted or discharged within four hours of arrival at an Emergency Department. The NHS Long Term Plan is a strategy supporting reform of urgent and emergency care services to ensure all patients get the care they need quickly and relieve pressure on A&E departments.

■ Ambulance Services: Labour Turnover

Jonathan Ashworth: [24975]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the staff turnover rate was in each Ambulance Service in England in each year since 2010-11 to date.

Helen Whately:

The attached table shows the annual number of joiners and leavers for each ambulance trust in England for the years requested as at 31 March, headcount.

Attachments:

1. Table [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ24975 - (1).xlsx]

■ Arthritis: Surgery

Jonathan Ashworth: [16118]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to encourage Integrated Care Systems to adopt the recommendations set out in Versus Arthritis' recent publication, Supporting people with arthritis waiting for surgery, including (a) clear communication with people on waiting lists, (b) personalised pain self-management support, (c) physical activity programmes, (d) mental health support and (e) signposting to financial support and employment advice.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 June 2021]: Once fully implemented, integrated care systems (ICSs) will strengthen partnerships between the National Health Service, local authorities and the voluntary sector. NHS England and NHS Improvement are already working with regional colleagues and ICS musculoskeletal (MSK) leads, to accelerate the restoration of elective care and optimise both access and outcomes. This includes working with Versus Arthritis through the Best MSK Health Collaborative, Outpatient Transformation and Elective Care, Personalised Care and Children's and Young Persons programmes.

An online resource has been developed to help patients, including those with arthritis, to manage both the physical and mental health implications of their condition, including pain self-management, at home. This guide is available at the following link:

www.csp.org.uk/conditions/managing-pain-home

Public Health England (PHE) is also providing training and resources to support healthcare professionals (HCPs) to have conversations with their patients about the benefits of keeping active. The Moving Medicine resource is at the following link:

<https://movingmedicine.ac.uk/>

There is also information available online for patients who have to stop or reduce work to part-time as a result of rheumatoid arthritis and the financial support they may be entitled to, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/rheumatoid-arthritis/living-with/>

■ Autism: Health Services

Damien Moore:

[\[28316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnostic pathways.

Helen Whately:

As part of the NHS Long Term Plan we are investing £2.5 million to test and implement the most effective ways to reduce autism diagnosis waiting times for children and young people in England. In addition, in 2021-22 we are investing an extra £10.5 million to address waiting times for a diagnosis for children, young people and adults and proactively identify those at risk of crisis. We will be publishing shortly our refreshed national autism strategy, which will set out actions to improve the diagnosis of autism for both adults and children.

■ Bio Products Laboratory

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[29741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value of contracts is that the NHS holds with Bio Products Laboratory Limited; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Department holds one contract with Bio Products Laboratory Ltd (BPL) with a value of £3.3 million. Public Health England is responsible for managing the contract which includes distribution of products into the National Health Service. NHS England and NHS Improvement hold one contract with BPL with a value of £5.3 million.

■ Breast Milk: Donors

Alison Thewliss:

[\[28225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to regulate commercial for profit human milk banks.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: There are currently no plans to introduce regulation of commercial for profit human milk banks. The Government will continue to closely monitor this emerging industry.

■ Breastfeeding: Ultrasonics

Daisy Cooper:

[\[27322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making therapeutic ultrasound for blocked ducts in breast feeding women available on the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

There has been no formal assessment.

■ Cancer: Coronavirus**Peter Dowd:** [\[27181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support cancer patients who have experienced disruption or delays to their cancer treatment as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is focusing on reducing the number of people waiting over 62 days on cancer pathways, particularly rescheduling diagnostic procedures or treatment for those who have had their care delayed by the pandemic.

An additional £1 billion has been made available in 2021/22 to support the start of the recovery of elective activity, including cancer services.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis**Mr Gregory Campbell:** [\[29733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will hold discussions with health ministers in (a) Scotland, (b) Wales and (c) Northern Ireland on reaching a consensus on having 75 per cent of cancers diagnosed within the first two stages across the UK.

Jo Churchill:

We have no current plans to do so. While the NHS Long Term Plan commits to diagnosing 75% of cancers in England at an early stage by 2028, in other parts of the United Kingdom this is a devolved matter. The Department engages in sharing best practice between the devolved administrations.

■ Cancer: Health Services**Peter Dowd:** [\[27179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has revised the planned delivery date for the Government's commitment to provide every person with cancer with personalised care.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service remains committed to ensuring that by 2021, where appropriate, every person diagnosed with cancer will have access to personalised care, including needs assessment, a care plan and health and wellbeing information and support.

■ Cancer: Mental Health Services**Mark Tami:** [\[28077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that sarcoma patients receive routine access to mental health support (a) during and (b) after cancer treatment.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Long Term Plan states that where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer, including sarcoma patients, should receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan based on a holistic needs assessment, end of treatment summaries and health and wellbeing information and support, including for mental health needs. All patients will have access to the right expertise and support.

People with long term conditions, such as cancer, have been identified as priority patients for accessing Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) services. Many IAPT services have strong links with a range of health and care settings to ensure that patients and carers receive the right support as quickly as possible.

■ Cancer: Waiting Lists**Peter Dowd:**[\[27180\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional resources he plans to put in place to tackle the backlog of cancer (a) diagnosis, (b) care and (c) treatment following the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The Government confirmed an additional £3 billion for the National Health Service in the Spending Review 2020 to support the recovery from the impact of COVID-19. Cancer patients will continue to be prioritised and will benefit from approximately £1 billion of this funding to begin tackling the elective backlog. This will be supported by £325 million for NHS diagnostics. Further funding is subject to the 2021 Spending Review in the autumn.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[28258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to monitor the effect of the lifting of biosecure systems on covid-19 infection rates in care homes.

Helen Whately:

Care home infections and vaccination rates are monitored on a daily basis, using testing data and information provided by care providers using the capacity tracker tool. Data is shared with local authorities via a dashboard to monitor outbreaks and infection rates at local level.

We will maintain a testing regime within care homes and offer booster vaccinations, subject to the final advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, to ensure the care home population and workforce are protected as we progressively ease restrictions.

■ Cereals

Martyn Day: [\[27239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 8721 on Cereals, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of (a) the Whole Grain Initiative's definition of whole grains and (b) using that definition to support dietary guidance on the consumption of whole grains.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has not made a specific assessment.

Martyn Day: [\[27240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 8721 on Cereals, what plans his Department has to increase the daily intake of fibre in children.

Martyn Day: [\[27241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 8721 on Cereals, what plans his Department has to increase the daily intake of fibre in adults.

Jo Churchill:

The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's (SACN's) Carbohydrates and Health report included an assessment of the relationship between dietary fibre and whole grains intake and cardio-metabolic, colo-rectal and oral health outcomes. Based on the SACN's findings that increasing dietary fibre intake would reduce the risk of heart diseases, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer, the Government recommends that children and adults should increase their daily fibre intake through a variety of food sources. These recommendations are reflected in the United Kingdom's national food model, the Eatwell Guide, and the five a day programme.

■ Chronic Illnesses: Rehabilitation

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[27190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to introduce a rehabilitation strategy for people with (a) dementia and (b) other long-term health conditions as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Helen Whately:

There are currently no plans to introduce a specific rehabilitation strategy for people with dementia and long-term conditions.

Guidance is provided to clinical commissioning groups to support them in commissioning rehabilitation services for their local population. The guidance covers the scope and components of good quality rehabilitation and how to compare rehabilitation services locally, regionally and nationally. NHS England and NHS Improvement's resource 'Dementia wellbeing in the COVID-19 pandemic' which includes specific considerations for rehabilitation.

■ Churches: Protective Clothing

Andrew Rosindell:

[28113]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of removing the requirement to wear face masks prior to 19 July 2021 for worshippers in churches.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no such assessment.

■ Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [1306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the paper entitled Insights on transmission of COVID-19 with a focus on the hospitality, retail and leisure sector, published by the EMG Transmission Group on 30 April 2021, was not disclosed by his Department during the case of R (On the Application of Sacha Lord and Hugh Osmond) v Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 May 2021]: The Government disclosed the key documents and evidence on 22 March. As this report was not published until 30 April, it was not included.

■ Coronavirus and Influenza: Vaccination

Jim Shannon:

[27158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether covid-19 booster vaccines and flu vaccines will be delivered (a) at the same time and (b) in pharmacies.

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 recommends a two staged approach is recommended, with those in the first stage offered a booster and flu vaccine as soon as possible from September. Those in the second stage would be offered a booster vaccine as soon as practicable after stage one, with equal emphasis on deployment of the flu vaccine where eligible.

Final decisions on the timing and scope of the vaccine booster programme, as well as cohorts and eligibility, will be made later in the year, informed by further independent advice from the JCVI. This includes further data on the durability of protection from vaccines, data supplied by manufacturers and clinical trial data regarding COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine coadministration. On 1 July, NHS England and NHS

Improvement wrote to primary care providers, including community pharmacies, outlining the JCVI's interim advice to allow local planning to begin.

■ **Coronavirus: Air Pollution**

Ian Byrne: [\[28366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what modelling his Department has undertaken on the effect of air pollution on hospitalisations and deaths from covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Public Health England has not undertaken any direct modelling on the effect of air pollution on hospitalisations and deaths for COVID-19.

■ **Coronavirus: Mental Health**

Catherine West: [\[26154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the long-term mental health impact of the covid-19 lockdown.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 7 July 2021]: We have not yet made a specific assessment as developing our understanding of the long-term impacts on mental health is ongoing.

■ **Coronavirus: Merseyside**

Gareth Thomas: [\[7086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in (a) Liverpool and (b) Sefton have contracted covid-19 since 2 May 2021; and how many of those people have been identified as having the Indian variant of the virus.

Gareth Thomas: [\[7087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in Sheffield have contracted covid-19 since 3 May 2021; and how many of those people have been identified as having the Indian variant of the virus.

Gareth Thomas: [\[7088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in Manchester have contracted covid-19 since 25 April 2021; and how many of those people have been identified as having the Indian variant of the virus.

Jo Churchill:

The information requested is not currently available as the data is being centrally validated.

■ **Coronavirus: Primary Health Care**

Rachael Maskell: [\[28257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to monitor covid-19 cases that require primary care support.

Jo Churchill:

The management of symptomatic patients with COVID-19 infection in the community is part of general practitioner (GP) practices' core service offer. This is supplemented with other specific support services such as COVID Oximetry@home, an enhanced service specification for 'long' COVID-19 and 'long' COVID-19 clinics.

Through the COVID Oximetry@home programme, pulse oximeters are being provided to support patients at home who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and are most at risk of becoming seriously unwell. The service is usually offered by general practices working alongside community teams. Between October 2020 and June 2021 approximately 24,000 patients with COVID-19 have been supported through this service.

The enhanced service specification for 'long' COVID-19 across England supports practices to plan their workforce requirements, training needs and infrastructure in order to support patients with this new condition. This includes the requirement to monitor cases to collect data on prevalence, demographics and any referrals made. 'Long' COVID-19 clinics are bringing expert clinicians together to deliver an integrated approach to support patients access vital rehabilitation, as well as helping develop a greater understanding of its debilitating symptoms.

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**Angela Rayner:**[\[25834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the contracts with (a) Ayanda Capital and (b) PestFix to provide personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak were approved through the 8-stage process.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 July 2021]: The eight stage process to assess and approve offers of support to supply personal protection equipment (PPE) evolved over a short period of time at the end of April 2020 to formalise the checks quickly put in place by the cross-Government PPE procurement cell in March 2020. Contracts with Ayanda Capital and Pestfix pre-dated the formalised eight stage assurance process but these suppliers were evaluated by officials on financial standing, technical compliance and ability to perform the contract. The contracts are awarded by the appropriate Departmental accounting officer in line with our terms and conditions.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[28196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he plans to issue to staff of his Department on the use of face masks to protect against covid-19 infection after 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The Department does not currently require face coverings to be worn by staff in Departmental buildings, although those who wish to wear them will be supported to do so safely. A risk assessment has been carried out

following the framework provided by the Health and Safety Executive to ensure staff can work safely in a COVID-19 secure environment.

Helen Hayes: [29101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of removing the requirement to wear face coverings (a) on public transport and (b) in indoor public spaces on people who (i) have blood cancer, (ii) have weakened immune systems and (iii) are unable to take the covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Ahead of moving to step four of the roadmap, we will undertake impact assessments, as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty. If the four tests are met and the decision is taken to move to step four, we will continue to set out in guidance that wearing a face covering may reduce risk of transmission, especially in enclosed and crowded indoor spaces. Additionally, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has provided interim advice on a potential booster vaccine programme in the autumn.

The standard guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people will be updated if the decision is taken to move to the next step of the roadmap.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Dr Kieran Mullan: [10717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the 14-day right to return and refund contained within the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 applies to privately-purchased covid-19 tests.

Jo Churchill:

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 does not disapply any existing consumer protection rights.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Theresa Villiers: [27051]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will include people on GP lists for flu vaccinations in his autumn 2021 programme of booster covid-19 vaccinations.

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 at stage

two would 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. Adults aged over 50 years old and those aged 16 to 49 years old who are in an influenza or COVID-19 at-risk group, are included in stage two.

Final decisions on the timing and scope of the booster programme, as well as cohorts and eligibility, will be made later in the year, informed by further independent advice from the JCVI.

Adam Holloway:

[27056]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the covid-19 vaccine status of (a) people who die within 28 days of a positive covid-19 test and (b) new covid-19 infections.

Adam Holloway:

[27057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of publishing information on the covid-19 vaccine status of (a) people who die within 28 days of a positive Covid test and (b) new covid-19 infections on rates of vaccine uptake.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: Public Health England (PHE) monitors the number of people who have been admitted to hospital and died from COVID-19 who have received one or two doses of the vaccine and will publish this data in due course. This includes the number of new cases of COVID-19 infection following vaccination.

PHE has not made a specific assessment of the potential effect of publishing information on the COVID-19 vaccine status of people who die within 28 days of a positive COVID-19 test and new COVID-19 infections on rates of vaccine uptake.

Rosie Cooper:

[27084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on research into the efficacy of a third booster dose of a covid-19 vaccine for immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The COV-BOOST study was commissioned through the National Institute for Health Research and will provide vital data on the impact of a third dose on patients' immune responses. Initial findings are expected in September. To fully understand how COVID-19 vaccines respond as a booster dose they must first be studied in people with a fully functioning immune system.

UK Research and Innovation is providing £4 million towards the OCTAVE study examining COVID-19 vaccine responses in clinically at-risk groups, including immunocompromised patients.

Henry Smith:

[\[27122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide an update on his plans to conduct research into the efficacy of a third covid-19 vaccine booster dose for immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The COV-BOOST study was commissioned through the National Institute for Health Research and will provide vital data on the impact of a third dose on patients' immune responses. Initial findings are expected in September. To fully understand how COVID-19 vaccines respond as a booster dose they must first be studied in people with a fully functioning immune system.

UK Research and Innovation is providing £4 million towards the OCTAVE study examining COVID-19 vaccine responses in clinically at-risk groups, including immunocompromised patients.

Navendu Mishra:

[\[27364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department provides to Novavax covid-19 vaccine trial participants who have been unblinded and received two vaccine doses under that trial over six months ago on whether they should receive an approved covid-19 vaccination.

Navendu Mishra:

[\[27365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) advice and (b) support his Department is providing to Novavax covid-19 vaccine trial participants who have been unblinded but do not have access to their antibody test results and are unsure of their level of protection against the covid-19 virus.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Guidance has been provided to support vaccine trial participants who wished to be unblinded at a time when they became eligible for an approved COVID-19 vaccine. This suggests individuals should discuss with the principle investigator at the site in which the participant was recruited who are best placed to advise on the options following unblinding.

In general, participants who only received a placebo would be recommended to receive the deployed COVID-19 vaccine schedule. Those that received a full course of an active vaccine, would be advised that further doses of deployed vaccine were not advisable. Whilst antibody tests were performed in the study, the advice on further vaccination would be based on the record of the participant's previous doses in the trial.

Catherine West:

[\[28277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in the UK have received the Covishield covid-19 vaccine since the start of the covid-19 vaccination roll-out.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has not approved doses branded as 'Covishield' and therefore none have been administered in the United Kingdom.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[28325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people participating in the Novavax vaccine trials are not disadvantaged by national and international vaccine certification policies.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[28326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that people participating in the Novavax vaccine trials are (a) able to show proof of their vaccine status for international travel and (b) not placed at a disadvantage when travelling overseas.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is working with clinical research sites to add participant information of COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials to the National Immunisation Management Service, in order to allow participants to access their Covid Pass for both domestic and international travel purposes.

Anne Marie Morris:[\[29051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on the potential merits of reducing the gap between first and second covid-19 vaccinations to three-to-six weeks; and whether there is sufficient vaccine supply to meet that arrangement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Currently, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommends an interval of eight weeks between doses of all the available COVID-19 vaccines. On 14 May, we amended the interval of second doses for the most vulnerable cohorts who were offered a vaccine in phase one of the programme, from 12 weeks to eight weeks. The eight week dose interval was applied to all eligible cohorts from 6 July.

Current evidence shows that a longer dose interval produces a better immune response. As such, the JCVI has advised against reducing the dose interval further in order to maximise the effectiveness of the vaccination programme. The JCVI regularly reviews its advice taking into account new data and evidence on the effectiveness of the programme and epidemiological situation.

Kate Osborne:[\[29923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to accelerate the covid-19 vaccination programme in the North East as a result of rising infection rates in that area.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has implemented surge vaccination in areas with rising infection rates to protect communities supported with an Enhanced Response Package (ERP) which includes Test and Trace measures, enhanced self-isolation support and guidance. On 20 May, North Tyneside Council received this support and we will continue to monitor whether other areas within the North East might require an ERP.

South Tyneside Clinical Commissioning Group continues to work closely with South Tyneside Council and other partners to provide wide access to vaccination to all their population, including walk-in pop-up services and a vaccine bus.

■ **Dementia: Coronavirus****Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[27188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle the deterioration in symptoms experienced by people with dementia as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have made guidance available to address the rehabilitation needs of people living with dementia, including the 'Dementia wellbeing in the COVID-10 pandemic' resource which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/dementia-wellbeing-in-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

We have also commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research on how to manage or mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on people with dementia and their carers living in the community. Summary leaflets were produced for people with dementia and their carers which are available at the following link:

<http://www.idealproject.org.uk/covid/>

■ **Dental Health: Children****Alex Cunningham:**[\[27153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 December 2020 to Question 106995 on Dental Health: Children, when his Department plans to hold a public consultation on a national early years supervised toothbrushing scheme for England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: We are currently reviewing plans for a consultation, subject to current funding considerations.

■ **Dental Services: Waiting Lists****Catherine West:**[\[26153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce dental waiting times.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 7 July 2021]: We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to increase levels of dental service as quickly as possible in view of the ongoing infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements. National Health Service dentists throughout the country have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments.

Diabetes: Diets**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[28088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the pilot low calorie diet programme launched in 2020 includes children under the age of 16.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The National Health Service low calorie diet (LCD) programme does not include children under the age of 16 years old. However, NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the latest evidence to inform future updates to the eligibility. NHS England and NHS Improvement launched the pilot program in September 2020, following a commitment in the NHS Long Term Plan. It provides LCD treatment for adults between 18 and 65 years of age living with type 2 diabetes who are overweight or obese.

Diabetes: Health Services**Feryal Clark:**[\[28361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of public health provision of diabetes (a) treatment, (b) support, (c) care (d) and prevention services.

Jo Churchill:

No recent assessment has been made.

Females: Sex**Gill Furniss:**[\[29121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made on the number of women and girls subjected to (a) virginity testing and (b) hymenoplasty procedures.

Gill Furniss:[\[29122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy will include a recommendation for a legislative ban on virginity testing and hymenoplasty.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Data on the number of women and girls subjected to virginity testing is not held. NHS England does not collect data on hymenoplasty procedures in the format requested. Both procedures are often carried out outside the National Health Service. The Department, in conjunction with the Home Office, is working rapidly to investigate both practices. We will set out the findings from this review, including any proposals for legislation, in the 'Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy' in due course.

■ First Aid: Training**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[27251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage members of the public to undertake first aid training.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement in partnership with St John Ambulance are working together to create a national network of community advocates to champion the importance of first aid, training 60,000 people that will help save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028.

■ Food: Advertising**Ben Bradley:**[\[28304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's Impact Assessment for Restricting checkout, end-of-aisle, and store entrance sales of food and drinks high in fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS), what assessment he has made of the reasons for the discrepancy between the (a) Government's impact assessment of a net cost to business of £1.1 billion per year and (b) food and drink industry's estimate of a £3 billion reduction in revenue as a result of a ban on the promotion of HFSS foods.

Jo Churchill:

There has been no such direct assessment. We have engaged with industry throughout impact assessment's consultation period and believe the values quoted in the impact assessment are robust.

Both the costs to business and health benefits gained from restricting placement of products high in fat, salt and sugar were modelled by Department analysts and publicly consulted on. The final impact assessment was revised in light of evidence and responses submitted through consultation. The impact assessment has gone through a rigorous review process including receiving a 'fit for purpose' rating from the Regulatory Policy Committee, an independent committee sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, who ensure that costs to business have been considered appropriately.

Ben Bradley:

[\[28305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Impact Assessment entitled Introducing a 2100-0530 watershed on TV advertising of food and drink that are high in fat, salt and sugar products and similar protection for children viewing adverts online, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of a ban on online advertising of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar with the finding by his Department that such a ban would reduce a child's annual calorie intake by 700 calories a year.

Jo Churchill:

The impact assessment for further advertising restrictions for products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) shows a positive net value, meaning the health benefits outweigh the costs to business and the Government. It also presents the number of calories removed from a child's diet each day as a result of the restrictions. This is a population wide estimate and does not reflect that this policy could most benefit children from lower income households who are more exposed to HFSS advertising and those who are already overweight or obese.

■ General Practitioners

Derek Twigg:

[\[28067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 24898 on General Practitioners, how his estimate of 31.5 million general practitioner appointments in April 2021 was calculated.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: On 17 June 2021 NHS Digital published monthly data on appointments in general practice covering October 2018 to April 2021. This was the first general practitioner (GP) appointment publication to fully incorporate COVID-19 vaccination appointments delivered in general practice and Primary Care Networks for December 2020 to April 2021. The data shows there were an estimated 7.6 million vaccinations delivered in April 2021. Including these vaccinations, there were an estimated 31.5 million appointments in April 2021. Excluding vaccination appointments there were an estimated 24.0 million appointments in April 2021.

The publication includes an estimate of total appointments as data from 2% of practices are omitted from the collection. The estimate is calculated by taking the number of registered patients from missing practices and a simple calculation based on the number of appointments per registered patient from the practices included in the data collection.

Derek Twigg:

[\[28068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 24898 on General Practitioners, what estimate his Department has made of the number of General Practitioner appointments that were made available in April 2020.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The data requested is not collected centrally.

Derek Twigg:

[28069]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 24898 on General Practitioners, if he will publish data on the number and proportion of (a) face-to-face and (b) remote GP appointments that were provided in each clinical commissioning group area or local authority area in April 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The information requested is the attached.

Attachments:

1. Appointment Count by CCG and Mode April 2021 table [PQ28069 TABLE .docx]

Derek Twigg:

[28968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 24898 on General Practitioners, what information his Department holds on how many GP appointments in April (a) 2019 and (b) 2020 were face-to-face appointments.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The following table shows the number of appointments in April 2019 and April 2020.

| | COUNT OF FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS | PROPORTION OF FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| April 2020* | 7,480,941 | 46.8% |
| April 2019 | 18,879,469 | 79.2% |

Source: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/appointments-in-general-practice>

Note:

* The appointments in general practice publication is considered experimental statistics due to data quality issues, which impose limitations on what can be inferred from the data. Further information on data quality issues and the impact on data quality of the response to COVID-19 in general practice is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/appointments-in-general-practice/appointments-in-general-practice-supporting-information>

■ General Practitioners: Coronavirus

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[27350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to ensure that patients are given the option to request face-to-face appointments with their GP rather than having to complete an initial telephone or e-consultation as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Jo Churchill:

On 20 May 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement published an updated standard operating procedure for general practice in the context of COVID-19 restrictions easing. The guidance is clear that practices must ensure they offer both face to face and remote appointments and the patients preferences for care are respected unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary, such as the presence of COVID symptoms. Practice receptions must be open so patients without access to online services are not disadvantaged and can walk in.

To make sure people can access the care they need, general practices use remote triage which can help practices effectively allocate clinical time by gathering key information in advance of a consultation. In turn, healthcare professionals can more effectively manage their time and focus on those who need care the most, which can include spending longer in face-to-face appointments. Telephone, online and video consultations can also be convenient and flexible ways to receive healthcare for some patients.

■ General Practitioners: Software

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[28233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to improve the speed and consistency of information and payments to GP practices using the new Primary Care Support England (PCSE) payment software.

Jo Churchill:

Primary Care Support England (PCSE), a service operated by Capita on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement, implemented a new general practitioner payment and pensions system, PCSE Online, on 1 June 2021. Since June the new payments system has successfully processed over 187,000 payment lines, totalling £970 million. Payments to general practice are made on a set schedule in line with contractual deadlines and NHS England and NHS Improvement has advised that all expected payments have been made, including any corrections that were made in-month to ensure that all contractual deadlines were met. PCSE has advised that it continues to work with stakeholders to monitor the new system and address any issues.

■ General Practitioners: West Yorkshire

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[27017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support GP services in West Yorkshire.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that in the West Yorkshire and Humber area, the local strategy for delivering the general practitioner workforce ambitions and priorities is being led by the West Yorkshire and Humber Primary Care Workforce Steering Group. This group works collaboratively with place leads, professional committee, Health Education England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to deliver initiatives across primary care. Additionally, the National Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme has helped to increase the general practice workforce across a number of roles and had supported workload pressures within general practice.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[27018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that GPs are effectively trained and retained within the NHS in West Yorkshire.

Jo Churchill:

Health Education England co-ordinates the training of doctors to become general practitioners (GPs) in West Yorkshire, with training schemes based in Bradford, Leeds, Airedale, Calderdale and Kirklees and Dewsbury, Wakefield and Pontefract.

All training schemes are fully recruited and provide a high standard of education assured through the General Medical Council. From August 2021, the majority of trainees will spend 24 months rather than 18 months in GP placements during their training and there are an increasing number of innovative training posts that offer trainees diverse experience in specialities relevant to general practice. Following completion of training, NHS England and NHS Improvement are responsible for GP retention.

NHS England and NHS Improvement has advised that in West Yorkshire and Humber area, the local strategy for delivering the GP workforce ambitions and priorities is being led by the West Yorkshire and Humber Primary Care Workforce Steering Group. This group works collaboratively with place leads, professional committee, Health Education England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to deliver retention initiatives across primary care.

■ Global Tobacco Regulators Forum

Adam Afriyie: [\[27100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government will be represented at the next meeting of the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum.

Adam Afriye: [\[27101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, who will be representing the Government at the next meeting of the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum.

Adam Afriye: [\[27102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on whether records of previous Global Tobacco Regulators Forums meetings which UK representatives have attended (a) exist and (b) are publicly available.

Adam Afriye: [\[27103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to encourage other Parties at the forthcoming Global Tobacco Regulators Forums meeting to adopt harm reduction based alternatives to tobacco.

Adam Afriye: [\[27104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government plans to take at the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum to encourage other parties to meet their treaty obligations on harm reduction under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Adam Afriye: [\[27105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what oversight the Government has over its representatives at the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum meetings.

Adam Afriye: [\[27106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to tackle potential misinformation on e-cigarettes at the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum meeting.

Jo Churchill:

The Fifth meeting of Global Tobacco Regulators Forum (GTRF) took place virtually from 7 to 9 July. The World Health Organization's (WHO) No Tobacco Unit in the Health Promotion Department hosts the GTRF meetings. Papers for the meetings are not publicly available from the WHO.

Officials from the Department's tobacco control policy team attended to represent the United Kingdom as leads and experts in tobacco control policy. This year's meeting was attended by civil servants from the Tobacco Control team. Officials will report back to senior officials and Ministers with any key outcomes. The Department holds notes on previous GTRF forums.

Officials updated the GTRF on the UK's tobacco control work and evidence-based position on harm reduction alternatives to tobacco, such as e-cigarettes. We also presented global evidence about harm reduction alternatives, and tackle any misinformation. We recognise that they play a vital role in helping smokers to quit and we will continue to advocate for their use as part of a comprehensive approach.

■ Health Professions: Recruitment**Patrick Grady:**[\[902650\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help support the recruitment and retention of medical and nursing staff.

Helen Whately:

We are on track to increase the number of nurses in the National Health Service by 50,000 over this Parliament. There are over 9,000 more nurses working in the NHS now compared to this time last year and 4,000 more doctors.

Applications to study nursing and midwifery are up 21% this year, following a 15% increase last year. Through the NHS People Plan we are working hard to support and retain the NHS workforce.

■ Home Care Services: Quarantine**Rachael Maskell:**[\[28262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the provision of domiciliary social care in the event that a large number of staff are required to self-isolate as a result of an increase in covid-19 infection rates.

Helen Whately:

Throughout the pandemic, we have provided £1.49 billion through the Infection Control Fund to support adult social care providers to implement infection prevention and control measures, such as paying staff to self-isolate in line with Government guidance. We are continuing to monitor absence rates in the adult social care workforce and the impact of self-isolation guidance on workforce capacity. We are considering any further actions that may need to be taken to support workforce capacity where appropriate.

■ Hospitals: Ventilation**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[29800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he has issued or plans to issue to hospitals on ensuring adequate ventilation during the covid-19 outbreak; what standards are used to measure the adequacy of such ventilation, what enforcement activity he plans to undertake to ensure that such guidance is followed; and whether he plans to make funding available to improve standards of ventilation.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[29801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance he (a) has issued and (b) plans to issue to GPs and clinical commissioning groups on ensuring adequate ventilation in GP surgeries in order to reduce the risk of covid-19 infection; by what standards GPs and clinical commissioning groups should plan and measure that ventilation; what steps he plans to take to ensure that guidance on ventilation is followed

and risk accordingly reduced; and whether he plans to allocate funding to improving ventilation standards.

Edward Argar:

‘COVID-19: Guidance for maintaining services within health and care settings. Infection prevention and control recommendations Version 1.2’ was issued to ensure that risk assessments should include evaluation of ventilation to ensure maximum workplace risk mitigation. This guidance is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990923/20210602_Infection_Prevention_and_Control_Guidance_for_maintaining_services_with_H_and_C_settings_1.pdf

‘Health Technical Memorandum 03-01 Specialised ventilation for healthcare premises. Part A: The concept, design, specification, installation and acceptance testing of healthcare ventilation systems’ gives comprehensive advice and guidance on the design, installation and operation of specialised building and engineering technology Health Technical Memorandum 03-01 Part A gives comprehensive advice that for other types of healthcare facility that are outside of the hospital setting such as general practitioner practices, a risk assessment of the nature of the treatment being delivered, condition of the patients and intensity of use needs to be undertaken by those responsible for the facility in order to determine the extent to which this guidance will be applicable. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HTM0301-PartA-accessible-F6.pdf>

The Care Quality Commission is responsible for compliance with the Health Technical Memoranda under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (revised). There are no plans to allocate funding to improving ventilation standards or to make funding available to improve standards of ventilation.

■ **Hyperactivity: Health Services**

Stephen Morgan:

[28300]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what figures his Department holds on the number of adults on NHS Trust waiting lists for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder services; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The data requested is not held centrally.

■ **In Vitro Fertilisation: Homosexuality**

Dawn Butler:

[27049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take urgent steps with representatives of Clinical Commission Groups across England to tackle the discrimination faced by same-sex women couples when accessing fertility treatment on the NHS.

Helen Whately:

In England, decisions about local NHS fertility services are determined by clinical commissioning groups, taking account of National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) fertility guidelines. We expect local National Health Service bodies to commission fertility services in line with the NICE guidelines, so that there is equal access across England.

NICE fertility guidelines include provision for same sex female couples who have demonstrated their clinical infertility through six failed cycles of artificial insemination. These provisions are a way of achieving equivalence between opposite sex and same sex couples in establishing clinical infertility. NICE has begun a scoping process for the review of these guidelines.

Kettering Hospital**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[25822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the evidence submitted to his Department on the alleged system and hospital failings at Kettering General Hospital between 2013-2019; and what plans he has to address that matter.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator for health and social care in England and as such, they review all concerns raised with them, consider the risk to patients and take regulatory action when appropriate and proportionate to protect people that use services. The CQC has inspected Kettering General Hospital eight times since 2014. The most recent inspection was in response to concerns raised regarding the care of patients who were at risk of, or and had fallen. As a result the CQC took enforcement action and served a Section 29a Warning Notice. The CQC continues to monitor the provider closely.

Lung Diseases**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[11519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve waiting times for patients presenting with respiratory symptoms.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[11520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on waiting times for respiratory diagnostic appointments.

Jo Churchill:

Community Diagnostic Hubs will create additional capacity for patients presenting with respiratory symptoms which will support efforts to reduce waiting times. Elective waiting lists, including for those with respiratory symptoms, are managed at system and trust level with digital solutions available to ensure the most clinically urgent patients are managed first. In addition, £1 billion has been made available to the National Health Service in 2021/22 to support the recovery of elective activity.

While we have made no official assessment, the NHS is taking steps to restore services and improve waiting times as a priority, including services for respiratory patients. In May, the NHS announced a £160 million accelerator initiative to rapidly trial further innovations and interventions to boost activity across all elective services.

■ Maternity Services

Navendu Mishra: [\[27360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS trusts in England are able to offer a midwifery-led continuity of carer model for women who are pregnant after the death of a baby.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

This information is not held centrally.

Colleen Fletcher: [\[29063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase access to Early Pregnancy Units for pregnant women experiencing emergencies.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: In line with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines, NHS England is working to improve the availability of scanning. This will ensure that regional services are organised so that an early pregnancy assessment service is available seven days a week for women with early pregnancy complications, where scanning can be carried out and decisions about management made.

■ Maternity Services: Vacancies

Colleen Fletcher: [\[29066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the midwifery staffing vacancies in all maternity settings in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England; and what steps his Department is taking to help fill those vacancies.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The Department has made no such estimate.

Health Education England is committed to increasing the number of midwifery training places by 25% or 3,650 over a four-year period to ensure future sustainability from 2022.

■ Medical Records: Data Protection

Marsha De Cordova: [\[14061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement on General Practice Data for Planning and Research service from NHS Digital on sharing data on medical histories with third parties, what steps his Department

is taking to help ensure people are informed about how their medical information will be used.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS Digital is promoting this new data collection through their website, engagement with the media, stakeholder and patient groups and on social media channels. They have sought to raise awareness of the collection and its importance to the health and care system.

The data collection has now been paused until 1 September 2021 and in the next two months we will communicate the significant benefits this system will have for the health and care system.

■ **Medical Treatments**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[27083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on research on the efficacy of (a) monoclonal antibodies and (b) other alternative treatments for immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has supported 15 studies on monoclonal antibodies and other therapies for immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups, including cell therapy and the use of probiotics. Twelve of these studies are now complete and three are ongoing. All NIHR-funded research is expected to be published in peer-reviewed, open access journals once completed to promote translation into patient care where appropriate.

Henry Smith:

[\[27123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department is making on research into the efficacy of the use of (a) monoclonal antibodies and (b) other alternative treatments for immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has supported 15 studies on monoclonal antibodies and other therapies for immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups, including cell therapy and the use of probiotics. Twelve of these studies are now complete and three are ongoing. All NIHR-funded research is expected to be published in peer-reviewed, open access journals once completed to promote translation into patient care where appropriate.

■ **Midwives**

Jim Shannon:

[\[27156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many midwives are employed in each NHS trust in England, by (a) headcount and (b) full time equivalent figures; and what the funded midwifery establishment is in each NHS trust in England.

Helen Whately:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics for England. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but excludes staff working in primary care, general practitioner surgeries, local authorities and other providers.

The number of midwives employed in each National Health Service trust in England by headcount and full time equivalent as at March 2021, the latest available data, is attached. The Department does not hold data on the funded midwifery establishment for each trust.

Attachments:

1. Table [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ27156 - Midwives FTE and HC March 2021.xlsx]

■ Midwives and Nurses: Training**Ms Harriet Harman:**[\[28047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to back-pay student (a) nurses and (b) midwives who were not entitled to student bursaries or grants and who provided frontline services during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

We have no plans to do so. All nursing and midwifery healthcare students who opted in to paid placements during the COVID-19 outbreak received a salary and automatic National Health Service pension entitlement at the appropriate band.

■ NHS**Margaret Greenwood:**[\[902641\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS provides a comprehensive service, available to all and free at the point of use.

Edward Argar:

Further to the £33.9 billion settlement for the NHS Long Term Plan, we will be providing an additional £3 billion this year, to ensure all patients have access to the care they need as the National Health Service recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ NHS and Social Services: Coronavirus**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[24136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) NHS and (b) social care staff have died from covid-19 since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The Office for National Statistics' data shows that 639 deaths among healthcare workers and 922 deaths among social care workers aged 20 to 64 years old, using

last known occupation involved COVID-19 were registered between 9 March 2020 to 7 May 2021.

■ **NHS: Protective Clothing**

Dean Russell: [23377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of using transparent face masks to facilitate lip reading to assist people with hearing difficulties.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's transparent face mask working group produced a new technical specification which gives testing, design and performance requirements for single-use transparent face masks, with comparable protection to a Type IIR mask. This specification is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/technical-specifications-for-personal-protective-equipment-ppe/transparent-face-mask-technical-specification>

The Department is encouraging manufacturers to develop new, innovative products which meet the standard for transparent face masks and funding is available to run pilot schemes once they are available. Future procurement will be informed by this work.

■ **Nutrition: Labelling**

Craig Whittaker: [28146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of nutritional and consumer response evidence on the viability of Nutriscore as the UK's preferred front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

Craig Whittaker: [28147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of non-UK market use of Nutriscore as a front-of-pack nutrition labelling scheme.

Craig Whittaker: [28148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has carried out a cost-benefit analysis of Nutriscore on its viability as the UK's preferred front-of-pack nutrition labelling scheme.

Daniel Zeichner: [28217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what market research his Department has undertaken on consumer responses to (a) multiple traffic light, (b) nutriscore and (c) Chilean warning system front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

Daniel Zeichner:

[28218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish a response to its consultation on front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: We are considering the responses to the United Kingdom-wide public consultation on our current front-of-pack nutrition labelling scheme including views and evidence on new international examples, specifically the Nutri-score label and Chile's warning label. We chose to consider the Nutri-score and Chile's warning label because they differ significantly from the UK's multiple traffic light scheme and have evidence of the impact on public health in non-UK markets.

The consultation included a technical annex which provides a provisional commentary on the costs and benefits on the suggestions included in the consultation. We will publish a consultation response as soon as possible. If changes to the scheme are required, we will consult again on proposed policy changes and publish a full impact assessment.

Research was commissioned alongside the consultation to test which front-of-pack nutrition labelling scheme supports people in Great Britain to identify healthier choices. This research tested the Government-recommended multiple traffic light, Nutri-score, Chile's warning and Positive Choice Tick labels with a British population. The preliminary study was published 10 March 2021 and is available at the following link:

<https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/13/3/900>

■ **Office for Health Promotion**

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[27187]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Office for Health Promotion will be fully operational during the course of the 2021-22 parliamentary session.

Jo Churchill:

The Office for Health Promotion will be fully established in autumn 2021.

■ **Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust: Coronavirus**

Anneliese Dodds:

[27294]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on eating disorder services at Cotswold House, Oxfordshire; and what steps he is taking to reduce current waiting times for (i) assessment and (ii) psychological treatment at Cotswold House, Oxfordshire.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: No specific assessment has been made.

■ **Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments**

Mike Amesbury: [\[28308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with stakeholders on the efficacy of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy as a treatment option for patients diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service continues to work with Pancreatic Cancer UK to raise awareness of prescribed pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy (PERT), including sharing guidance with Cancer Alliances. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines recommend that PERT should be considered for people with both operable and inoperable pancreatic cancer.

■ **Paramedical Staff: Training**

Damien Moore: [\[28313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve emergency medical technician training.

Helen Whately:

Emergency medicine technician training is undertaken as a Level 4 Apprenticeship through individual ambulance trusts. The training standards are set by the Health and Care Professionals Council. Employers, working with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, should ensure that standards meet the requirements of the ambulance service and the level of training required.

■ **Pharmacy: Coronavirus**

Ms Harriet Harman: [\[28046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of turning the £370 million of advanced payment loans provided to pharmacies during the covid-19 outbreak into grants.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made.

The Department has reached an agreement with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee that pharmacy contractors can claim for additional COVID-19 costs incurred between 1 March 2020 and 31 March 2021 and the £370 million increased advance payments will be recovered between October 2021 to March 2022 following payment of claims for additional costs.

■ **Physician Associates**

Jessica Morden: [\[29754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that physician associates are afforded the protection of formal statutory regulation.

Helen Whately:

The Department's consultation 'Regulating healthcare professionals, protecting the public' closed on 16 June. The consultation sought views on proposals to modernise each of the healthcare professional regulators' legal frameworks and on the proposed approach to introducing statutory regulation for physician associates (PAs) and anaesthesia associates (AAs).

The reforms will update the General Medical Council's (GMC) current legislation, enabling it to bring PAs and AAs into regulation under a new, modernised framework. We plan to publish the consultation response in the autumn. A further consultation on the draft legislation that will bring PAs and AAs into regulation will follow. We are working with the GMC to ensure that regulation of PAs and AAs begins as early as possible in the second half of 2022.

Public Transport and Shops: Protective Clothing**Ian Byrne:**[\[28362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of mask wearing being voluntary (a) on public transport and (b) in shops on rates of covid-19 transmission.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The Government's decision on moving to step four of the roadmap will involve undertaking impact assessments, as part of the duties placed on it by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We will continue to encourage the wearing of face coverings and highlight that wearing a face covering may still help to reduce risk of transmission.

Radiotherapy**Tim Farron:**[\[20356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy's report entitled *Catch Up With Cancer - The Way Forward*; whether he plans to adopt those recommendations; and if he will make a statement.

Tim Farron:[\[20357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policies of the findings of Action Radiotherapy's flash survey on radiotherapy and the radiotherapy workforce from May 2021; and whether he plans to use those findings to inform his Department's work on radiotherapy.

Tim Farron:[\[20358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the role of radiotherapy in tackling the cancer backlog induced by the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

No formal assessment has been made of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy's report and we have no plans to adopt these recommendations. Action Radiotherapy's flash survey will be taken into consideration alongside existing programmes of work. Health Education England's Cancer Workforce Plan commits to the expansion of capacity and skills across six professions by 2021, including clinical radiology.

During the pandemic, the National Health Service has significantly increased the use of new radiotherapy methods to deliver targeted treatment in fewer hospital visits. Maximising capacity and minimising patient time in hospital, particularly through the use of fewer fractions, remain important in the recovery of cancer services. In addition, £32 million has been made available from the Spending Review 2020 to support the replacement of radiotherapy equipment in 2021-22.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:[\[29840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will enable people travelling from red list countries to isolate at home under local public health teams' supervision when covid-19 restrictions are eased on 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

International arrivals from 'red list' countries or those who have departed from or transited in a 'red list' country in the preceding 10 days will be required to quarantine in a managed quarantine facility for 10 days. This requirement will remain after 19 July.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Bill Esterson:[\[13929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) assessment he has made of and (b) representations he has received on the reliability of the supply of covid-19 tests by Expert Medicals Ltd for international travel arrivals into the UK.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: The Department has received representations relating to the volume of complaints and data reporting by Expert Medicals Ltd. We continue to monitor their performance and should this fall below the required standards, appropriate action will be taken.

Taiwo Owatemi:

[14068]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons covid-19 tests carried out by the NHS are not accepted for travel purposes; and whether the Government plans to cap the price of such tests carried out by private companies.

Jo Churchill:

In order to preserve testing capacity for priority uses to protect public health, individuals wishing to travel should book a private test.

While there are no plans to introduce a cap on the price of such tests we are committed to working with the travel industry and private testing providers to reduce the cost of travel testing. NHS Test and Trace tests are available at the market mid-point to ensure tests are available at an appropriate cost and when purchased through private providers for day two and day eight testing, they are accepted for travel purposes. Since requirements were introduced for international travel testing, the costs have fallen significantly. We also offer deferred payment plans and hardship support.

Mr David Davis:

[17684]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential benefits to public health of applying a costs cap to covid-19 testing services for British holidaymakers travelling abroad.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not made a specific assessment.

We are committed to working with the travel industry and private testing providers to reduce the cost of travel testing whilst also ensuring travel is as safe as possible. Since requirements were introduced for international travel testing, the costs of travel testing have fallen significantly. NHS Test and Trace tests are available at the market mid-point to ensure tests are available at an appropriate cost. We also offer deferred payment plans and hardship support.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[23040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the evidential basis supporting the decision to advise against travel to amber destinations for leisure purposes in order to protect public health.

Jo Churchill:

We are unable to provide the information requested as it relates to the formulation of Government policy. Decisions regarding travel advice are informed by the data within the Joint Biosecurity Centre's risks assessments alongside wider public health factors, including the percentage of a country's population that have been vaccinated; the rate of infection; the prevalence of variants of concern; and the country's access to reliable scientific data and genomic sequencing.

Mrs Pauline Latham:

[\[23162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence has been provided to Ministers on the comparative effectiveness of (a) mandatory self-isolation and (b) a mandatory testing regime for arrivals into the UK from amber destinations for managing the risk to public health from covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: We are unable to provide the evidence provided to Ministers as it relates to the formulation of ongoing border policy and its release could prejudice decision making.

■ **Travel: Quarantine**

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[14156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of infection control measures at covid-19 quarantine hotels; and if he will make a statement.

Sarah Owen:

[\[14225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the current management of hotel quarantine at helping prevent the delta variant of covid-19 from entering community circulation.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 16 June 2021]: The Managed Quarantine Service operates through a set of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which include infection control. These procedures are based on advice from the Department's infection prevention specialist. We have contracted with Global Secure Accreditation to provide liaison officers in each hotel to oversee the correct deployment of the SOPs. They undertake monthly reviews of compliance and their effectiveness and if required make recommendations for the Department to strengthen them. Should an outbreak occur, incident management teams investigate the cause and implement measures to stop further transmission. Directors of Public Health and Environmental Health take considerable interest in all quarantine hotels in their area and regularly visit all quarantine hotels in their area to assure the correct infection control measures are in place.

■ **UK Health Security Agency**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[29924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any conflicts of interest were declared during the procurement process for the contract awarded on the 2 April 2021 to Verita to assist Public Health England with the transition to UK Health Security Agency.

Jo Churchill:

No conflicts of interests were recorded by Public Health England in the award of the contract with Verita.

Vaccination: Children**Mr Steve Baker:****[R] [28167]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) create catch-up non-covid vaccination programs for children vulnerable to serious childhood diseases and (b) protect children's vaccination services against the risk of disruption by unseen events in the future.

Jo Churchill:

The majority of National Health Service immunisation services were maintained throughout the COVID-19 response and time-critical routine immunisations administered in primary care continued to be delivered. However, the delivery of schools-based immunisation programmes have been rescheduled when schools reopened and we have raised awareness of the ongoing availability of NHS immunisations and the importance of keeping up to date with routine childhood immunisations.

Children's vaccination services will continue to be maintained. The NHS ensures accurate information on the immunisation status of children and young people is available and reminders/recalls are sent to those who fail to attend. This information is available to clinicians to provide catch-up vaccinations at every appropriate opportunity, if needed.

HOME OFFICE**Asylum****Marsha De Cordova:****[28327]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to ensure that asylum cases are determined on the basis of need without consideration of the route of arrival to the UK.

Chris Philp:

We are clear that those in genuine need of protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach where they have that opportunity, rather than choosing to make further unnecessary and dangerous journeys to the UK. Where appropriate, we will apply the provisions in the Immigration Rules to declare such claims inadmissible for consideration in the UK asylum system.

Where an individual is admitted for consideration to our asylum system, and they did not come directly to the UK or claim asylum without delay once here, they are likely to get a new temporary protection status if they have been recognised as requiring

protection. This status will afford basic entitlements whilst still meeting our international law obligations.

■ Asylum: LGBT People

Dawn Butler:

[27044]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to proposals in the 2021 Queen's Speech on reforms to the immigration system, what steps her Department is taking to (a) meet the specific experiences and needs of LGBTQ+ asylum seekers and (b) ensure that LGBTQ+ asylum seekers are not penalised in their asylum applications in the event that they do not reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity immediately upon arrival in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has and continues to work closely with a diverse range of organisations specialising in asylum and human rights protection to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people (LGBTQ+) communities, not only to facilitate the development of bespoke guidance and training products but also to further our work for LGBTQ+ within our asylum system.

We ensure LGBTQ+ asylum seekers are signposted to relevant NGOs specialising in the support of these individuals. This is done through an information leaflet given to all asylum claimants at the point of claim which includes sections on legal advice, additional help and assistance with links to relevant legal bodies and support organisations. LGBTQ+ asylum seekers can also access support from Rainbow Migration (formerly the UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group), who provide both practical and emotional support for LGBTQ+ people including how to help improve their confidence and self-esteem and to reduce isolation.

The Home Office recognises discussing persecution may often be distressing and those seeking asylum are given every opportunity to disclose information relevant to their claim before a decision is taken. Our caseworkers are very mindful many asylum seekers come from cultures which shun any open expression or discussion of sexual orientation or gender identity. We recognise the intimate nature of disclosure set against the individual's cultural background may have made it difficult for some to disclose and discuss their sexuality or gender identity with officials at a port of entry.

Where it appears a claimant has been in the UK for a prolonged period of time before either coming to immigration attention or voluntarily seeking protection, this will be explored with the claimant. Consideration will be given to any explanation offered for not seeking protection at the first available opportunity, or for not disclosing the issue of sexuality or gender identity as a claim basis at the first available opportunity. Adverse inference however will not solely be drawn from someone not having immediately identified their sexual or gender identity as a basis to their claim.

■ Detention Centres

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[28339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under what legal jurisdiction offshore immigration processing centres would operate.

Chris Philp:

We are committed to the 1951 Convention and act in accordance with our international obligations, and we will continue discussions with our international partners to find solutions to our shared migration challenges.

■ Detention Centres: Staff

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[28340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of who would staff any offshore immigration processing centre.

Chris Philp:

We are committed to working closely with international partners as we work to fix our broken asylum system. We are talking to a range of partners about how we could work together to find a solution to our shared migration challenges.

We cannot comment on the details of ongoing discussions with our international partners.

■ Domestic Abuse: Males

Scott Benton:

[\[27347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of providing funding to male domestic violence victim service providers.

Victoria Atkins:

This Government is committed to protecting and supporting all victims of domestic abuse, regardless of gender. That is why we recently passed the landmark Domestic Abuse Act, which includes a new definition of domestic abuse. Additionally, the Statutory Guidance that will accompany the Act will address the impact on male victims and their unique needs and barriers to accessing support. We will be publishing this guidance for consultation shortly.

Since 2017/18 the Home Office has provided funding of over £160,000 per year to the Men's Advice Line run by Respect which supports and advises male victims of domestic abuse. Additional funding of £151,000 was provided to further bolster the helpline during the pandemic. In addition, The Home Office has provided approximately £365,000 from 2018 to 2020 to Hestia to improve support for male victims of domestic abuse.

In March 2019 the Home Office published the Male Victims Position Statement which sets out 12 specific commitments to better enable male victims and survivors to come

forward and receive necessary support, and to tackle offenders. This will be refreshed later this year following the publication of the Violence against Women and Girls and Domestic Abuse Strategies.

■ **Fire and Rescue Services: Industrial Health and Safety**

Grahame Morris:

[\[29776\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessments she has made of the level of monitoring and reporting by the Health and Safety Executive of cases of (a) disease, (b) death, (c) dangerous occurrences and (b) workplace outbreaks among Fire and Rescue Service employees.

Kit Malthouse:

Fire and rescue authorities, as employers are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees. This includes compliance with any statutory requirements to report cases of disease, death, dangerous occurrences, and workplace outbreaks.

Since March 2020, fire and rescue employees across the country have volunteered to complete over 550,000 activities in support of the response to the Pandemic.

Ministers receive regular updates on levels of COVID-19 related employee absence in fire and rescue services.

■ **Frontier Workers: Defence and Infrastructure**

Jack Lopresti:

[\[27135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to grant frontier worker status to people (a) presently working in the UK, (b) who can prove a previous employment history at a UK employer and (c) who will be working on strategically important projects in the UK defence and infrastructure sectors.

Kevin Foster:

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

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

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

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

■ Hate Crime

Dawn Butler: [\[27042\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking in advance of the publication of the Law Commission's final report in respect of its Hate Crime review, due to be published in 2021.

Dawn Butler: [\[27043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that all protected characteristics are treated equally under hate crime legislation in advance of the Law Commission's final report in respect of its Hate Crime review.

Victoria Atkins:

In 2018, the Government asked the Law Commission to undertake a review of current hate crime legislation, including whether additional protected characteristics, such as sex, gender and age, should be included.

The Law Commission is due to publish its recommendations later this year, following which the Government will formally respond.

■ Hezbollah

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29746\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to tackle the domestic operations of Hezbollah since its full proscription in February 2019.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of UK citizens who are members of Hezbollah.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the relationship between Hezbollah and the Islamic Resistance Support Organisation.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29749\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle sources of financial assistance to Hezbollah in the UK.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[29750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Foreign Secretary on tackling Hezbollah activity in Lebanon.

Kevin Foster:

The Government does not routinely comment on intelligence matters.

Hizballah is a proscribed terrorist organisation in the UK and membership is therefore a criminal offence. Since the extension of Hizballah's proscription in 2019, the

Government has also extended the UK's domestic financial sanctions designation to cover the group in its entirety.

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

The Government publishes quarterly national statistics on the use of police powers under the Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent relevant legislation in Great Britain. This includes information on arrests, charges and convictions for proscription offences.

The Home and Foreign Secretaries routinely discuss global counter-terrorism matters, both bilaterally and at Cabinet during meetings of the National Security Council.

■ Immigration: Housing

Henry Smith: [27121]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to include housing availability in the development of immigration policy.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes Impact Assessments which analyse the impacts of migration policy changes, including quantified and unquantified costs and benefits.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Julian Sturdy: [27143]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many travellers returned from amber list countries in June 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office regularly publishes migration statistics, including the number of daily air passenger arrivals to the UK on gov.uk. The latest publication covers up to the end of April 2021 and can be found at:

[Border Force transparency data: Q1 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/border-force-transparency-data-q1-2021)

■ Travel: Quarantine

Julian Sturdy: [27142]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many self-isolation home visits took place in June 2021 for travellers returning from amber list countries under covid-19 travel restrictions.

Kevin Foster:

Throughout the month of June, the service conducted up to 10,000 checks per day on non-exempt amber list arrivals.

■ Undocumented Migrants

Damien Moore:

[\[28312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help prevent illegal immigration into the United Kingdom.

Chris Philp:

To prevent illegal entry into the UK, the Government has introduced the Nationality and Borders Bill, which will:

- Introduce new and tougher criminal offences for those attempting to enter the UK illegally by raising the penalty for illegal entry from six months' to four years imprisonment and introducing life sentences for people smugglers.
- Provide Border Force with additional powers to:
 - o Search unaccompanied containers located within ports for the presence of illegal migrants;
 - o Seize and dispose of any vessels intercepted and encountered;
 - o Stop and divert vessels suspected of carrying illegal migrants to the UK and, subject to agreement with the relevant country such as France, return them to where their sea journey to the UK began.
- Increase the penalty for Foreign National Offenders who return to the UK in breach of a deportation order from six months' to five years' imprisonment.
- Implement an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme to block the entry of those who present a threat to the UK.

■ Unexplained Wealth Orders: Oman

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[27329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of using Unexplained Wealth Orders against Oman's Royal Office minister.

Kevin Foster:

Across the UK law enforcement and prosecution agencies are operationally independent.

As such, Ministers do not advise on the merits of potential law enforcement activity, including the use of unexplained wealth orders.

■ Visas: Relatives

Ben Lake:

[\[29879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent estimate she has made of the number of potential sponsors who have left the UK since 2013 as a result of close relatives not being able to join them under the Adult Dependency visa rule.

Kevin Foster:

It is not possible to make such an estimate as the Home Office does not record the reason why individuals leave the UK.

■ **Yvonne Fletcher****Allan Dorans:**[\[29909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to review the evidence which has been withheld by the Government since 2015 on the grounds of national security in the investigation into the murder of WPC Yvonne Fletcher in 1984, to ascertain whether that evidence may now be released.

Kit Malthouse:

In any case referred to the CPS by the police, a decision to prosecute is made in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors, and a case must meet the evidential and public interest stages of the Full Code Test. Ultimately, the decision was taken that a prosecution could not proceed.

The Government is unable to confirm or deny the existence of any evidence being withheld on national security grounds.

Although a prosecution is not currently possible, should new information come to light the police and CPS would look again at whether a prosecution could be brought. We are determined to bring perpetrators to justice wherever possible.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT■ **Buildings: Fire Prevention****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[27093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the average legal costs incurred by leaseholders in pursuing claims against developers in court in cases involving liability for fire safety remediation costs.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[27094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the proportion of buildings marketed by developers within the last 15 years that are affected by fire safety problems where those developers remain solvent and capable of paying for remediation, legal and other costs associated with any successful court case brought by current building owners.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[27095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) financial, (b) advisory and c) evidential support he plans to provide to leaseholders that are seeking to take developers to court in cases involving liability for fire safety remediation.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[27096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his comments of the 4 July 2021, in cases where a building with fire safety problems was marketed by developers (a) more than 15 years ago and (b) that are no longer solvent, what support he plans to make available to leaseholders to prevent them bearing the costs of remediation work.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[27097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his comments of the 4 July 2021, in cases where a building with fire safety problems was marketed by developers that are no longer solvent (a) what support he plans to make available to leaseholders to prevent them bearing the costs of remediation work and (b) what options in law building owners have to pursue former Directors or other parties responsible for the conduct of the developer at the time the defective building was marketed by them.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[27112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of buildings constructed with unsafe cladding materials that will be (a) included and (b) excluded from the proposed extension of the Defective Premises Act 1972 regulations from six to fifteen years.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[27113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of premises constructed through Special Purpose Vehicles which may not be covered by the proposed extension of the Defective Premises Act 1972 regulations from six to fifteen years.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government's proposed changes to the Defective Premises Act 1972 as part of the Building Safety Bill will more than double the time available to seek compensation for substandard building work from six to 15 years. These new measures will provide a legal route to redress that previously would not have been possible for hundreds of buildings, benefitting thousands of leaseholders.

There are various limitation periods set in the Limitation Act 1980 for different types of civil claim. These range from 12 months (for defamation or the late payment of insurance claims) to six years (for claims relating to some types of contracts) to a long stop of 15 years for cases involving negligence. A 15-year limitation period has been chosen to bring the Defective Premises Act in line with other types of serious civil claim.

The Government has been clear that those responsible must pay towards the cost of remediating defective buildings. It is fundamental that the industry that caused this issue contributes to setting things right. Some parts of the industry have done the right thing, funding remediation of serious historic defects, but this is not happening in all cases. In many cases, those who caused the problems are evading responsibility.

That is why we are taking action, providing a route to redress so that those who caused these problems can be held accountable.

Along with retrospectively extending the limitation period under the Defective Premises Act, going forward we are also expanding the Defective Premises Act to include refurbishments, and we will be commencing section 38 of the Building Act 1984. These measures will also be subject to a 15-year limitation period. Together, these increased rights to redress will enhance accountability, with stronger incentives against shoddy workmanship, further reinforcing the culture change in the construction industry that the Building Safety Bill will drive.

These reforms are supported by more than £5 billion in direct grant funding for the remediation of dangerous cladding on high-rise buildings, where the risk to multiple households is greater when fire does spread; a significant proportion of this is funding the delivery of construction works now, or has funded work which has finished.

■ Churches: Music

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[28114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of allowing worshippers to sing in church prior to 19 July 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

Places of worship play an important role in providing spiritual leadership and bringing communities together. However, their communal nature can make them particularly vulnerable to the spread of coronavirus.

Congregational singing has been suspended due to the increased risk of transmission through small droplets and aerosols.

This means that those taking part in such activities are at higher risk of transmitting the virus and spreading infection.

However, in line with Government's proposals to move to Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown, congregational singing indoors, with or without masks, will be able to resume from 19 July.

■ Community Ownership Fund

Douglas Chapman:

[\[28222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department will begin to accept applications to the Community Ownership Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

My department will begin to accept applications to the Community Ownership Fund from this summer. We will shortly publish the prospectus which will set out the detailed dates for the first bidding round.

■ Community Renewal Fund

Steve Reed:

[29808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to measure the impact of the projects funded through the Community Renewal Fund on the change in the relative spatial deprivation of the most deprived areas of the relevant local authority.

Luke Hall:

Each of the successful CRF projects are required to undertake an evaluation of the impact that the project has had; in addition MHCLG officials will also be evaluating the programme as a whole during 2022.

■ Homelessness: Ethnic Groups

Ms Harriet Harman:

[28043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of homelessness of black residents in (a) England and Wales, (b) London and (c) Southwark in 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

The latest data relating to ethnicity breakdown of homeless households in England can be found in the annual homelessness statistics and live homelessness tables here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

Data can be viewed by local authority and across different years.

Housing is a devolved issue and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government does not collect homelessness data for Wales.

The Government is committed to tackling homelessness and is investing over £750 million this year to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in England.

■ Homes England: Conditions of Employment

Grahame Morris:

[29774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make it his policy to instruct Homes England not to dismiss some or all of its staff and rehire them on different terms of pay.

Eddie Hughes:

As laid out in recent statements to Parliament, the Government does not support the use of Section 188, or 'fire and rehire' as a mechanism to achieve settlement of new Terms and Conditions. It is for Homes England to decide how best to manage their pay and workforce issues, and we will support them in achieving a successful pay settlement through the normal process with staff and unions.

Homes England: Industrial Relations**Grahame Morris:** [\[29773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether employee representatives were (a) appointed or (b) elected in Homes England in accordance with section 188(1B)(b)(i) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 in each of the last 12 months.

Eddie Hughes:

During the preceding 12 month period in Homes England, employee representatives were elected pursuant to section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Housing Revenue Accounts**Helen Hayes:** [\[29857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of housing revenue accounts to meet future investment needs in social housing.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to increasing the supply of affordable housing. We are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which will leverage up to £38 billion of private finance and provide up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow. We are keen to see local authorities playing a key role in the delivery of this programme alongside Housing Associations. Alongside this we have introduced a package of reforms to give local authorities increased flexibility over how they can spend their Right to Buy receipts on replacement homes. This package will make it easier for authorities to fund homes using Right to Buy receipts including homes for social rent; allow authorities greater flexibility over the types of homes they provide to reflect the needs of their communities; give authorities more time to use receipts and to develop ambitious build programmes; and make sure more new build replacements are delivered instead of acquisitions, contributing to net supply. Government abolished the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap in 2018, enabling local authorities to borrow for building.

Job Creation: Urban Areas**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[28384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to support the creation of well-paid, local jobs in town centres.

Luke Hall:

As we build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic, this Government will deliver growth that levels up opportunity, is aligned to our net zero objectives, and cements our status as Global Britain. Through the £3.6 billion Towns Fund, we are supporting

101 places develop Town Deal proposals to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth through land use, economic assets including cultural assets, skills and enterprise infrastructure, and connectivity. We have now committed over £2 billion under the Towns Fund, offering Town Deals to 86 places across England. This includes the accelerated funding provided to places last year. Announcements for the remaining Town Deals will be made in due course.

Furthermore, the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. The Fund will operate UK-wide, extending the benefits of funding for priority local infrastructure across all regions and nations.

■ **Landlords: Licensing**

Jeff Smith:

[\[29072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which local authorities have requested approval from his Department for the (a) extension and (b) creation of a landlord licensing scheme and are yet to receive a decision.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department does not make a distinction between renewals and new schemes when processing selective licensing applications.

There are three schemes currently under consideration.

■ **Leasehold**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of requiring maintenance contracts and property enhancement contracts on leasehold properties to be independently reviewed before being awarded.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to award leaseholders with increased right of appeal on decisions that their property management company and freeholder has taken on enhancements and maintenance to their properties or communal areas.

Eddie Hughes:

Leaseholders have existing rights of input into, and challenge of, decisions made by their freeholders on enhancements or maintenance of their properties or communal areas.

The law is already clear that service charges, and any increase in costs, must be reasonable and where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard. The consultation process set out in Section 20 of the

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 further sets out a process associated with major works. Leaseholders may make an application to the First-tier Tribunal for it to make a determination on the reasonableness of their service charges or on section 20 grounds.

Some leaseholders will also have access to redress schemes – if their freeholder is a social landlord or employs a managing agent, they are currently obliged to be a part of such a scheme. We intend to extend this requirement to all freeholders.

We also established an independent working group chaired by Lord Best to raise standards across the property sector, which considered how the service charge regime, including transparency of charges, potential caps and major works consultations, operated. The working group published its final report to Government (see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulation-of-property-agents-working-group-report>) and we are considering the report's recommendations.

■ Letting Agents: Regulation

Mr John Baron:

[29731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what further steps the Government is taking to (a) implement the recommendations of the Regulation of Property Agents: working group report, published 18 July 2019 and (b) raise standards across the property agent sector.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. This commitment includes raising professionalism and standards amongst property agents, protecting consumers while defending the reputation of good agents from the actions of rogue operatives. We therefore welcome the ongoing work being undertaken by the industry itself to raise professionalism and standards across the sector.

The Government is considering the recommendations in the report received from the working group on the regulation of property agents. We welcome the work of Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town as the Chair of the independent steering group on codes of practice for property agents, and we will continue to work with industry on improving best practice.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Alan Brown:

[27216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 21267 on Levelling Up Fund, how many applications were received for the first round of funding by the deadline of 12 noon on 18 June 2021.

Luke Hall:

The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

Applications for the first round of the Levelling Up Fund closed at midday on 18 June. We have received in the region of 300 applications, but these are currently being triaged to ensure compliance with our eligibility requirements, and will then be assessed in line with the published assessment process set out in the [Levelling Up Fund Prospectus](#) and [Technical Note](#) on Gov.uk.

Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund will be announced later in the year and bidding authorities will be informed in due course.

Dr Luke Evans:**[27340]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his timeline is for decision-making under the Levelling Up Fund.

Luke Hall:

The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

Applications for the first round of the Levelling Up Fund closed at midday on 18 June. It is expected that investment decisions will be made by the UK Government for this funding round by autumn 2021.

The approach set out in the Prospectus available on GOV.UK will be kept under review for future rounds. Announcements about the future of the Fund will be made later this year.

Steve Reed:**[29807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to measure the impact of the projects funded through the Levelling Up Fund on the change in the relative spatial deprivation of the most deprived areas of the relevant local authority.

Luke Hall:

The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. The Fund will reflect this Government's greater emphasis on high-quality evaluation, which is critical to understanding what types of interventions work well in addressing levelling up challenges, through individual projects and across varying spatial scales.

As part of business case development for the Levelling Up Fund, local authorities are asked to set out a proportionate plan for project-level monitoring and evaluation, which forms part of bid assessment. Further details on our approach to monitoring

and evaluation are available in the published Levelling Up Fund prospectus on GOV.UK.

■ Local Government Finance

Steve Reed: [\[29804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, which funds he plans to remove competitive bidding from to reduce the amount of funding streams allocated to councils through competitive bidding.

Luke Hall:

The Government recognises the importance of providing local authorities with longer-term clarity to enable their forward planning. Decisions about funding beyond this financial year will be made at the Spending Review later this year. Government has a long-standing policy to provide grant funding to local government on a non-ringfenced basis as part of the commitment to greater localism. This policy provides greater funding flexibility to local authorities and supports them to make spending decisions based on their local needs and priorities. The Local Government Finance settlement and the vast majority of local government's Core Spending Power (£51.3 billion) are un-ringfenced, giving local authorities flexibility over their spending decisions.

■ Local Government Finance: Reserves

Steve Reed: [\[29056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what data his Department holds on the level of reserves held by local authorities in England.

Luke Hall:

This information can be found on the Government's website

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Catherine West: [\[29868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what support his Department is providing to local authorities to support the Government's net zero target.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government recognises that communities and local government are often best placed to align local opportunities, resources and needs with strategic aims. Government has therefore made significant amounts of funding available to local authorities to empower local areas to take a place-based approach which reflects their local circumstances.

As part of its commitment to retrofit existing homes and decarbonise buildings, Government is funding a number of schemes such as:

- The Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD), which supports projects to install energy efficiency measures such as various types of insulation, and low-carbon heating

systems for low-income households, has already provided £500 million to local authorities for upgrades to low-income households across England, and is being delivered up to December 2021.

- The Sustainable Warmth Competition, which enables local authorities in England to apply for further funding under the £200 million Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 scheme and from an initial allocation of £150 million for the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 scheme, for delivery up to March 2023.
- The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator, which has awarded £62 million of funding to social landlords across England and Scotland to test innovative approaches to retrofitting at scale, seeing over 2300 social homes improved to at least EPC band C. The Government has announced a further £100 million in financial year 2021/22 which will cover delivery up to March 2023 for the first wave of the £3.8 billion manifesto commitment.
- The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, which is providing over £1 billion in grants to public sector bodies, including local authorities, to fund heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures over 2020/21 and 2021/22.

We will continue to work closely with local and regional partners to understand the needs of the sector as we transition to net zero.

■ Local Government: Coronavirus

Steve Reed:

[29805]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department (a) has issued or (b) plans to issue to local authority chief executives on ensuring adequate ventilation in council-managed buildings, whether or not with public access, to reduce the risks of transmission of covid-19 infection; to what standards local authority chief executives should (i) plan and (ii) measure such ventilation; what enforcement activity his Department plans to undertake to ensure that guidance is followed; and whether he plans to make funds available for improving standards of ventilation in those building.

Luke Hall:

Public Health England has published guidance on the ventilation of indoor spaces which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19> The Health and Safety Executive has published guidance on ventilation and air conditioning here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm> Using this guidance, local authorities should assess the risk from Covid and implement the appropriate transmission risk controls. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks and implement the appropriate controls. HSE is the health and safety enforcing authority for local authority activities and can take proportionate

enforcement action. Council-managed buildings are advised to pay due regard to the published guidance above, alongside any sector-specific guidance

■ Regional Planning and Development: Devolution

Steve Reed:

[\[28205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Written Statement of 1 July 2020, Revitalising high streets and town centres, HCWS145, if he will make an assessment of the extent to which his policies on the use of Article 4 directions set out in that Written Statement are compatible with the Government's Levelling up agenda and its policies on the devolution of powers.

Luke Hall:

By strengthening our policy on Article 4 directions we are allowing all local authorities to use Article 4 directions in a measured and targeted way. This will help to safeguard against the loss of retail premises in thriving high streets and core shopping areas.

■ Right to Acquire Scheme

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[29756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of giving social housing tenants the right to acquire rented property built prior to 1997.

Eddie Hughes:

The Right to Acquire (RtA) was introduced in 1997, through the Housing Act 1996. A Housing Association that accepted government grant from that point accepted that the RtA would be a condition of the grant.

Backdating the legislation to apply to homes built before 1997 would require forcing Housing Associations to sell properties to eligible tenants. However, Government has made home ownership available to certain Housing Association tenants through a voluntary agreement with Housing Associations supporting pilots of the Voluntary Right to Buy.

The Midlands pilot for the Voluntary Right to Buy was launched in August 2018. This pilot has given thousands of Housing Association tenants in the East and West Midlands the opportunity to buy their home with a discount. An independent evaluation for the Midlands Voluntary Right to Buy pilot was published in February 2021. The 2019 manifesto committed to evaluate new pilot areas.

■ Temporary Accommodation: Greater London

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[28044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of trends in the number of families living in temporary accommodation in (a) London and (b) Southwark who have to travel over an hour each way to attend their children's schools.

Eddie Hughes:

We do not collect data on the distance of temporary accommodation from the household's school. The legislation and guidance sets out that local authorities should try to place individuals within their own area, and retain established links with schools, doctors, social workers and other key services and support. However, when this is not possible, they should place the household as near as possible to the original local authority. Placing a household out of the local authority area should be as a last resort and authorities must consider the impact a change in location would have on a household.

If a local authority places a household into accommodation in another local area, they are required by law to notify the local authority of any placement, to ensure there is no disruption to schooling or employment.

Towns Fund**Steve Reed:**[\[28206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 24984 on the Towns Fund and the statement in that Answer his Department has a robust monitoring and evaluation strategy to spot issues early and work with towns to address them, whether his Department has cancelled plans to fund any projects through the Towns Fund as a result of issues identified through that monitoring and evaluation.

Steve Reed:[\[28207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 24984 on the Towns Fund and the statement in that Answer that his Department has a robust monitoring and evaluation strategy to spot issues early and work with towns to address them, what steps his Department has taken as a result of issues it has identified through that monitoring and evaluation.

Luke Hall:

Town Investment Plans were subject to a robust assessment process and offers of Town Deals reflected both the overall quality of the plans, and that of the individual projects within. Projects that did not fit with the intervention framework or that were judged to be unviable were not approved for funding.

Further detailed assurance must be carried out for each project before funding is released. Once funding is released and projects move into the delivery phase, our monitoring and evaluation activities will identify any issues, and appropriate action will be taken.

Steve Reed:[\[28208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 24209 on the Towns Fund, what information he plans to publish on the work of his Department in implementing the referenced comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy.

Luke Hall:

The Department will publish a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Towns Fund. This strategy will set out the evidenced framework and theory of change, which underpin the evaluation methodologies for the Towns Fund, a work plan, timeline and key milestones, and a bibliography.

Steve Reed:[\[29806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will take steps to measure the impact of the projects funded through the Towns Fund on the change in the relative spatial deprivation of the most deprived areas of the relevant local authority.

Luke Hall:

The Towns Fund Monitoring and Evaluation strategy covers three levels of evaluation; process, impact and value for money. The Towns Fund impact evaluation will examine the impact of Towns Fund activities on a number of elements of spatial deprivation: employment, land values, resident incomes, business turnover and profits, investment, well-being and perception of place. This is all summarised in the Towns Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, which the Department will publish in due course.

■ Unitary Councils: Somerset**Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:**[\[26088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many of the 5000 respondents to the recent consultation on the Somerset local unitary bid supported (a) one Somerset and (b) stronger Somerset.

Luke Hall:

On 5 July I said in response to the Hon. Member's parliamentary questions of 28 June, 29 June and 30 June (UIN 23083, 23084, 24394, 24907) that over 5,000 responses have been received for the consultation on local government reorganisation in Somerset; that the Secretary of State expects to announce his decisions on the Somerset unitary proposals before the summer; and this will be accompanied with a summary of responses to the consultation on local government reorganisation in Somerset. This remains the case.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Agriculture: Overseas Trade****Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[25813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to support British farmers and food producers to increase their global sales.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade is working with farming and food organisations to deliver tailored export support to our agriculture, food and drink producers. Our 'Open Doors' campaign offers a wide range of support for businesses who want to start exporting or expand into new markets, including exporting masterclasses and a flagship agriculture mentoring programme. The DIT Export Academy also provides a variety of educational programmes supporting businesses to grow internationally and increase their sales.

Arms Trade**Alyn Smith:**[\[29903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of exports of arms and military equipment to (a) Iraq, (b) Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, (c) Libya, (d) Mali, (e) Myanmar, (f) Nicaragua, (g) Pakistan, (h) Russia, (i) Saudi Arabia, (j) Somalia, (k) South Sudan, (l) Sri Lanka, (m) Sudan, (n) Syria, (o) Turkmenistan, (p) Uzbekistan, (q) Venezuela, (r) Yemen and (s) Zimbabwe in 2020.

Alyn Smith:[\[29904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the value was of exports of arms and military equipment to (a) Afghanistan, (b) Bahrain, (c) Bangladesh, (d) Belarus, (e) Central African Republic, (f) China, (g) Colombia, (h) Democratic People's Republic of Korea, (i) Democratic Republic of Congo, (j) Egypt, (k) Eritrea, (l) Iran in 2020.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Such exports require an export licence, which are assessed against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the "Consolidated Criteria").

HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) on export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK containing detailed information including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences. The most recent publication was on 13th July 2021.

JUSTICE**Breastfeeding: Public Places****Navendu Mishra:**[\[27362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he plans to take to tackle the recording of breastfeeding in public without consent.

Alex Chalk:

This behaviour may already be captured by existing offences.

However, we are keenly aware of concerns that have been expressed over the changes in technology, including the misuse of photography, social media, imagery, and the opportunities to abuse and upset others that such developments can bring.

We have therefore asked the Law Commission to review the law in this area to ensure victims are properly protected.

It is important that any changes to the law in such sensitive areas, are thoroughly assessed and fully evidenced.

The review has looked at the question of non-consensual photography in public places, including whether recording and sharing images of breastfeeding should be captured as “intimate” imagery for the purposes of any reformed criminal law.

The Government awaits the Law Commission’s findings with interest and shall consider them carefully.

■ Child Arrangements Orders: Legal Aid Scheme

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it her policy to make legal aid accessible to low income parents to support child contact and maintenance arrangements.

Alex Chalk:

Legal aid is already available for certain private family law cases, where there is evidence of domestic abuse and for all EU and international child custody, maintenance, contact, and prevention of abduction cases. Where an issue falls outside the scope of legal aid, funding may still be available through the Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) Scheme, where it would breach or risk a breach of human rights or retained enforceable EU law if funding is not provided, subject to the statutory means and merits tests.

Legal aid is also subject to a means test. Individuals in receipt of certain means-tested benefits, including Universal Credit, are currently passported through the income part of the means test. We are in the process of reviewing the means test for legal aid to assess the effectiveness with which it protects access to justice, particularly for those who are vulnerable. In doing so, we are considering the full range of means-testing criteria, including the income thresholds for civil and criminal legal aid and the passporting provisions for people receiving certain benefits. This review will be published, with an accompanying consultation, in Autumn 2021.

■ Downview Prison

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[\[29877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will make it his policy not to transfer high-risk female offenders to E Wing at HMP Downview.

Alex Chalk:

HMP Downview’s E Wing provides separate accommodation in the women’s estate for transgender women with Gender Recognition Certificates (GRC) who pose, or face, too high a risk to be located in the general women’s population. The circumstances in which a transgender woman with a GRC may be considered for

placement in separate accommodation is detailed in 'The Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender' policy framework. A planned review of the implementation of this policy is underway.

■ Matrimonial Proceedings and Separation

Scott Benton:

[\[27348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he plans to take to ensure that more separation and divorce proceedings are resolved through mediation rather than the family courts system.

Alex Chalk:

Divorce and dissolution are a fundamental change of legal status that may have implications for people's rights and responsibilities, for matters such as property and inheritance, and for the families involved. Since the Matrimonial Causes Act 1857, divorce has always been a court process and only the court can legally end a marriage.

However, divorcing couples can use family mediation to reach agreement about the arrangements for any children and for dividing their financial assets, rather than asking the court to decide these matters.

This government is committed to supporting more families to resolve issues such as these through mediation, where appropriate. On 26 March 2021, a £1m Family Mediation Voucher Scheme was launched by the MoJ, to encourage and better support families to use mediation and resolve disputes outside of court.

The Family Mediation Voucher Scheme is currently available in private law children cases where there are no safeguarding concerns and the case is deemed suitable for mediation. The scheme will offer over 2,000 families a financial contribution of up to £500 towards their mediation costs, giving these families the opportunity to resolve their disputes with the assistance of a trained mediator.

We are closely monitoring the uptake and impact of the scheme and are actively considering what more could be done to encourage parties to consider mediation as an alternative to court, including better signposting of mediation as part of the implementation of the Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020.

■ Reoffenders: Children

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[29865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the reoffending rate of children released from custodial establishments.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[29866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of trends in the levels of reoffending rates of children released from custodial establishments over the last 10 years.

Alex Chalk:

The average number of children in custody has fallen by 73% between 2010/11 and 2020/21 and their reoffending rate fell from 73.8% to 65.2% between 2008 and 2018 (most recent data).

Many of the children sentenced to custody have committed very serious crimes. However, they are also often very vulnerable, with complex needs, and require significant levels of support to enable them to positive, crime-free lives. The government is determined to reduce their reoffending further. We are providing all prison officers in the youth estate with the opportunity to receive a degree-level qualification to become youth justice specialists; in partnership with the NHS, we are rolling out a new approach to care that provides children in custody with greater psychological support; and we are trialling secure schools, a new form of youth custody that puts education and healthcare at the centre of the custodial experience for children.

■ Secure Training Centres**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[29867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to his Department's press release of 16 June 2021 entitled Lord Chancellor takes immediate action to move children from Rainsbrook, which establishments the children previously living in Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre have been moved to.

Alex Chalk:

Whilst it would not be appropriate to specify the secure establishments individual children have been transferred to, all placement decisions have and will continue to be based on the individual needs, requirements and vulnerabilities of the children. Staff have spoken to all children at Rainsbrook to explain the current situation and have worked closely with Youth Offending Teams to ensure that children are suitably supported and placed into appropriate accommodation in a smooth, co-ordinated and organised manner. During this time, the Youth Custody Service has also increased advocacy support at Rainsbrook so that children have had greater access to independent advocacy and support services.

■ Young Offenders: Location**Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[29864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of English child prisoners are living in custodial establishments in (a) Wales and (b) Scotland.

Alex Chalk:

The Youth Custody Service (YCS) does not hold central figures which break down whether children under their care were born in England. Any child sentenced in England or Wales would be held in an English or Welsh establishment.

The criminal justice system of Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Government and the Ministry of Justice does not hold any information about children born in England who are subsequently held in the Scottish secure estate.

■ Youth Custody: Gender Recognition

Mark Jenkinson: [27313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance is in place for Youth Custodial Services on the allocation of transgender offenders.

Mark Jenkinson: [27314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what guidance is in place for Youth Custody Services on the care and treatment of people who are transgender.

Alex Chalk:

Published Youth Custody Service (YCS) placement guidance ([Youth Custody Service Report Template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863610/transgender-pf.pdf)) states that “Young people who identify as transgender will typically be placed into a mixed gender Secure Children’s Home (SCH) or Secure Training Centre (STC) if considered suitable, alongside the risk they present to others and their age”. As part of placement considerations, the YCS placements team will consider an environment where the young person can mix with children and young people who are both male and female but also where that additional support is in place for a young person presenting with complex needs.

The revised Policy Framework for the ‘Care and Management of Individuals who are Transgender’, published in 2019 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863610/transgender-pf.pdf) sets out the requirements for secure establishments – including Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) – to care for and appropriately manage individuals who are transgender. In addition, as an annex to the Framework, the YCS are developing specific guidance for transgender children and young people in YOIs, STCs and SCHs, which is due to be published later this year. Specialist agencies have been consulted to support the development of the guidance. A multidisciplinary approach is taken to care for and manage transgender children and young people effectively with central or local multidisciplinary meetings held within secure settings at pre-determined points in a transgender child or young person’s sentence.

TRANSPORT

■ Clean Air Zones

Mr Barry Sheerman: [28963]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to encourage more local authorities to introduce Clean Air Zones.

Rachel Maclean:

Under the 2017 UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations and its further Supplement in 2018, 61 local authorities were directed to develop plans for delivering Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) compliance in the shortest possible time.

As the plan sets out, it is for local authorities to determine what the appropriate solution is to tackling NO₂ concentrations, reflecting the highly localised nature of the problem. In some cases, local authorities will determine that a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is the intervention required. However given the potential impacts on individuals and businesses, when considering between equally effective alternatives to deliver compliance, Government has been consistently clear that if a local authority can identify measures other than charging zones that are at least as effective at reducing NO₂ to legal levels but with less of an impact, those measures should be preferred. Any alternative will need to deliver compliance as quickly as a charging CAZ if it is to be preferred for inclusion in the plans which local authorities develop.

Where a CAZ is needed to deliver legal NO₂ levels in the shortest possible time, Government is providing guidance to local authorities to implement the zone, as well as financial assistance to help local businesses and individuals adapt - including grants to help upgrade vehicles. The first two Clean Air Zones have been implemented by Birmingham City Council and Bath and North East Somerset Council, with further zones expected to be introduced later this year and next year.

Under the Transport Act 2000, local authorities are permitted to implement a charging zone to achieve air quality objectives independently of the Government's NO₂ programme.

The Government firmly believes that local authorities are best placed to implement solutions in local areas. These local authorities will devise their own criteria for their scheme to meet their objectives.

■ Dangerous Driving: Death**Charlotte Nichols:**[\[28350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to his Department's response of 24 March 2021 to the e-petition entitled Ryan's Law: Widen definition of death by dangerous driving, what options his Department has considered as part of its review of potential further options that might be used to respond such incidences.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes road safety seriously and is aware of the traumatic effects of drivers failing to stop when a person is caused serious or fatal injury. The Department for Transport is exploring options that could be pursued in this area, including, but not limited to, the available penalties, and how the offence operates as part of longer-term and wider work on road safety.

■ Driving Licences: Older People

Anneliese Dodds:

[29885]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people over the age of 70 are waiting for a decision on the renewal of their driving licence following the expiry of their existing licence who applied for that renewal after the Government's covid-19 extension period expired on 31 December 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

Drivers whose licence expired between 1 February and 31 December 2020 have had their entitlement to drive in the UK automatically extended for 11 months. The extension started from the date the licence was due to expire. Drivers whose entitlement expires on or after 1 January 2021, are advised to renew their driving licence as normal.

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, along with fewer operational staff being on site to allow for social distancing in line with Welsh Government requirements and an 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 six to 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](#).

■ Driving Tests

Damien Moore:

[28314]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the waiting times for category C1 driving tests.

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 (such as on public holidays and weekends).

The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners. It will also continue its training programme to enable more examiners to conduct vocational tests.

The DVSA has held initial discussions with representatives from the heavy goods vehicle (HGV) training industry to develop plans for training schools to take on the responsibility of signing-off the manoeuvre elements of the practical test. Adopting this approach would allow the DVSA to focus on the on-road element and to increase practical test throughput.

The DVSA is also reviewing the way it delivers car and trailer testing to enable the agency to prioritise HGV testing.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Speed Limits**

Selaine Saxby:

[\[28374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to raise public awareness of the (a) responsible use of and (b) speed limit that applies to e-bikes and (c) the legal provisions that apply to the modification of the speed restrictions of e-bikes.

Rachel Maclean:

E-cycle users, like any other road user, have a duty to behave in a safe and responsible manner and to comply with the Highway Code. Legal provisions applying to e-cycles are set out in The Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles Regulations 1983 and The Pedal Cycles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1983, and subsequent amendments.

The Department does not have any plans to raise public awareness of these provisions beyond existing road safety messaging, such as THINK!

■ **Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests**

Emma Hardy:

[\[29883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has he made of the waiting times for HGV driving licence tests; and whether he has plans to take steps to reduce them.

Rachel Maclean:

The suspension of routine vocational testing as a result of the pandemic has created an inevitable backlog. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is doing 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 (such as 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.

■ **London-Exeter Railway Line: Rolling Stock**

Jim McMahon:

[\[29871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 17 January 2020 to Question 1751 on London-Exeter Railway Line: Rolling Stock, whether he has exercised the call option over the leasing costs of the 36 Eversholt Rail funded class 802 bi-modes operating on the West of England route of the Great Western Region; and whether the discussions with the incumbent operator to secure the best price for all train leases for the existing train fleet have concluded.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Call Option was exercised by the Department. However, further commercial discussions with the rolling stock leasing companies (ROSCOs) led to a revised improved offer which enabled the Call Option to be withdrawn.

■ **Motor Vehicles: Carbon Emissions**

Sam Tarry:

[\[29946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions his Department has had with local authorities to ensure the roll-out of zero-emissions vehicles and infrastructure is coordinated across the UK, and aligns with the Government's net-zero targets.

Rachel Maclean:

Local authorities have a crucial role to play in tackling air and climate emissions, and supporting the uptake of zero emission vehicles (EV). UK government has a suite of activities to work closer than ever with local authorities, to encourage leadership and widespread regional and local action in this space. This includes ministers writing to and engaging authority council leaders and chief executives, and officials from the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) working closely with the many tiers and structures of government across the UK.

This engagement has also fed into the development and delivery of our grant schemes for local authorities, including the existing On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) that supports public chargepoints for their residents without access to private parking; and, the upcoming £90m Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund.

Government has also been working closely with local authorities on the development of an EV Infrastructure Strategy. This will be published later this year, and will set out the vision and action plan for charging infrastructure rollout needed to achieve the 2030/35 phase out successfully. This will set expected roles for different stakeholders and how government will intervene to address the gaps between the current market status and our vision. Government also continues to fund the Energy Saving Trust to provide an impartial advisory service which helps local authorities in England to

develop local policies and strategies to support charging infrastructure and zero emission vehicle uptake.

■ Public Transport: Protective Clothing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will reconsider the policy on mask wearing on public transport after 19 July 2021.

Rachel Maclean:

The success of vaccine deployment has paved the way for the gradual lifting of restrictions. At step 4 on July 19th, the Government will remove the vast majority of outstanding legal restrictions, including the requirement to wear face coverings. This marks a new phase in the pandemic response where people manage the risks to themselves and others as the country learns to live with the virus. However, the Government recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport. The Government will provide guidance to the public and to businesses on how they can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the risk of a resurgence.

■ Public Transport: Ventilation

Jim McMahon:

[\[29872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure adequate ventilation in (a) trains, (b) buses and (c) other forms of public transport to reduce risk of covid-19 infection; what plans he has to issue guidance operators of public transport services on transport ventilation; what standards or criteria his Department advises are used to plan and measure transport ventilation; and whether his Department plans to make funds available to improve standards of ventilation on public transport.

Rachel Maclean:

Guidance on ventilation is included within the Department's 'Safer Transport Guidance for Operators'. It suggests operators consider how they can increase ventilation and air flow, and asks that wherever possible operators and businesses should ensure that a fresh air supply is consistently flowing through vehicles, carriages and transport hubs. The guidance sets out a number of ways in which this might be achieved including through the opening of windows, the use of air conditioning systems and through the use of filters. The Department's public facing communications messaging asks that passengers open windows wherever possible and safe to do so.

The Department is also working with the Rail Delivery Group, which represents train operating companies, to continue to develop guidance for operators on train ventilation. Operators are currently trialling the use of new high grade filters which are likely to offer further protection against airborne Covid transmission. Where trains are ventilated using an air conditioning system, the air in the carriage will be completely replaced every 6-9 minutes.

Buses typically rely on opening windows for passenger ventilation. Industry is using a range of methods to ensure that these windows are kept open, including through the use of window stickers, on-board announcement and the placing of small blocks in the windows which prevent them from being fully closed. Coach operators carry out risk assessments, with mitigations including enhanced ventilation and HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) filters.

Aviation has high standards of ventilation and uses HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters as standard on passenger aircraft.

The Department is currently working with operators to understand scope for further ventilation improvements and to understand how we can best support industry moving forwards.

■ Road Traffic Offences

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[27339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports that 10,000 drivers hold a valid licence despite accruing 12 penalty points; and what assessment he has made of trends in the level of penalty points accrued by drivers in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean:

Only a court can disqualify an individual from driving under the “totting up” provisions where a driver has accrued 12 or more penalty points. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency’s role is to maintain a record of the endorsement information received from the courts on the individual’s driver record.

If the DVLA receives a notification from a court for a driver with 12 or more penalty points who has not been disqualified, the DVLA will alert the court to this. This enables the court to consider whether to re-open the case and disqualify the driver where appropriate. The DVLA cannot overturn a court’s decision not to disqualify a driver where more than 12 penalty points have been accrued.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Crispin Blunt:

[\[29722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what methodology his Department uses to allocate countries to the green, amber and red travel lists; and if he will publish that methodology.

Robert Courts:

Decisions on Red, Amber or Green List assignment and associated border measures are taken by Ministers, who take into account the JBC risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors.

Key factors in the JBC risk assessment of each country include:

- genomic surveillance capability

- COVID-19 transmission risk
- Variant of Concern transmission risk

A summary of the JBC methodology is published on gov.uk, alongside key data that supports Ministers' decisions.

■ Travel: Finance

Lilian Greenwood: [\[29781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many and which highway authorities were notified that they could not bid for active travel capital funding for 2021-22 from Tranche 3 of the Active Travel Fund.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department made it clear to authorities that their performance with earlier tranches of active travel funding would be taken into account in allocating future funds. One council was not invited to bid this year and, for similar reasons, a number of other authorities will receive a reduction in their allocation, or if their bids are not of high enough quality, potentially no funding at all.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Crispin Blunt: [\[29723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to make a decision on whether people who are double-vaccinated can be exempt from covid-19 quarantine measures.

Robert Courts:

From 19 July, arrivals who have been fully vaccinated through the UK vaccination programme (plus 14 days) will not have to self-isolate or take a day 8 test when travelling to England from amber list countries. There are no changes to the green or red list, or for those arriving from countries on these lists.

■ Travel: USA

Sir Alan Campbell: [\[28070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress the Government has made on negotiations with the US Administration on the opening up of a travel corridor between the UK and US.

Robert Courts:

The Prime Minister and President Biden have made clear the importance of bringing about the return of safe trans-Atlantic travel as soon as possible.

The recently formed joint UK-US Experts' Working Group is underway, and we are working closely with our US partners on delivering the practical solutions to effectively restoring travel.

Travel from the UK to the US is currently restricted under Presidential Executive Order and regulations 212(f) and meaningful travel cannot begin in earnest until the US lifts these restrictions. As announced by Secretary of State for Transport on 8 July, we are confident that vaccines will play an important role in normalising travel between the UK and US this summer.

■ Urban Areas: Air Pollution

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[28964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to improve air quality in urban areas.

Rachel Maclean:

The government's Clean Air Strategy sets out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollution from a wide range of sources. We have also put in place a £3.8 billion plan to tackle roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

The government's Environment Bill makes a clear commitment to set a legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter and enables local authorities to take more effective action to tackle air pollution in their areas. The Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons on 26 May and is now proceeding through the various Parliamentary stages in the Lords, with Royal Assent expected in the Autumn. In the meantime, key work on implementing the Bill's measures is continuing at pace, including the work to set legally binding air quality targets.

These measures will help to clean up air faster and more effectively in our towns and cities.

TREASURY

■ Bank Services: Fraud

Sarah Olney:

[\[29873\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if his Department will encourage banks to strengthen protections for their customers against fraudsters.

John Glen:

The Government is working with industry to close down the vulnerabilities that fraudsters exploit and ensure members of the public have the information they need to spot a scam and stand up to fraudsters. This is a shared endeavour between Government, law enforcement and the private sector.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) also requires banks to maintain effective systems and controls to prevent the risk that they might be used to further financial crime. This includes controls to prevent fraud.

With regard to Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams, the Government recognises the work industry has undertaken to date, including the introduction of a voluntary reimbursement Code, which has demonstrably had a beneficial impact. However, the

Code, whilst improving matters, comes with limitations, including disparity in how different payment service providers are interpreting their obligations under it, as well as its lack of comprehensive cover across providers.

The Government therefore welcomed the publication of the Payment Systems Regulator's (PSR) call for views on APP scams in February 2021, which set out various potential measures for reducing APP scams and improving customer outcomes, including new requirements on payment service providers to reimburse APP scam victims and publishing APP scam data.

The PSR's call for views has now closed and the Government is engaging with the PSR and industry on next steps, including considering what further actions may be necessary to make progress on this issue.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

Alison McGovern:

[\[29788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics: 1 July 2021, including data tables 12 and 14, if he will provide details of employments broken down by (a) country, (b) region, (c) local authority, (d) age and (e) gender as at 31 May 2021.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs publish statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) regularly. The latest statistics were published on 1 July 2021 and can be found on GOV.UK.

The number of employments on furlough at 31 May 2021 broken down by the requested categories are available in the spreadsheet accompanying the release: a) country and region by gender (table 11); b) local authority and gender (table 12); and, c) age and gender (table 14).

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: West Yorkshire**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[27252\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people were in receipt of support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in (a) Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) West Yorkshire as at 1 July 2021.

Jesse Norman:

HM Revenue and Customs publish statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme regularly. The latest statistics were published on 1 July 2021 and can be found on GOV.UK.

These statistics, the latest available, report that on 31 May 2021 there were (a) 3,200 employments on furlough where the employee was resident in Morley and Outwood constituency, and (b) 72,200 employments on furlough where the employee was resident in the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Area. Employees can have more than one furloughed employment. These are provisional figures.

■ Credit Rating

Owen Thompson:

[\[29854\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of receipt of (a) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme furlough payments and (b) Bounce Back Loan Scheme payments on the recipients' credit ratings.

John Glen:

The CJRS supports businesses to preserve employer-employee matches by providing a mechanism to pay the wages of furloughed employees. Through easing the financial burden, the CJRS supports jobs, reduces the risk of permanent business closures and reduces the risk of large losses in incomes, through wage support to furloughed employees.

By maintaining employer-employee matches, the CJRS therefore seeks to reduce the risk of long-term labour market scarring. As of 14 June 2021, there have been 11.6 million unique jobs supported by the CJRS since its inception. A total of 1.3 million employers have made a claim through the CJRS since it started in March 2020, totalling £65.9 billion in claims.

The Government launched the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS) on 4 May 2020 to ensure that the smallest businesses could access loans of up to £50,000, capped at 25% of businesses' turnover in a matter of just days.

It is important to note that businesses are responsible for repaying any facility they take out and failure to keep up with their repayments may impact a borrower's credit rating.

In order to give businesses further support and flexibility in making their BBLS repayments, the Chancellor has announced "Pay as You Grow" (PAYG) options. PAYG will give businesses the option to repay their BBLS facility over ten years, the option to move temporarily to interest-only payments for periods of up to six months (an option which they can use up to three times), or to pause their repayments entirely for up to six months.

Please be reassured, borrowers who make use of these PAYG options will not be penalised through their credit rating for doing so.

■ Disability: Children

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[27194\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support disabled children and their families to access health, education and care services during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

The government has to date provided the NHS with over £27bn to support its response to and recovery from Coronavirus, which includes the provision of healthcare services to disabled children. This is part of the overall £87bn support for health services since the start of the pandemic.

The government has also provided over £6 billion in un-ringfenced funding directly to councils to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19, including in children's social care.

We are increasing education funding for children with complex special educational needs and disabilities by nearly a quarter in two years, to £8 billion this year.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[28946]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the VAT rate for on-street electric car charging.

Jesse Norman:

Electricity supplied at electric vehicle charging points in public places is subject to the standard rate of VAT (20 per cent). In order to keep costs down for families, the supply of electricity for domestic use, including charging electric vehicles at home, attracts the reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent).

Expanding the relief would come at a very high cost. VAT makes a significant contribution towards the public finances, raising about £130 billion in 2019/20, and helps to fund public priorities including the NHS, schools, and defence. Any loss in tax revenue would have to be balanced by a reduction in public spending, increased borrowing or increased taxation elsewhere.

■ Free Zones: Wales

Virginia Crosbie:

[29949]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will (a) take steps to ensure parity of funding for Freeports for England and Wales and (b) allocate £25 million for a Freeport in Wales to match the funding allocated to each of the eight Freeports in England.

Steve Barclay:

Freeports will regenerate communities across the UK by attracting new businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and down the country. The UK Government remains committed to establishing at least one Freeport in Wales and I'd welcome the support of the Welsh Government to ensure Freeports are introduced in Wales as soon as possible.

The Welsh Government is due to receive Barnett in the usual way and it should be for the Welsh Government to decide how much seed funding to provide to a Freeport in Wales. It is also important to recognise that the seed funding is only one part of the offer available to ports and businesses. There are a variety of benefits from Freeports, including on tax, customs, planning and innovation, many of these which will be delivered by the UK Government.

■ Government Departments: Darlington

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[29782\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27140 on Treasury: Buildings and with reference to the staffing of the Darlington Economic Campus, what estimate he has made of the number of existing roles that will be moved to Darlington from each of the (a) Department for International Trade, (b) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (c) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and (d) Office for National Statistics; from which existing office locations those jobs will be moved; what estimate he has made of the number of new jobs that will be created in Darlington in each of the (a) Department for International Trade, (b) Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, (c) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and (d) Office for National Statistics; what the timescale is for those departments moving work to the Darlington Economic Campus; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Darlington economic campus is an important part of the government's wider Places for Growth programme, which aims to move 22,000 Civil Servants out of London by 2030. There will be at least 750 roles relocated to Darlington from across HM Treasury, the Department for International Trade, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Office for National Statistics. The roles across the campus will be filled through both voluntary relocations of existing staff and direct recruitment. The economic campus will have a phased opening and all departments are working at pace to establish the campus as quickly as possible. The estimated number of roles to be based in Darlington by Department and timescales for moves will be announced by those Departments in due course.

■ Help to Buy Scheme

Ben Lake:

[\[28292\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to amend the Help to Buy ISA price cap of £250,000 for properties outside London.

John Glen:

The Help to Buy: ISA scheme aims to help those struggling to save enough to get onto the housing ladder. The property price cap allows the Government to target support at the first-time buyers who need it the most. The scheme includes a higher property value cap of £450,000 for properties in London compared to £250,000 anywhere else in the UK.

Since the scheme launched in 2015, 386,728 property completions have been supported through the scheme with a mean property value of £174,531 compared to an average first-time buyer house price of £210,727.

The Government keeps all aspects of savings policy under review.

■ HSBC: China**Peter Dowd:** [\[29068\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of HSBC's decision to transfer executives from the UK to China.

Peter Dowd: [\[29069\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with HSBC on the National Security Law in Hong Kong.

Peter Dowd: [\[29070\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with HSBC on the freezing of pro-democracy activist Ted Hui's bank account.

John Glen:

The Government engages in regular dialogue with businesses in Hong Kong and the UK, as well as monitoring the operation of the financial sector and its participants on an ongoing basis. Financial institutions operating in Hong Kong do so within a strict legal and regulatory framework.

■ International Monetary System**Caroline Lucas:** [\[29767\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of how to utilise the UK's Special Drawing Right allocation to make grant contributions ahead of the (a) autumn Comprehensive Spending Review and (b) COP26 climate summit; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [\[29768\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the UK's Special Drawing Right allocation to increase grant funding for the United Nations Green Climate Fund ahead of COP26.

John Glen:

The IMF Special Drawing Right (SDR) is an international reserve asset designed to supplement the official reserves of IMF member countries. SDRs are allocated to members, including the UK, in proportion to their IMF quota shares. HMG therefore holds SDRs as part of the UK's international reserves.

The UK strongly supports the proposed new \$650bn SDR allocation and has urged its implementation by the end of August. The UK also strongly supports the G7's ambition to significantly magnify the impact of the allocation to reach a total global ambition of \$100bn to the countries most in need.

The UK together with other G7 members has called on the IMF to work quickly to explore a menu of options for the voluntary channelling of SDRs to further support health needs and to help enable greener, more robust recoveries in the poorest and

most vulnerable countries. G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors have also committed to explore options to channel SDRs to support resilient, inclusive and sustainable recoveries.

As COP26 Presidency, the UK is committed to delivering climate ambition ahead of and beyond the conference, including strong efforts on emissions reduction and ensuring there is finance flowing for mitigation and adaptation globally.

The UK has committed to contribute £1.44bn to the Green Climate Fund from 2019-2023, which will support projects that reduce emissions and help people adapt to the impacts of climate change.

■ National Insurance: Children

Steve McCabe:

[\[29727\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many children in receipt of child benefit and over 15 years 9 months have not received their National Insurance number as of 9 July 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The requested information is not available.

In order for a child to be issued a National Insurance Number (NINo) automatically, the child must be part of a live Child Benefit claim when they are 15 years, 9 months old.

If a child has been part of a claim, but is not part of a claim when they are 15 years, 9 months old, HMRC can be contacted to request a NINo.

If a child has never been part of a Child Benefit claim (or a claim for a childcare service administered by HMRC) HMRC will have no record of them. An application can be made to DWP to obtain a NINo.

HMRC do not collate information on the number of young people who fall out of the automatic process and do not later obtain their NINo.

Steve McCabe:

[\[29728\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the current average waiting time in days is for a child of a qualifying age to receive their National Insurance number.

Jesse Norman:

In order for a child to be issued a National Insurance Number (NINo) automatically, the child must be part of a live Child Benefit claim when they are 15 years, 9 months old. They will receive their NINo automatically just before their 16th birthday.

If a child has been part of a claim, but is not part of a claim when they are 15 years, 9 months old, HMRC can be contacted to request a NINo. This process takes approximately 15 working days.

If a child has never been part of a Child Benefit claim (or a claim for a childcare service administered by HMRC) HMRC will have no record of them. An application can be made to DWP to obtain a NINo.

■ PAYE

Alison McGovern:

[29789]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the statistics on earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information and tables 11 and 12, if he will publish payrolled employees from PAYE RTI by (a) region, (b) NUTS1 and NUTS2 and (c) age.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC and the ONS jointly publish statistics on earnings and employment from Pay As You Earn Real Time Information. The next release will be on Thursday 15 July and will be available on the ONS website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandwork/nghours/bulletins/earningsandemploymentfrompayasyouearnrealtimeinformationuk/previousReleases>.

Breakdowns by NUTS1, NUTS2 and age are already available individually in the statistics, along with a breakdown by industry. The range of these statistics has been expanded since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, with NUTS3 being published for the first time in July. Further additional breakdowns will be released over the next few months and will be announced through the ONS release calendar.

■ Premier FX: Insolvency

Thangam Debbonaire:

[28234]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to provide support for people who have lost money in the Premier FX collapse.

John Glen:

Premier FX, an authorised payment institution, was placed into administration in August 2018 on the application of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), and subsequently entered insolvency.

An FCA investigation, which reported in February 2021, found that Premier FX had misled its customers by informing them that it was able to hold their funds indefinitely, that their funds would be held in secure, segregated client accounts and that their funds would be protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. As a result, the FCA has publicly censured Premier FX for breaches of the Payment Services Regulations. The FCA continues to investigate whether there were breaches of its rules by other parties and, if so, will take action, including steps to recover redress for any breaches that may have caused or contributed to losses from customers.

The Government has great sympathy for the creditors of Premier FX and encourages them to continue to engage with the insolvency process.

■ Public Sector: Redundancy Pay

Emily Thornberry: [\[27075\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many breaches of the control process for special severance payments were identified by his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20, and (c) 2020-21; and which organisations were accountable for those breaches.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of financial sanctions were applied by his Department in response to breaches of the control process for special severance payments in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and to which organisations or sponsoring Departments those sanctions were applied.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27077\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of special severance payments were made to Government special advisers with the written approval of his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and by which Departments those advisers were employed.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27078\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of special severance payments were made to Government special advisers without the written approval of his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and by which Departments were those advisers employed.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27079\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of special severance payments were made to officials in Ministerial private offices with the written approval of his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and by which Departments were those officials employed.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27080\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of special severance payments were made to officials in Ministerial private offices without the written approval of his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and by which Departments were those officials employed.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27081\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of special severance payments were made to individuals earning more than £100,000 with the written approval of his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and by which organisations or departments those individuals were employed.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27082\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what value of special severance payments were made to individuals earning more than £100,000 without the written

approval of his Department in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21; and by which organisations or Departments those individuals were employed.

Steve Barclay:

It is important that all public sector exit payments are fair and proportionate to employers, employees and taxpayers. Special Severance Payments are no exception to this, and we expect these payments to be used in only in agreed exceptional circumstances. To this aim, HMT published updated guidance on Special Severance Payments on May 27th 2021 which supplemented the guidance already outlined in Managing Public Money. This guidance introduced new HMT powers to sanction departments for non-compliance and new annual reporting requirements for Special Severance Payments. As this guidance is newly implemented, we have not yet seen any breaches and therefore have not sanctioned any Department. In future, we will have real time data on breaches and sanctions, payments made with a value higher than £100,000 and payments made to employees earning over £150,000. We also expect the annual transparency reporting, which takes place later this year, to provide us with a Departmental overview of the value of Special Severance payments made every year.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Morley and Outwood**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[27248\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people in Morley and Outwood constituency have (a) applied for and (b) been successful in their application for the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC publish statistics on the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-july-2021>.

HMRC do not publish figures for the number of individuals that applied for the SEISS. As at 6 June 2021, 3,900 individuals successfully claimed a SEISS grant in Morley and Outwood constituency.

■ **Service Industries: Payments**

Sarah Owen:

[\[28346\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to improve consumer protections for customers in the event that merchants use a third party payment handler.

John Glen:

Payments in the UK have seen rapid change over recent years. These changes offer exciting opportunities for UK businesses and consumers, with many making payments faster and cheaper. However, and as will always be the case with a rapidly changing technological landscape, they also present new challenges and risks.

Given the pace of change, the Government is leading a review of the payments landscape to ensure the right policy approach to these challenges and opportunities. The Government published a Payments Landscape Review Call for Evidence in 2020, setting out and seeking views on its aims and actions for UK payments. The Government's primary aims include ensuring that UK payments networks operate to the benefit of end users, including consumers. The Government will publish a response to its Call for Evidence shortly, setting out next steps and the long-term vision for UK payments.

■ Stamp Duty Land Tax

Jim Shannon:

[\[29799\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to compensate property sellers who agreed sales ahead of the March 2020 covid-19 lockdown and therefore failed to qualify for the stamp duty freeze.

Jesse Norman:

As with many tax policy announcements made at fiscal events, the change to SDLT was effective from the day of announcement. The £500,000 SDLT threshold applied to sales that have been completed or substantially performed between 8 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

The temporary SDLT relief was designed to stimulate immediate momentum in a property market where property transactions fell by as much as 50 per cent during the COVID-19 lockdown in March. This momentum in the property market has supported the jobs of people whose employment relies on custom from the property industry, such as retailers and tradespeople.

The relief will not be backdated for those who purchased a property before the relief was introduced. Any changes to extend the relief retrospectively would inevitably lead to similar borderline cases for purchases completed at an earlier point.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Bereavement Benefits

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[29863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 17 May 2021 to Question 704 on Bereavement Benefits, what his timescale is for bringing forward a draft Remedial Order to extend eligibility for Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Support Payment to cohabitees with children.

Guy Opperman:

It remains our intention to take forward a Remedial Order that will extend eligibility for Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Support Payment to cohabitees with children.

■ Children: Maintenance**Marion Fellows:**[\[29833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how the Child Maintenance Service (a) identifies and (b) responds to parents who perpetuate coercive control by (i) failing to pay, (ii) partly paying and (iii) irregularly paying the child maintenance they owe.

Guy Opperman:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) is committed to ensuring victims of domestic abuse get the support they need to use the service. All caseworkers have received specific training on domestic abuse so they can quickly identify and provide appropriate support to victims.

Customers using the Direct Pay service are advised to contact CMS if their arrangement breaks down so that they may move to the Collect & Pay service. Where a parent fails to pay on time or in full, the CMS will take action to re-establish compliance and collect any unpaid amounts that have accrued. Where compliance cannot be achieved, the CMS has a range of strong enforcement powers that are designed to get money flowing quickly, prevent the build-up of arrears and ensure children get the financial support they deserve.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Coronavirus**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[29793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to mitigating the risk of covid-19 transmission through ventilation in JobCentre Plus premises and other buildings owned and managed by her Department, with and without public access, what guidance she has issued or plans to issue to relevant building managers on that matter; how ventilation standards throughout her Department's estate will be monitored; what steps her Department will take to ensure that guidance is followed; and whether she plans to provide funding to improve standards of ventilation throughout her Department's estate.

Mims Davies:

DWP has continued to follow the BEIS guidance for offices and contact centres which refers also to the Health and Safety Executive's advice on air conditioning and ventilation. DWP is aware that BEIS guidance is due to be updated and DWP will impact review this once issued. DWP also review the guidance issued by the Representatives of European Heating and Ventilation Associations (REHVA) and Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE). On behalf of DWP, the Integrator and Supply Chain partners (Facilities Management engineers) took actions based on these recommendations when they were issued in 2020, to mitigate the risk of covid-19 transmission. DWP issued guidance to site based Senior Responsible Officers on these changes and has also maintained an informative Coronavirus Hub on its intranet.

DWP will continue to review guidance issued by the authoritative sources and will maintain systems via its planned preventive maintenance (PPM) schedules and

monitors action plans for any sites that require further improvements or mitigation. Each property has its own risk assessment and COVID controls checklists that include ventilation. Work orders can be raised by its employees through the recognised helpdesk system, where issues are identified outside of the PPM process. DWP is also currently completing a further review of ventilation systems as part of the cross Government COVID taskforce, utilising documentation issued by the Cabinet Office led taskforce.

DWP will impact any further guidance issued, as it has with existing guidance and will ensure appropriate actions are taken when necessary. DWP staff such as its site-based Senior Responsible Officers, managers, estates field teams and trade union colleagues will ensure that the guidance is followed at local level and formal auditing / inspections will take place.

DWP continues to maintain its building systems via planned preventive maintenance and improve standards across the estate as part of Life Cycle Works / Capital Investment works.

■ **Kickstart Scheme**

David Linden:

[\[28299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many participants in the Kickstart scheme have declared in their universal credit claim that they have an illness, disability or health condition.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [6284](#).

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Scotland**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[29916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the timescale is for replacing personal independence payments in Scotland with the Scottish Government's disability assistance benefit.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[29917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Scottish Government on the transfer of responsibility for personal independence payments.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[29918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations she has had from the Scottish Government on further devolution of social security benefits in Scotland.

Justin Tomlinson:

The timescale for the introduction of the Scottish Government's replacement disability benefits is a matter for the Scottish Government. The Department is in regular discussions at ministerial, policy and operational level with their Scottish Government

counterparts to ensure a safe and secure transition to the Scottish Government's replacement benefits when they are introduced. There have been no formal representations received on the further devolution of social security in Scotland. This Government's priority is ensuring the successful transfer of the social security benefits already devolved to Scotland under the Scotland Act 2016.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Canada

Charlotte Nichols: [\[29930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to remove the freeze and uprate on pensions of British-expats living in Canada.

Guy Opperman:

The Government has no plans to change this policy.

The policy on the up-rating of UK State Pensions paid overseas is longstanding and has been supported by successive post-war governments for over 70 years.

■ Universal Credit: Greater London

Catherine West: [\[29869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has made an assessment of the potential effect of the end of the £20 universal credit uplift on levels of child poverty in (a) Haringey and (b) London.

Will Quince:

No such assessment has been made.

This Government has long championed the principle of work as the best route out of poverty and towards financial independence. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty and in improving long-term outcomes for families and children.

Since 1 December 2020, the Covid Winter Grant and Covid Local Support Grant have provided Local Authorities in England with additional funding to support families with food and essential utility bills. On 21 June we extended this temporary scheme for a final time with an additional £160 million in funding through 30 September, taking total funding under the scheme to £429 million. This funding recognises that while restrictions are planned to end in July, families might need additional help to get back on their feet as the vaccine rollout continues and our economy recovers.

Getting people back to work and supporting them to progress is therefore at the heart of our approach to tackling poverty and building back better. Our Plan for Jobs is already delivering for people of all ages right across the country and includes investing over £7 billion on new schemes such as the £2 billion Kickstart Scheme, the Restart Scheme and our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme.

■ Universal Credit: Payments

Rachael Maskell: [\[27225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made a recent assessment of the adequacy of average universal credit payments in meeting the costs of living.

Will Quince:

The Secretary of State is legally required to conduct an annual review of benefits and pension rates to determine whether they have retained their value in relation to the general level of prices and earnings.

The up-rating process for working age benefits has traditionally relied on the September CPI figure and in April 2021 Universal Credit was increased by CPI of 0.5%.

Universal Credit can include support for housing costs, children and childcare costs, and support for disabled people and carers, depending on a claimant's individual circumstances.

■ Workplace Pensions: Islam

Sam Tarry: [\[29947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to encourage employers to offer halal-compliant pensions to employees.

Sam Tarry: [\[30428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has issued guidance to employers on the offer of halal-compliant pensions and employers' obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Guy Opperman:

The Pensions Regulator provides guidance for employers on matters they should consider when selecting a pension scheme to satisfy their automatic enrolment duties. As part of this guidance employers are invited to consider whether the scheme offers investment options that suit the needs of their staff, such as funds that comply with Sharia law. As with all official guidance, this is kept under review and updated where appropriate.

Since 2019, the Government has required trustees of occupational pension schemes to set out their policy publicly on how they take members' views into account. Many have provided feedback mechanisms; some have created new fund options as a result of member demand.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Uniforms

Emily Thornberry:

[\[23123\]](#)

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 6 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Jeremy Quin:

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

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

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

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Climate Change: Females****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[25770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the link between universal access to (a) sexual and reproductive health and rights, (b) family planning and (c) girls' education and climate change.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Wendy Morton:

The global climate crisis is a major threat to girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender equality. Enabling girls and women to thrive, by providing quality education, health services and protecting their rights, is part of the solution. SRHR, including voluntary family planning, and girls' education have wide-ranging benefits for individuals and societies, including supporting their adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change. Supporting people in their reproductive choices may also have a positive impact on the conservation of nature over the long term, given the role this plays in empowering women and lowering fertility rates. In this context, it is important to note that it is high income countries that have the greatest impact on the biosphere.

The UK is a proud defender of SRHR and in 2021 we are supporting the launch of FP2030, the new global partnership to support countries to accelerate progress on voluntary family planning. The UK is also championing the right of all girls to twelve years of quality education so that they have the knowledge and skills to thrive, including leading change to help tackle the climate crisis. The UK is committed to delivering an inclusive COP26 that advances gender equality within climate action and finance.

SRHR, including voluntary family planning, and girls' education have wide-ranging benefits for individuals and societies, including supporting their adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change. The UK is a proud defender of SRHR and champion of the right of all girls to twelve years of quality education. The UK is committed to delivering an inclusive COP26 that advances gender equality within climate action and finance. Our recently published COP Presidency paper 'Priorities for Public Climate Finance' sets out gender-responsive climate finance as a UK priority, which we are championing through our COP26 and G7 presidencies.

■ 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.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

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.

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■ 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.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 12 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

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.

The UK also recognises the serious and unequivocal threat that climate change poses to our planet, and that it can undermine the enjoyment of Human Rights. It is important that States comply with their human rights obligation when taking any action to respond to climate change. The UK, therefore, calls on States to address the human rights implications of climate change and ensure that any action taken to respond to climate change complies with their human rights obligations.

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.

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HOME OFFICE

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Kate Osamor:

[\[25110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish guidance on welfare benefit entitlement for EU nationals who have not made an application under the EU Settlement Scheme by the deadline of 30 June 2021.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Kevin Foster:

As with citizens of countries elsewhere in the world, EEA citizens who missed the 30 June deadline to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, and do not have any other form of immigration leave, no longer have their rights protected, including access to benefits.

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

The Home Office has already published guidance on late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme at EU Settlement Scheme: EU, other EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members | Horizon.

The Home Office is working closely with DWP and HMRC to ensure all those eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme apply, including contacting people to encourage them to do so. We will also expediate outstanding applications to the EUSS, including late applications where there are compelling or compassionate grounds for doing so.

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The Home Office has already published guidance on late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme at Immigration Rules Appendix EU - Immigration Rules - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Home Office is working closely with DWP and HMRC to ensure all those eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme apply, including contacting people to encourage them to do so. We will also expediate outstanding applications to the EUSS, including late applications where there are compelling or compassionate grounds for doing so.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ **HMICFRS's Inspection Report: An inspection of the National Crime Agency's Crime Reduction Function**

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS173\]](#)

The National Crime Agency (NCA) leads the fight against serious and organised crime. It has the power to task other law enforcement partners and a capability, with local to international reach, to disrupt the impact of serious and organised crime on the UK.

This is the eighth HMICFRS inspection of the NCA and examines the non-specialist NCA investigation teams based at the branch offices across the UK. The focus is specifically on the alignment of investigations to the threats, allocation of resources, and the NCA's capacity to tackle organised crime.

I have asked HMICFRS to publish the report. It will be published today and will be available online at www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk. I will arrange for a copy to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The inspection found that NCA's crime reduction function is working well in a number of areas of law enforcement. The Agency's management of the highest priority cases and the difficult management of scarce, specialist resources are effective, and cases being developed by the intelligence command are focused on SOC threats. The Agency's investigators show resilience and flexibility often in difficult conditions. However, the report also identifies a number of areas for improvement, including assessment of capacity in the Investigations Command to meet the demand being developed by the Intelligence Command, inadequate level and quality of equipment and access to investigative tools in some parts of the country, an over-reliance on legacy IT systems and the need for consistent investment to ensure the NCA is at the same standards as the police force.