



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 14 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:42 P.M., 14 July 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan:

[\[30318\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many items of written correspondence from hon. Members sent to Ministers of their Department have been (a) received and (b) replied to since 1 April 2020; and how many of those responses were responded to by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials of his Department.

Lucy Frazer:

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

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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Repayments

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[30404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he made an assessment of the potential merits of delaying bounce back loan repayments for 12 months to enable local businesses to recover from the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

We have always been clear that businesses are responsible for repaying any finance they take out. However, we recognise that some borrowers will benefit from additional flexibility with regards to their repayments. That is why we announced the Pay As You Grow measures last year.

Pay As You Grow is designed to provide Bounce Back Loan borrowers more time and flexibility over their repayments by giving them the option to:

- Extend the length of the loan from six years to ten.
- Make interest-only payments for six months, with the option to use this up to three times throughout the loan.
- Take up a six-month repayment holiday. This option is available once during the term of their loan.

Businesses are able to use these options either individually or in combination with each other. These are only available once a business has started making repayments

on the loan. In addition, they have the option to fully repay their loan early and will face no early repayment charges for doing so.

The British Business Bank has a range of guidance and resources available to all businesses, including content on managing cashflow and a list of independent advice services. Details can be found at: <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/finance-hub/dealing-with-debt/>.

■ Business Premises: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: **[28263]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he will take to ensure that businesses remain covid-19 secure after lockdown restrictions are eased.

Paul Scully:

On Monday 5 July, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out the details of the final stage of the roadmap and our approach for managing Covid as we learn to live with the virus. The 'Working Safely' guidance will be updated in advance of moving to step 4 which will happen on 19 July.

Edward Miliband: **[30321]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure adequate ventilation in businesses to reduce risk of covid-19 infection; what plans he has to issue guidance to businesses on ventilation of premises that (a) are and (b) are not open to the public; what standards or criteria his Department advises are used to plan and measure ventilation; of businesses; and whether his Department plans to make funds available to improve standards of ventilation in businesses.

Paul Scully:

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-19 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. Health and Safety Executive is the health and safety enforcement authority for Local Authority activities and can take proportionate enforcement action.

Venues are advised to pay due regard to the published guidance above, alongside any sector-specific guidance.

■ Business: Coronavirus**Feryal Clark:** [\[29156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to support supply chain businesses affected by the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Enfield North constituency, (b) Greater London and (c) England.

Paul Scully:

The Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support for businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, including grants, business interruption loans and the Coronavirus Job Support Scheme.

The Government continues to provide financial support via Local Authorities for businesses that are required to close, or which are severely affected by the restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Agency Workers**John McDonnell:** [\[28931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing outsourced workers in his Department into direct employment.

Amanda Solloway:

The Department periodically assesses its sourcing strategy, taking into consideration the HMG-published 'The Sourcing Playbook', which provides government guidance on service delivery including outsourcing, insourcing, mixed economy sourcing and contracting.

■ Employment: Environment Protection**Dr Luke Evans:** [\[28347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the skills training and reskilling of workers to play an active role in the UK's green economy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS and DfE jointly convened the independent Green Jobs Taskforce formed of business, unions and skills providers, to advise on how we can develop plans for new, long-term, good quality green jobs, and support industries and their employees as they transition to net zero. The Taskforce has assessed how the UK jobs market and the skills sector will need to adapt to support net zero, developing ideas and solutions for how the UK can deliver the green jobs of the future.

In addition to the anticipated report from the Taskforce (published today), we have the programmes in place now – including Apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps, Traineeships, T Levels, and the forthcoming National Skills Fund - to help us grow future talent pipelines and deliver the skilled individuals we will need. The Lifetime Skills Guarantee announced by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister will help

people train and retrain at any stage of their lives and so develop the skills most valued by employers.

The Government will consider the Taskforce's rich evidence base and comprehensive recommendations ahead of setting out, later in the year, our Net Zero Strategy and future skills policy.

■ Flexible Working

Feryal Clark: [\[29157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to introduce rights for flexible working.

Paul Scully:

Employees with 26 weeks continuous service already have a right to request a flexible working arrangement under current flexible working legislation. An employer can only reject a request for business reasons, such as the detrimental impact on ability to meet customer demand or an inability to re-organise work among existing staff.

The Government's manifesto included a commitment to encourage flexible working and to consult on whether flexible working can be made the default unless employers have good reasons not to. We will issue this consultation in due course.

■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[28264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the planned easing of covid-19 restrictions on face coverings and social distancing from 19 June 2021, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people will be able to continue to exercise individual judgment on protective measures they wish to take when at work.

Paul Scully:

On Monday 5 July, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out the details of the final stage of the roadmap and our approach for managing Covid as we learn to live with the virus. The 'Working Safely' guidance will be updated in advance of moving to step 4 which will happen on 19 July. It will set out a range of mitigations businesses should consider when carrying out their risk assessment.

■ Met Office: Boats

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of the Met Office was procured from.

Amanda Solloway:

The Met Office does not own any seagoing vessels. It works with partners to gather observations of meteorological and oceanographic conditions from third party voluntary observing ships, buoys or light vessels, both nationally and internationally, in collaboration with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

Mothers and Pregnancy: Redundancy

Marsha De Cordova: [\[29133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a ban on making pregnant women and new mothers redundant between (a) notification of pregnancy and (b) six months after return to work.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[29134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to bring forward proposals to extend pregnancy redundancy discrimination protections.

Paul Scully:

The Government consulted on increasing redundancy protection for pregnant women and new mothers in 2019. In our response to the consultation, we said that the existing framework which applies while a mother is on Maternity Leave (Regulation 10 of the Maternity and Parental Leave etc.) would be extended into the period from the start of her pregnancy and for six months on return to work. We will also extend redundancy protection into a period of return to work for those taking shared parental leave and adoption leave.

We will introduce these changes as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

Oil and Gas Authority: Boats

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of the Oil and Gas Authority was procured from.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Oil and Gas Authority does not have any boats in its service at this point in time.

Plastics: Waste Disposal

Selaine Saxby: [\[28371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what research the Government is funding on how UK businesses and their supply chains make, use and dispose of plastic, and the risks those actions pose to human health.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government put together a package of £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funds a variety of projects related to plastics including around understanding and improving supply chains and environmental and health impacts. For example, the Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging Challenge, with £60m of funding from UKRI through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund and matched by £149m from industry, is supporting academic-led research to address known problems and to support industry-led collaborative research and development of new technologies, establishing the UK as a leader in smart sustainable packaging and supporting a reduction in waste entering the environment. This builds on the success of the £20m Plastic Research and Innovation Fund, which established projects like the UK Circular Plastics Network which brings together the diverse users of plastic products and realise the best means for reducing plastic waste.

Remote Working: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[28265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the less than 100 per cent efficacy of covid-19 vaccines, what steps he will take to enable workers who are at greater risk to covid-19 to continue to work from home after stage four of lockdown roadmap restrictions are lifted.

Paul Scully:

On Monday 5 July, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out the details of the final stage of the roadmap and our approach for managing Covid as we learn to live with the virus. The 'Working Safely' guidance will be updated in advance of moving to step 4 which will happen on 19 July. We will update the 'Working Safely' guidance with the latest advice to help employers take reasonable steps to manage the risks and support their staff and customers. It is up to employers to use this guidance to update their working arrangements in line with Step 4 and communicate this to their staff.

Restart Grant Scheme: Animal Housing**Daisy Cooper:**[\[29139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Restart Grant Guidance for Local Authorities, updated 4 May 2021, for what reason animal boarding kennels are excluded from accessing support grants; and if he will reconsider that policy.

Paul Scully:

The Restart Grant scheme aimed to support businesses in specific sectors to reopen as coronavirus restrictions eased across the country. One-off grants were given to eligible businesses in the non-essential retail, hospitality, leisure, personal care and accommodation sectors.

The Restart Grant scheme closed on 30 June. There are no plans to retrospectively change the eligibility criteria for this scheme.

■ Retail Trade: Enfield North

Feryal Clark: [\[29155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to support high street businesses in the Enfield North constituency.

Paul Scully:

Our comprehensive economic response to business includes grants, the furlough scheme, tax deferrals, and business rates relief. Eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses within the constituency continue to benefit from 66% business rates relief until March 2022, subject to a cap, and hospitality, accommodation and attractions are benefitting from a 5% cut in VAT until the end of September, followed by a 12.5% rate until 31 March 2022.

The London Borough of Enfield has made £9,640,989 Additional Restrictions Grant payments, and £12,978,459 Restart Grant payments.

Projects within London Borough of Enfield boundaries received £3,434,663 of funding from the London Economic Action Partnership which receives funding from Government through the Local Growth Fund.

■ Space Technology

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[30363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress he has made on the publication of a timetable for the delivery of the national space strategy.

Amanda Solloway:

This Government is committed to making the UK a global science and technology superpower and a meaningful actor in space. This will be achieved through the UK's first comprehensive national space strategy that unleashes growth and innovation in the UK space sector. The strategy is progressing and will be published in due course.

■ Wind Power: Celtic Sea

Selaine Saxby: [\[28373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made ahead of COP26 of the potential merits of developing floating offshore wind generation in the Celtic Sea to help the UK Government deliver its target of 1GW of energy by 2030.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Celtic Sea is an area with significant potential for floating offshore wind.

Following engagement with the market, The Crown Estate is currently designing new seabed leasing for floating wind in the Celtic Sea, focusing on projects up to 300MW.

The number, size and locations of potential projects will not be known until the process is completed.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan:

[30319]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many items of written correspondence from hon. Members sent to Ministers of his Department have been (a) received and (b) replied to since 1 April 2020; and how many of those responses were responded to by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials of his Department.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ6450](#) on 27 May 2021, and [PQ21147](#) on 1 July 2021. Data on the timeliness of responses to Hon. and Rt Hon. members from Government Departments and Agencies will be released, and made available to Members, before Summer recess.

■ Elections: Proof of Identity

Catherine West:

[28276]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to pay the cost of providing voter cards to people with no other forms of photographic document for identification purposes.

Chloe Smith:

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

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

Cabinet Office will cover costs of Voter Cards for local authorities.

COP26

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Stephen Timms:

[902702]

What plans he has to identify potential sources of finance to tackle climate-related loss and damage ahead of COP26.

Alok Sharma:

I am taking a pragmatic approach to ensure that we increase overall finance moving to climate action, from both the public and private sector. Obviously, the 100 billion dollars a year promised by developed countries to support developing nations must be delivered and we also need to scale up finance for adaptation.

Christina Rees:

[\[902706\]](#)

What recent progress he has made on preparations for COP26.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Presidency alongside our Operational Partners continue to work tirelessly to support the delivery of an in-person COP26 in Glasgow.

As the Prime Minister announced at the G7, the UK Government has begun work to provide COVID-19 vaccines to accredited COP26 delegates who would be unable to get them otherwise.

I urge all accredited delegates who do not have access to a vaccine to register their interest through the UNFCCC registration portal as soon as possible and no later than 23 July.

DEFENCE

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Jim Shannon:

[\[28186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions he has had with his US counterpart on retaining military personnel in Afghanistan.

James Heappey:

Ministers and senior officials have frequent contact with their US counterparts on a range of issues. On 15 June 2021, the Defence Secretary met with his counterparts from the US, France and Germany. Leaders discussed a range of issues and agreed on the importance of an orderly withdrawal from Afghanistan. More recently, the Defence Secretary discussed Afghanistan with Secretary Austin on his visit to the US on 13 July 2021. We will continue engaging with our Allies and partners as Afghanistan transitions to a new phase, following the withdrawal of NATO troops.

■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what criteria he has set out to re-enter Afghanistan following the withdrawal of troops from that country.

James Heappey:

All UK troops assigned to NATO's Resolute Support Mission will drawdown along with allies and partners. Military commitments are a decision for the Government of the day. Any decisions on our future presence will be made in consultation with our NATO Allies. We continue to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, including its efforts to counter terrorism, through our diplomatic and development work and support to the security sector.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether hon. Members will have a vote on future military operations in Afghanistan in the event that the Government plans to re-enter that country.

James Heapey:

Overseas operational deployments of military personnel are notified to Parliament in line with the longstanding convention of successive Governments.

Military commitments are a decision for the Government of the day. Any decisions on our future presence will be made in consultation with our Allies.

The UK remains committed to supporting the development of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces on their path to becoming fully self-sufficient and in maintaining security for the people of Afghanistan.

■ Army Reserve

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[28105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to change the categorisation for Army reserves, including (a) untrained reserves, (b) trained strength reserves and (c) trade trained strength reserves.

James Heapey:

There is currently no plan to change the categorisation of Untrained, Trained and Trade Trained for the Army Reserves. The Army does not anticipate a need for any change of definition.

■ United Nations: Peacekeeping Operations

Navendu Mishra:

[\[28351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 16977 on United Nations: Peacekeeping Operations and the reference in that Answer to the deployment of Military Staff Officers to seven UN Peacekeeping missions, what costs were incurred by the UK Government for that deployment; and how many personnel made up that deployment.

James Heapey:

In answering the hon. Member's Question 16977, I wrongly referred to deployment of staff officers on seven UN missions. In fact, UK staff officers are deployed on six missions. I apologise for this error.

In the Financial Year (FY) 2019-20, the UK deployed personnel into 20 Military Staff Officer roles in UN Peacekeeping and Special Political Mission Headquarters across five missions at a cost of £224 000.

The sixth mission, Operation TOSCA in Cyprus, includes a deployment of 12 individual Military Staff Officers and a troop contingent of around 250 personnel,

which in total cost the UK £18.1 million, in FY 2019-20. We cannot accurately separate the staff costs for the wider deployment.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Cinemas and Theatres: Ventilation

Jo Stevens:

[30371]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to ensuring adequate ventilation in theatres and cinemas to help reduce the transmission of covid-19 by (a) issuing guidance to operators of theatres and cinemas services, (b) clarifying what standards operators should use to plan and measure ventilation, (c) outlining what enforcement activity he plans to take to ensure such guidance is followed and (d) making funds available to improve standards of ventilation.

Caroline Dinenge:

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.

Venues are advised to pay due regard to the published guidance above, alongside any sector-specific guidance available.

■ Internet: Advertising

Mr Kevan Jones:

[28981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has plans to assess the use of third party cookies by online advertisers.

Caroline Dinenge:

Following the Government's call for evidence in 2020 we will be launching a public consultation by the end of this year as the next steps of our Online Advertising Programme.

Whilst online advertising presents benefits, it also presents new challenges for consumers, businesses and society as a whole. It raises questions over the

collection, analysis and use of consumer data, as well as the appropriateness and accuracy of targeting. The scale and speed of advertising has also highlighted possible challenges around content standards and harmful advertisements.

We are currently working to shape the consultation and what it will consider. Ultimately we want to ensure standards about the placement and content of advertising can be effectively applied and enforced online so that consumers have limited exposure to harmful or misleading advertising.

■ Internet: Safety

Catherine McKinnell:

[\[30356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish (a) the social media companies, (b) other online platforms and (c) experts on online harms that his Department consulted with in the process of formulating the guidance entitled Online Safety Guidance if you own or manage an online platform, published on 29 June 2021.

Caroline Dinéage:

The voluntary, non-statutory guidance entitled 'Online Safety Guidance if you own or manage an online platform' published by the Government is targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and at start-up organisations, specifically those that are likely to be in scope of future Online Safety legislation. The guidance was developed in consultation with relevant SMEs and start-ups to understand their needs and to frame the guidance in the most user-friendly and effective way. This included multiple rounds of user research and feedback on how information should be presented.

We are unable to publicly name individual companies that took part in user testing, due to the approach agreed with these organisations when they took part in the research. DCMS also worked with relevant industry bodies who represent hundreds of SME and start-up organisations to draw up the content for the guidance. This includes Tech Nation, the Coalition for a Digital Economy (Coade), the Federation of Small Businesses, the Independent Game Developers' Association (Tiga) and the Association for UK Interactive Entertainment (UKIE), as well as subject matter experts in government and civil society.

■ Music: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[28982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to remove all covid-19 restrictions for indoor music venues after 19 July 2021.

Caroline Dinéage:

As announced by the Prime Minister, the Government will proceed cautiously to Step 4 of the Roadmap on 19 July. At Step 4, most of the legal restrictions imposed throughout the pandemic will be removed and all remaining businesses will be able to reopen.

The Government will provide guidance for Step 4 of the Roadmap to help businesses and the public to make informed decisions about how to manage risks from COVID-19.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption: Young People

Bill Esterson:

[\[30348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the report entitled Adoption UK's Adoption Barometer 2021, published in June 2021, on the 28 per cent of adopted young people aged between 16-25-years who were not in education, employment or training at the end of 2020.

Bill Esterson:

[\[30350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to evaluate the potential (a) effects and (b) consequences of social media on contact between adopted children and their birth families.

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 Adoption UK's barometer report carefully as part of our planning for funding for future years.

Contact will continue to be a challenge for adopted children, their birth parents, and their adoptive parents, particularly when this contact comes through social media. It is important that social workers help children, birth parents, and adoptive parents to understand the implications of disclosing personal information on social networking sites, and the harm unauthorised or unmediated contact can have.

We continue to work with Regional Adoption Agencies and Voluntary Adoption Agencies to ensure that services including contact support are delivered to a high-quality standard.

■ Children and Young People: Education

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for there having been recent increases in the number of children and young people being outside of the mainstream education system.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[25052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of children outside of the mainstream education system being subjected to sexual exploitation.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not collect data on the number of children and young people who are educated other than at a school. Local authorities have reported an increase in the number of children educated other than at a school for reasons that include COVID-19 related health concerns.

The Department supports the right of parents to educate their children at home. Most parents do this with the intention of providing their child with the best education, and sometimes during challenging circumstances.

For some parents, their child's education is not the primary reason behind their decision to home educate. This can mean that some children are not provided with a suitable education.

In some cases, children outside of mainstream education can mean they are children missing education. Local authorities have a duty to make arrangements to establish, as far as possible, the identities of children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and to take action where they are not receiving a suitable education.

The Department does not collect data on the number of children outside of mainstream education being subjected to sexual exploitation. Local authorities have a duty to safeguard all children in their area, regardless of education setting, as set out in the Children Act 1989.

■ Children: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[28254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the trends in the number of parents who will need to be at home to look after nursery and school children who are isolating as a result of covid-19 over (a) the next (i) one and (ii) three months and (b) the course of the rest of 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department regularly reviews data, analysis and advice from a number of different sources, including the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, Public Health England (PHE), the Office for National Statistics and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

The Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M) has produced modelling throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. SPI-M's latest published modelling contributed to previous decisions made around Step 4 of the roadmap:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spi-m-o-summary-of-further-modelling-of-easing-restrictions-roadmap-step-4-9-june-2021>.

From 16 August, pupils and students under the age of 18 years old will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Instead, pupils and students will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed that they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to

take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. The Department encourages all individuals to take a PCR test if they are advised to do so.

Attendance in nurseries has remained largely stable over the summer term 2021, despite the rising levels of community case rates. PHE's national flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports show that 0 to 4 year olds have consistently had among the lowest case rates of all age groups.

■ Education: Coronavirus

Anna McMorrin:

[\[30410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish a response to the Children Not In School consultation which closed on 24 June 2019.

Nick Gibb:

The Department remains committed to a registration system for children not in school. We will set out further details on this in the Government response to the consultation, which we intend to publish in the coming months.

■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[28252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what covid-19 testing and isolating system will be in operation in schools and colleges from September 2021.

Nick Gibb:

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

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

From Step 4 of the roadmap, schools and colleges will no longer be expected to undertake contact tracing. Close contacts will be identified via NHS Test and Trace. As with positive cases in any other setting, NHS Test and Trace will work with the positive case or, depending on the age of the contact, their family, to identify close contacts. From 16 August, unless they test positive, children under the age of 18 years old and those who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact. Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed that they have been in close contact with a positive case and advised to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. Self-isolation will continue for those who have tested positive for COVID-19.

Rachael Maskell:

[28253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will ensure that schools, colleges and universities work with local public health teams to ensure that the safest protocols are in place as the covid-19 lockdown restrictions are further eased.

Nick Gibb:

When moving to Step 4, 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 the system of controls on staff and parents and the impact that those measures have on young people's education.

Local health protection teams continue to play a role in supporting nurseries and schools as restrictions are eased. Schools and nurseries will already have contingency plans setting out what they will do if they have a COVID-19 outbreak, or if they were advised to use any of the measures described in the contingency framework, which were also known as outbreak management plans.

As part of their outbreak management responsibilities, local health protection teams, working with local authorities and directors of public health, may advise individual schools and nurseries, or a cluster of closely linked schools and nurseries, to temporarily re-introduce some control measures. Given the detrimental impact that restrictions on education can have on children and young people, any measures in schools and nurseries should only ever be considered as a last resort, kept to the minimum number of settings or groups possible and for the shortest amount of time possible.

Where health protection teams, local authorities or directors of public health judge that wider containment action is needed and wish to limit attendance across an area, they should work with their regional partnership team to escalate a proposal to the central Local Action Committee command structure.

The Education Contingency Framework outlines the principles of managing local outbreaks of COVID-19, including responding to variants of concern, in nurseries and schools. The framework can be found here:

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

All nurseries and schools should continue to have outbreak management plans outlining how they would operate if any measures described in the contingency framework were recommended for their setting or area.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise guidance for nurseries, schools and universities from Step 4. The Department will continue to keep these measures under review in partnership with health experts and informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice.

Rachael Maskell:

[28255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to introduce a covid-19 test and release system to support school and college students and staff who are self-isolating.

Nick Gibb:

From Monday 16 August, children under 18 years old, and those who are double vaccinated, will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact.

From Step 4, schools and nurseries will not routinely be required to undertake contact tracing for children and young people. The Department expects schools to continue to fulfil their contact tracing responsibilities up to Step 4. From that point onwards, close contacts will be identified directly by NHS Test and Trace. Schools may be contacted in exceptional cases to help with identifying close contacts, as currently happens in managing other infectious diseases. Pupils and students who test positive will be subject to the normal Test and Trace process, which will identify close contacts.

Self-isolation will continue for those who have tested positive for COVID-19.

■ Educational Institutions: Sexual Harassment

Daisy Cooper:

[28329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to amend the safeguarding framework in response to the Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges published by Ofsted on 10 June 2021.

Daisy Cooper:

[28330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his timeframe is for making changes to the safeguarding framework in response to the Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges published by Ofsted on 10 June 2021.

Vicky Ford:

Amended statutory guidance for schools in respect of safeguarding titled 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) was published on 6 July 2021, alongside revised departmental advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999348/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2021.pdf.

The guidance has been strengthened and updated following the consultation on proposed changes to KCSIE and the departmental advice, as well as findings from the Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges. We will continue to consider what further changes are needed for KCSIE 2022, following a further consultation later this year.

The statutory guidance for inter-agency working titled 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' received a technical update in December 2020. We are currently

assessing what changes may be needed following the publication of the Ofsted review. Working Together guidance will also need to be consulted upon and we will provide a date for this in due course.

■ **Extracurricular Activities: Coronavirus**

Alex Sobel: **[25130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to prioritise removing all limits to group sizes for youth residential activities under Step 4 of the covid-19 roadmap on 19 July 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department recognises the significant benefits that youth residential and summer camps can have for children's mental health and wellbeing, as well as their educational and social development.

That is why the Government has prioritised the recommencement of residential visits, including youth residential and summer camps, for children at Step 3 of the roadmap. It has also increased limits on group sizes to 30 from 21 June 2021.

As the Government moves to Step 4 of the roadmap, and the majority of COVID-19 restrictions across all parts of society are relaxed, key restrictions on all education and childcare settings will come to an end. This includes current advice on consistent groups (bubbles) and limits on group sizes for all residential visits. Our priority is to ensure all education and childcare settings are able to offer high quality, face to face provision for children and young people.

At Step 4 of the roadmap, youth residential providers will be able to undertake residential visits in groups of any number, and without the need to keep children in consistent groups: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/covid-19-response-summer-2021>.

The Department has published new guidance for providers, setting out the actions they can take to reduce the risk of transmission from Step 4: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999758/OOSS_Provider_Guidance_PDF_Step_4.pdf.

■ **Higher Education: Ventilation**

Kate Green: **[30353]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has issued or plans to issue to vice-chancellors on ensuring adequate ventilation in universities and other higher education institutions to reduce risks of covid-19 infection; with reference to what standards vice-chancellors should plan and measure the effectiveness of that ventilation; what enforcement activity he plans to undertake to ensure guidance is followed and risk reduced; and whether he plans to make funds available to improve standards of ventilation in universities.

Michelle Donelan:

The department has published guidance for higher education (HE) providers for Step 4 of the government's COVID-19 roadmap, available at:

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

From Step 4 of the roadmap, the guidance advises that it is important to ensure settings are well ventilated when in use and a comfortable teaching environment is maintained.

HE providers should assess the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace and identify control measures to manage that risk. They should identify any poorly ventilated spaces as part of their risk assessment and take steps to improve fresh air flow in these areas, particularly when holding events where large numbers of visitors are on site.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on air conditioning and ventilation during the COVID-19 outbreak and the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers COVID-19 advice provides more information. This can be found at: http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/schools/files/folders/folders/documents/healthandsafety/proceduresaz/CIBSE_Covid_19_Ventilation_guidance.pdf. The HSE may take action to improve control of workplace risks if needed, for example through the issue of enforcement notices to help secure improvements.

Improving ventilation can be achieved by a variety of measures and there is no separate funding source for ventilation in HE.

■ National Tutoring Programme: Finance**Daisy Cooper:****[28331]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much and what proportion of the funding for subsidised tuition under the National Tutoring Programme has been taken up by schools.

Nick Gibb:

In summer 2020, the Department announced a £1 billion catch-up package to help tackle the effect of lost teaching time as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, including a £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) for disadvantaged pupils.

The NTP for 5 to 16 year olds has two pillars:

- Schools can access high quality, subsidised tuition support from approved Tuition Partners.
- Schools in the most disadvantaged areas have been supported to employ in-house Academic Mentors to provide tuition to their pupils.

Schools have not directly received funding to access the NTP. Through approved Tuition Partners, they will have access to high quality tuition, with the cost to schools subsidised by 75%. The core salary for Academic Mentors employed through the NTP will also be covered by the Department (£19,000 pro-rata). Schools are free to

use additional catch-up funding to pay the remaining cost of both NTP Partners and Academic Mentors should they wish to do so.

Since the launch of the programme in November 2020, over 240,000 pupils have been enrolled to receive tutoring across over 5,000 schools. Of those enrolled, over 195,000 have already commenced tutoring.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus

Andrew Rosindell:

[28117]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of removing covid-19 social distancing restrictions for primary school aged children in schools.

Nick Gibb:

In line with Step 4 of the roadmap for England, the majority of COVID-19 restrictions will be relaxed, including the measures recommended for schools.

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

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise this guidance for schools. Our aim is to balance the risks associated with COVID-19, whilst moving to a 'steady state' that minimises both the burden of implementing a system of controls on staff and parents, and the effect that those measures have on young people's education.

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

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[25891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) mental health and (b) wellbeing of school (i) leaders and (ii) teaching and support staff as covid-19 infection rates are rising.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to supporting the wellbeing and mental health of staff in schools and colleges. We regularly commission research to assess the wellbeing of head teachers, teachers and school staff, in addition to monitoring relevant emerging research in the field. The latest published wave of the School Snapshot Survey can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/903642/2. Workforce_6104.01_Winter_2019_.pdf.

The Department took quick action when the COVID-19 outbreak started to help support the mental health of head teachers, funding a pilot led by the charity

Education Support. This is now providing peer-support and one-to-one supervision from experts to head teachers, until the end of August 2021.

In June 2021, the Department launched an invitation to tender for a contractor to deliver a longer term programme of professional supervision. This is to be delivered to a minimum of 2,000 head teachers experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges from this autumn, prioritising those who need support the most.

In addition, on 10 May, the Department published the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>. The charter sets out the actions that the Government and other organisations, including Ofsted, will take to improve wellbeing of all staff in schools and colleges.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, the Department announced more than £17 million of mental health funding to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges. The Government has also convened a Mental Health in Education Action Group, led by Ministers, to consider how we can support the wellbeing of pupils and staff as part of education recovery.

The Department continues to review evidence and consult with stakeholders in shaping future plans for staff mental health and wellbeing support.

■ Schools: Freedom of Expression

Andrew Rosindell:

[28119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to promote free speech in schools.

Nick Gibb:

Schools play an important role in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. This involves supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and teaching them about the importance of respect for other people and for different views.

Schools are already required to actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. Freedom of speech is relevant to, and could be considered in, the context of all these values.

Head teachers and other staff are best placed to make their own decisions about what they teach in this respect and how they teach it, subject to their obligations to ensure political balance.

The Department is developing guidance for schools on political impartiality to help them to understand their responsibilities in this area. This will include the importance of exposing pupils to a diverse range of views during their time at school.

■ Schools: Ventilation**Kate Green:** [\[30351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has issued or plans to issue to headteachers on ensuring adequate ventilation in schools to reduce risks of covid-19 infection; to what standards schools should plan and measure that ventilation; what enforcement activity he plans to undertake that guidance is followed and risk reduced; and whether he plans to make funds available to improve standards of ventilation in schools.

Kate Green: [\[30352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance he has issued or plans to issue to principals of further education colleges on ensuring adequate ventilation in colleges to reduce risks of covid-19 infection; with reference to what standards should further education colleges plan and measure that ventilation; what enforcement activity he plans to undertake to ensure that guidance is followed and risk reduced; and whether he plans to make funds available to improve standards of ventilation those colleges.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's guidance states that it is important that schools or colleges, when open, ensure that they are well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained. This can be achieved by 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 guidance for schools can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak> and the guidance for further education colleges can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision>.

The Department continues to review the ventilation requirements set out in the guidance, including considering whether monitoring carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels would be appropriate, and we are working with Public Health England and ventilation experts on a pilot project to measure CO₂ levels in typical classrooms.

The Department continues to keep the protective measures under review based on the latest scientific evidence and advice as this continues to evolve.

■ South Tyneside Council: Holiday Activities and Food Programme**Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:** [\[30364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what funding his Department has allocated to South Tyneside Council to provide (a) the holiday activities and food programme and (b) for food and fuel poverty emergency assistance in the last 12 months.

Vicky Ford:

The Department for Education-funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children,

has been expanded to every local authority across England this year – backed by up to £220 million. It builds on previous programmes, including last summer’s programme, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

South Tyneside Council has been allocated a maximum of £831,630 to deliver HAF programmes over Easter, summer and Christmas 2021.

In summer 2020, South Tyneside received £220,000 from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ £63 million grant.

Since 1 December 2020, the Department for Work and Pensions has operated the COVID Winter Grant Scheme, which has subsequently been renamed as the COVID Local Support Grant. Funding has been provided to local authorities in England to support families with food and essential utility bills. On 21 June, the government extended this temporary scheme for a final time, with an additional £160 million in funding through to 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. South Tyneside Council has received £1,506,852.06 since 1 December through this scheme.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Reviews**

Bill Esterson:

[30349]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Department will publish its SEND review, commissioned in 2019.

Vicky Ford:

The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Review has been making good progress, but the COVID-19 outbreak has frustrated the pace of this important review and materially altered the context for reform.

The SEND Review continues to work with system experts to make sure we are designing a system fit for the future. We are drawing on the best evidence available to review the system, before publishing proposals for public consultation as soon as possible.

■ **Teachers: Labour Turnover**

Peter Kyle:

[25896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the retention rate was after one year post-qualification for newly qualified teachers in each of the last ten calendar years by (a) region and (b) local authority.

Nick Gibb:

The national retention rate of teachers who qualified in the last 10 years is published in the ‘School Workforce in England’ statistical publication at the following link:

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>.

Regional and local authority retention rates are not currently published. Figures for teachers who qualified in 2016 were published in the Teacher Analysis Compendium, which is available on page 67 at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748164/Teachers_Analysis_Compendium_4_.pdf. Estimates have not been compiled for other time periods as this would incur disproportionate cost.

Attachments:

1. 25896_table [[25896 Table showing Regional Retention Rates.xls](#)]

■ **Universities: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[28256]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he plans to provide to universities to support students who are self-isolating, from September 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

From the 16 August and as part of Step 4 of the government's COVID-19 roadmap, double vaccinated people and people under 18 years old will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case.

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

Universities UK have also produced a checklist for providers to support students who are required to self-isolate as well as bespoke guidance for higher education providers on how to prepare for and care for international students or students who are required to self-isolate on arrival in the UK.

The Office for Students (OfS) has published a statement on support for students in self-isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak. Some students may be eligible for a one-off payment of £500 through the NHS Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if they are required to self-isolate. We will continue to review the situation moving forward.

We also recognise that many students are facing additional mental health challenges due to the disruption and uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Protecting student wellbeing is vital during these difficult times, and it is important that students can still access the mental health and wellbeing support they need.

We have asked the OfS to allocate £15 million towards student mental health in 2021/22 (from September) through proposed reforms to Strategic Priorities grant funding, to help address the challenges to student mental health posed by the transition to university, given the increasing demand for mental health services. This will target those students in greatest need of such services, including vulnerable groups and hard to reach students.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Aquariums and Zoos: Animal Welfare****Sarah Champion:**[\[28202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has for consultation with zoos and aquariums in response to the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill and the development of the Secretary of State's standards for modern zoo practice.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra and the UK's Zoos Expert Committee (ZEC) are in the process of revising the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoos Practice (SSSMZP). We aim to run a targeted consultation amongst key stakeholders on a draft of the revised SSSMZP by the end of this year (2021). All licensed zoos and aquariums in Great Britain will be invited to take part in the consultation.

■ Bovine Tuberculosis: Disease Control**Rachael Maskell:**[\[26147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made on vaccinating cattle against bovine TB.

Victoria Prentis:

In a world first, field trials for a cattle vaccine and new skin test for bovine tuberculosis (bTB) have now begun in England.

If the field trials are successful, farmers and vets will move a step closer to being able to vaccinate their animals against the disease, helping to save thousands of cattle every year that would have otherwise have been culled to prevent the spread of bTB to other herds. The skin test which will accompany the vaccine will also represent a major breakthrough by enabling vets to identify cattle that have been vaccinated and those that are infected with the disease – to date this has not been possible.

bTB is the most difficult and intractable animal health challenge that we face today and costs taxpayers around £100 million every year. Over 36,000 cattle in England and Wales have had to be slaughtered in the last year to tackle the disease and the UK is leading the way in the development of a cattle vaccine with the aim of rolling it out by 2025.

In December 2020, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) – which has over 500 staff involved in tackling the disease – awarded a contract to Eville & Jones to run clinical field trials in cattle as a result of a culmination of over 20 years of ground-breaking research at the agency. Details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/clinical-research-organisation-identified-to-lead-bovine-tb-cattle-vaccination-field-trials>.

A bTB-free farm in Hertfordshire has commenced the first phase of these trials to determine the safety and accuracy of the DIVA skin test, with further herds across England and Wales to join them over the coming months.

In the event that these first trials are successful, the study will then be expanded to more farms in England and Wales as part of its second phase, to test both the Cattle Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine and a diagnostic test to detect infected animals amongst vaccinated animals (DIVA) skin test together.

This will allow us to generate sufficient evidence to support a Market Authorisation application to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate to use both products in the UK.

More information about the bTB cattle vaccination programme can be found at:

- APHA Science Blog: <https://aphascience.blog.gov.uk/2020/09/02/tb-vaccine-field-trials/>
- TB Hub: <https://tbhub.co.uk/resources/frequently-asked-questions/development-of-a-deployable-tuberculosis-vaccine-for-cattle/>

■ Cereals

Martyn Day:

[27242]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to (a) regulate the use of the term wholegrain food in food labelling and (b) incorporate whole grains or fibre into front of pack labelling.

Victoria Prentis:

The rules on the provision of food information to consumers, taken together with other requirements in food production, ensure that food is produced safely and labelled effectively in order for consumers to make informed choices on the food they buy and consume. Food information may not be misleading to consumers and where terms such as “wholegrain” are used, this must be justified by the choice of ingredients used and indicated on the ingredients list.

There may be an opportunity for use of the term “wholegrain” to be considered as part of a planned review of the Bread and Flour Regulations 1998. As part of the review, we will hold a public consultation and since many of the issues raised by stakeholders to date are technically complex we expect this review will need sufficient time to consider responses and agree the best way forward.

Between 30 July and 21 October 2020, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) held a four-nation consultation on front of pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL). As part of this consultation, DHSC invited views and evidence on whether updated dietary advice on fibre should be reflected on FOPNL.

The Government will publish a consultation response as soon as possible. If any changes are required, we will consult again on policy options.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Directors

Cat Smith:

[24236]

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

Victoria Prentis:

This information is published in the department's annual report and accounts, available on gov.uk at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/defras-annual-report-and-accounts-2019-to-2020

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

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

A summary of the work of non-executive directors across Government can be found in the Government Lead Non-Executive's annual report, available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-lead-non-executives-annual-report-2019-to-2020. The Non-Executive Directors' Report in the annual report and accounts provides more information on the work of Defra's non-executive directors (link above).

■ Environmental Land Management Scheme

Dr Matthew Offord:

[28158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the number of farmers who will leave the industry under the exit scheme of the Land Management System.

Victoria Prentis:

Our proposed lump sum exit scheme will provide support for farmers in England who wish to exit the industry.

In 2018, we undertook a survey of around 1,000 farmers as part of our planning for the Agriculture Act. Six per cent of those surveyed said they wanted to leave farming but felt they were not able to do so at that time. Financial reasons were given as the main barrier.

There will be a range of factors which will affect individual farmers' decisions about whether they wish to take the lump sum and exit farming. The consultation will be used to gather further evidence about likely uptake.

Our consultation can be found here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/agricultural-policy/lump-sum-and-delinked-payments-england/>. This consultation is open until 11 August 2021.

■ Fishing Catches: North Sea

Peter Aldous: **[28177]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 June 2021 to Question 12119, what the Total Allowable Catches are for North Sea sole and plaice for 2021; and what the (a) UK's opening quota is for those species under the 10m fleet pool quota allocation and (b) EU's opening quota is for 2021.

Peter Aldous: **[28178]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the estimated value is of the increase in UK quota agreed with the EU for (a) North Sea sole and (b) North Sea plaice for 2021 compared to 2020.

Victoria Prentis:

Information relating to this question is already published:

- UK opening quotas (pre-landing obligation exemptions and pre-allocations adjustments) are set out in the Secretary of State's determination of fishing opportunities which is available here [[Fishing opportunities for British fishing boats in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-opportunities-for-british-fishing-boats-in-2021)].
- UK quota allocations have been set out by the Marine Management Organisation here [[Fishing quota allocations for 2021 for England and the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-quota-allocations-for-2021-for-england-and-the-uk)].
- Total TACs are set out in the written record of fisheries consultations between the UK and EU for 2021 here [[Fisheries: consultations between the UK and the EU in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fisheries-consultations-between-the-uk-and-the-eu-in-2021)] and the agreed record of fisheries consultations between the EU, Norway and the United Kingdom for 2021 here [[Fisheries: cod, haddock, saithe, whiting, plaice, herring and sprat management in the North Sea - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fisheries-cod-haddock-saithe-whiting-plaice-herring-and-sprat-management-in-the-north-sea)].

The data requested is set out in the below table.

NORTH SEA SOLE

2021 Total allowable catch (a)	21,361 tonnes
2021 UK opening quota (a)	2,446 tonnes
2021 UK under-10m fleet pool allocation (a)	797 tonnes
2021 EU opening quota (b)	18,817 tonnes

NORTH SEA SOLE

2021 estimated value of the increase in the UK's opening quota compared to 2020 (based on 2019 UK average landings prices) £13.0m

North Sea plaice

2021 Total allowable catch (a) 143,419 tonnes

2021 UK opening quota (a) 37,113 tonnes

2021 UK under-10m fleet pool allocation (a) 88 tonnes

2021 EU opening quota (a) 51,985 tonnes

2021 estimated value of the increase in the UK's opening quota compared to 2020 (based on 2019 UK average landings prices) £18.8m

(a) post-landing obligation exemption deductions, and pre-allocations adjustments (e.g. quota banked from previous year)

(b) taken from the UK-EU negotiation Written Record as the final EU TAC and Quota Regulation is not yet published, so this is pre-landing obligation exemption deductions and allocations adjustments (e.g. quota banked from previous year)

■ Food: Labelling

Julian Sturdy: [\[28181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of food labelling requirements in eateries in relation to the protection of people with allergies; and what plans his Department has to improve those requirements.

Julian Sturdy: [\[28182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations the Government has received from (a) members of the public and (b) civil society groups on the campaign for Owen's law; and whether the Government plans to take steps to implement to enact those proposals.

Victoria Prentis:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk on 2 June, PQ UIN [6370](#).

■ Ragwort: Weed Control**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[28156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether it is his Department's policy that all landowners, including those in the public sector, should remove all growths of ragwort.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra's injurious weeds policy aims to balance a variety of different interests. Injurious weeds, which include common ragwort, form part of our native plant communities, supporting a wide variety of invertebrates and are a major nectar source for many insects.

The 'Code of Practice on How to Prevent the Spread of Ragwort' sets out guidance for all landowners, including those in the public sector, on when and how common ragwort should be removed.

The Code does not seek to eradicate common ragwort, but only seeks to control its spread where it poses a high risk of spreading to agricultural land, for example land used for grazing.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Minority Groups****Seema Malhotra:**[\[28200\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the safety of minority Sikh, Hindu and Hazara Muslim communities in Afghanistan.

Nigel Adams:

UK Ministers and officials frequently raise the protection of religious minorities with Afghan counterparts. Most recently, on 2 June the Minister of State for South Asia, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, spoke to Afghan Foreign Minister Hanif Atmar to offer condolences for the attack on 8 May on a school in a predominantly Hazara area of Kabul. British Embassy officials in Kabul regularly meet with representatives from religious minority groups to hear their concerns. We continue to make public condemnations about targeted killings, and violence against minorities and human rights advocates, calling for transparent investigations. Only a negotiated and inclusive settlement will bring sustainable peace to Afghanistan. We continue to make clear to all sides that any political settlement must protect the progress made in the country, including protection for women and minority groups.

■ Climate Change: Finance

Emma Hardy:

[\[26156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to identify innovative sources of finance for funding climate-related loss and damage.

James Duddridge:

The UK seeks to enable action to avert, minimise and address loss and damage, particularly in countries most vulnerable to impacts of climate change. As incoming COP 26 Presidency the UK is pressing donors to meet and surpass their commitment to provide \$100 billion in climate finance to developing countries. The UK has increased its International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion over five years. This includes finance for adaptation relevant to averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage.

The UK supports innovative approaches in a number of areas, including disaster risk reduction and support for regional insurance schemes. Most recently, at the G7 Summit, the UK announced £120 million of support with Germany committing €125 million of funding to regional disaster protection schemes across Africa, South East Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific, to protect the lives and livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people against climate risks. This new funding contributes to the Risk Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) target of making 1 billion people safer from disasters by 2025.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[29874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer to Question 27285 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, whether any doses have been shared by the Government to date.

Wendy Morton:

I refer the Hon. Member to my previous answer on 5 July. We have already begun discussions to ensure the first 5 million doses are shared by the end of September and we will make an announcement shortly.

■ Endangered Species: Conservation

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[27249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure the protection of endangered species globally.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government is playing a leading role in developing an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be adopted at COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) later this year. This includes supporting global targets to

ensure more ocean and land is protected, ecosystems are restored, species extinction rates are slowed and population sizes are recovering. At the G7 Summit, Leaders agreed the Nature Compact, setting out commitments to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. Over the next five years, at least £3 billion of the UK's International Climate Finance will be invested in climate change solutions that protect, restore and sustainably manage nature. In September 2020, the Prime Minister announced a £220 million International Biodiversity Fund, including a £100 million Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, to address biodiversity loss. The UK Government is also introducing world-leading due diligence legislation through the Environment Bill to tackle illegal deforestation in UK supply chains.

We are driving international efforts to protect endangered animals from poaching and the illegal wildlife trade (IWT), and are investing £36 million between 2014 and 2021 on work to directly counter IWT in animals and plants. We are also contributing £250 million to the Global Environment Facility between 2018-2022, which includes the world's biggest fund for tackling IWT, the Global Wildlife Programme (GWP), supporting IWT projects across 32 countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

■ **Libya: Travel Restrictions**

Damien Moore:

[R] [\[28310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential (a) merits and (b) risks of changing his Department's advice against all travel to Libya.

James Cleverly:

All FCDO travel advice pages remain under constant review to ensure they reflect the latest threat assessment to British nationals and include up-to-date information and advice.

■ **Nepal: Coronavirus**

Sarah Champion:

[\[28201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UK's support to Nepal's covid-19 vaccination programme; and what discussions he has had with international counterparts on further support from the international community to that programme.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is a leading donor to COVAX, the multilateral mechanism set up to support international co-operation on vaccines, having committed £548 million to the scheme. COVAX has delivered 348,000 doses to Nepal so far with further tranches on the way. As G7 chair this year the UK has also secured a commitment to donate 1 billion vaccine doses to the developing world by June 2022, including 100 million donated by the UK - the first 5 million in the coming weeks. The majority of these doses will be donated to COVAX. COVAX remains best-placed to allocate vaccines to where they will be most effective. As shareholders and contributors to both the World Bank and

the Asian Development Bank, the UK has also pushed hard for multilateral organisations to provide finance to countries for vaccine procurement, including Nepal. The World Bank has now made at least \$75 million available to the Government of Nepal for that purpose; a further \$165 million will soon be proposed to the board of the Asian Development Bank, which the UK will also support.

■ Overseas Aid: Diplomatic Service

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[30409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether ambassadors and UK diplomatic missions overseas have been provided with Official Development Assessment budgets for financial year 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

As part of our business planning process, all Foreign, Commonwealth and Development resources have been allocated to ensure we deliver the priorities as set out in the Integrated Review including the seven strategic priorities for Official Development Assistance that I have set out.

■ Spain: Democracy

Andrew Rosindell: [\[28115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with their counterparts in the Catalanian government on the potential effect on democracy in Spain of the claim by the Spanish Court of Auditors for €5.4 million from Catalan government officials for the work that they have done abroad.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[28116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in his Department have had discussions with their counterparts in the Spanish government on the potential effect on democracy in Spain of the claim by the Spanish Court of Auditors for €5.4 million from Catalan government officials for the work that they have done abroad.

Wendy Morton:

UK Government ministers and officials discuss a range of issues with their Spanish counterparts. Our Consulate General in Barcelona maintains contact with regional authorities there on matters such as trade, investment and tourism. UK Government officials regularly meet with representatives of the Catalan government to discuss matters of mutual interest that are within their competence as an autonomous community of Spain. We have been clear on the issue of Catalonia. The UK continues to support the upholding of the Spanish Constitution and the rule of law. This issue is a matter for Spain and the Spanish courts.

■ Turkey: Ethnic Groups**Catherine West:** [\[28281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of recent levels of discrimination against the Alevi community in Turkey; and whether he has raised that discrimination with his Turkish counterpart.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has long encouraged Turkey to work towards the full protection of fundamental rights, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression and of religion or belief, including those of minority communities such as the Alevis. We are aware of concerns voiced by the Alevi community.

We encourage the Turkish authorities to safeguard their welfare and respect their human rights, in line with provisions in the Turkish constitution that protect the rights of religious minorities. We will continue to engage the Turkish Government on these issues and to urge respect for these freedoms which are essential to the long-term health of Turkish democracy. I raised human rights with my Turkish counterpart on 28 June during my visit to Turkey.

■ Westminster Foundation for Democracy: Finance**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[30408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27283, if will publish the budget for the 2021-22 financial year which has been shared with Westminster Foundation for Democracy.

Nigel Adams:

A full budget for FY2021/22 and a final audited spend for FY2020/21 for the Westminster Foundation for Democracy will be published in due course, including in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-06-28/23297>

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:** [\[28187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Royal College of Nursing on the use of the allergy drug Budesonide in the treatment of early covid-19 symptoms.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not had specific discussions with the Royal College of Nursing.

Inhaled budesonide was trialled as part of the PRINCIPLE trial platform in the United Kingdom as a treatment for COVID-19 in non-hospitalised patients who are 65 years

old and over or 50 years old and over with an underlying health condition. On 12 April, interim analysis revealed that inhaled budesonide reduced the time to self-reported recovery by a median of three days. A complete analysis is currently underway to understand the full benefit. Clinical guidance has been issued for clinicians to consider prescribing inhaled budesonide on a case-by-case basis, but it is not currently recommended as the standard of care in the UK. The Department has briefed the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges on the recent results from the PRINCIPLE trial.

Jim Shannon:

[\[28188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to control the transmission of the South African variant of covid-19 in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

The Beta variant accounts for a relatively small amount of COVID-19 cases and is on the list of current variants of concern (VOC) monitored by Public Health England and forms part of the wider approach to dealing with VOCs. This includes the continuous tracking and identification of new strains and assessing their impact on the United Kingdom population.

In response to VOCs, including the Beta variant, support measures have been made available to local authorities, including surge testing, enhanced contact tracing, faster standard tracing for all cases in the area as well as direct reporting into a national incident management structure to ensure a consistent and timely response.

■ Coronavirus

Julian Sturdy:

[\[7816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of publishing the Government's internal review into the handling of the covid-19 pandemic; and what steps his Department is taking to immediately apply the lessons of that internal review to its ongoing pandemic response.

Jo Churchill:

An informal review was carried out to help inform future working. We are unable to provide the information requested as it relates to the ongoing formulation of Government policy. A full review in the form of a statutory inquiry will take place.

■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to support continued locally enhanced covid-19 contact tracing.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Approximately one third of all upper tier local authorities in England are currently participating in the 'Local-0' scheme, enabling them to trace COVID-19 cases directly within the first 24 hours. The scheme has

been embedded as 'business as usual' practice since June following the success of a pilot project. Steps are also being taken to broaden participation with further local authorities in the coming weeks.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Sarah Owen: [\[14066\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has in place in the event of community transmission of a covid-19 variant with a high level of vaccine escape.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 June 2021]: We have governance arrangements in place and tools available in the event of transmission of a dangerous variant of concern with vaccine escape qualities. This includes the local action committee command structure and outbreak management protocols within the Contain Framework, which act as routes to provide support and interventions where required. The United Kingdom's world leading genomic sequencing programme allows us to quickly identify and respond to any new variants and we are building onshore capability to rapidly develop new vaccines if required.

Julian Sturdy: [\[23173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what urgent steps his Department is taking to communicate an accurate official and public understanding of the operation of the rule of six within covid-secure venues; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of misunderstanding of the rule of six among (a) enforcement officials and (b) the general public on the children's indoor play sector.

Julian Sturdy: [\[23174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what urgent steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) local authorities, (b) the police and (c) public officials enforcing covid-19 regulations understand that the children's indoor play sector is permitted to operate under the current covid-19 restrictions; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of enforcement officials failing to understand that the children's indoor sector is entitled to operate in a covid-secure manner under current restrictions on that sector.

Jo Churchill:

The 'rule of six' applies in all indoor settings, including the children's indoor play sector and this clear and consistent approach assists the public and enforcement officials such as the police, local authorities and public health officials to understand the requirements.

We have not made a specific assessment of potential effect of such misunderstandings of the rule of six. However, the Government continues to work closely with local authorities and the police to support effective enforcement. We keep all social distancing restrictions under continuous review.

Rachael Maskell:

[29843]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how he plans to ensure that people who are fearful of covid19 infection risks are able to protect themselves by insisting others wear face coverings and socially distance as infection levels rise.

Rachael Maskell:

[29845]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how he plans to ensure that people who are concerned about covid-19 infection are supported to retain their freedom as the level of that infection rises.

Jo Churchill:

While we have no plans to ensure that people can insist that others wear face coverings, we will continue to provide guidance on when the public should consider wearing one.

On 5 July, the Government set out plans for step four of the roadmap in England, to enable the public to make informed decisions through guidance rather than laws, enabling personal risk-based judgements.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[28195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions Ministers of his Department have had with representatives of (a) charities and (b) patient organisations that represent people who are immunocompromised on the use of face masks as a protection against covid-19 infection.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Ministers have regular discussions with representatives of charities and patient organisations on a range of issues, including interventions to protect against COVID-19.

If the decision is taken to move to step four of the roadmap, 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.

The standard guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people will be updated ahead of any lifting of restrictions on 19 July.

■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

Mr Mark Harper:

[R] [28992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to paragraph 26 of Covid-19 Response: Summer 2021 and his Oral Statement of 6 July 2021, Official Report, column 753, what the evidential basis is for the selection of 16 Aug 2021 as the date to implement the policy change on self-isolation after contact with a positive case.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The exemption regarding self-isolation for the fully vaccinated after contact with a positive case is being introduced in mid-August to allow more people to become fully vaccinated, reducing the risk of severe illness.

Public Health England's (PHE) analysis published on 14 June shows the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective against hospitalisation after two doses and the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses. As the vaccine programme progresses, links between cases and hospitalisations weaken. PHE's analysis shows the vaccination programme has already prevented over 44,500 hospitalisations and 27,000 deaths in England. Consequently, introduction of the change in August will reduce the risk of further transmission, hospitalisations and deaths.

Rachael Maskell:[\[29081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people who have not received a covid-19 vaccine will still be required to self-isolate for 10 days if they have been in contact with a person who has tested positive when the rules on self-isolation are eased.

Jo Churchill:

Adults who are not fully vaccinated and therefore at a higher risk of catching and transmitting COVID-19 will still need to self-isolate if they are identified as the contact of someone who has tested positive. Anyone who tests positive will also still need to self-isolate regardless of their vaccination status or age.

■ Coronavirus: Screening**Sir Greg Knight:**[\[18477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) reliability and (b) efficiency of the company Atruchecks in the provision of covid-19 PCR tests; what customer satisfaction surveys or recent evaluations of that company have been made to date; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 June 2021]: The Government has investigated Atruchecks and they have currently been removed from the private providers lists on GOV.UK. Providers may be reinstated to the list if they provide evidence which satisfies the Department that they have undertaken corrective action and provided the Department with evidence to show this. The Department does not conduct customer satisfaction surveys.

Daisy Cooper:[\[22025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to make covid-19 antibody testing available to (a) immunocompromised and (b) clinically extremely vulnerable patients in order that they can assess their own levels of vaccine protection.

Jo Churchill:

Antibody testing is available in limited circumstances which includes some of those classed as immunosuppressed and clinically extremely vulnerable. However, there are currently no plans to implement antibody testing post-vaccination in order to determine levels of antibodies other than testing that is already in place. There remains uncertainty as to whether the presence of antibodies means that an individual cannot transmit the virus to others. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation will continue to review emerging scientific evidence on the use of vaccines in those with immunosuppression and those classed as clinically extremely vulnerable and will update its advice as necessary.

Rachael Maskell:[\[29083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many days after being in contact with someone who has tested positive for covid-19 it is recommended that a person wait before taking a covid-19 test to ensure that the viral load is sufficient to generate an accurate test result.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: There are no recommended number of days someone should wait before taking a COVID-19 test. Individuals should seek a test as soon as possible within the 10 day isolation period, to allow NHS Test and Trace to identify any close contacts.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[28110\]](#)

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

Nadhim Zahawi:

The National Institute for Health Research has commissioned the National Immunisation Schedule Evaluation Consortium to undertake the Com-CoV trial. This trial is gathering data on the long-term immune response of using different COVID-19 vaccines for the first and second dose. Public Health England has also undertaken follow up on people given mixed schedules as part of routine care to monitor self-reported side effects and antibody response. The results will be published in due course.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[28111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure long-term monitoring of the immune response among people given a covid-19 vaccine booster in autumn 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation has made interim recommendations on the potential COVID-19 vaccine booster programme. Should this be confirmed, plans to evaluate the programme will be developed in due course.

Cat Smith:[\[28238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether it is his policy that people who are homeless will be a priority group within the covid-19 booster vaccination programme.

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>

However, based on the JCVI's interim advice, those eligible for phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme are likely to be offered a booster, including people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. Decisions on the timing, scope and cohort eligibility of any booster programme will be confirmed once the JCVI has provided their final advice.

Damien Moore:[\[28311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to help ensure that people who took part in covid-19 vaccination trials are able to correctly log their vaccine doses on their medical records for the purposes of foreign travel.

Nadhim Zahawi:

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

Participants of trials which have been unblinded, including those who received unlicensed vaccines, will be able to obtain a COVID Pass for international travel based on their vaccination status, with details of their vaccine records accessible within their COVID Pass, once these are available on NIMS.

Sir Christopher Chope:[\[28938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department holds on the number of deaths that have been reported of people who have died within (a) one month, (b) two months and (c) three months of having received a covid-19 vaccination since 1 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Data on the number of deaths reported of people who have died within one, two and three months of having received a COVID-19 vaccination since 1 January 2021 is not available in the format requested.

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.

PHE publishes the technical briefing which provides the latest data regarding deaths by vaccination status among Delta confirmed cases in England from 1 February 2021 which is available at the following link:

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

Rachael Maskell:**[29079]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people over 40 years old are required to wait up to 12 weeks for their second covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Since June 2021, second doses for all over 40 year olds have been administered on an eight-week interval after their first dose. All over 40 year olds who received a first dose by mid-May will be offered a second dose by 19 July.

Rachael Maskell:**[29080]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have contracted covid-19 after (a) one vaccine, (b) at least three weeks after the first vaccine, (c) two vaccines and (d) at least two weeks after the second vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Data on how many people have contracted COVID-19 after one vaccine, at least three weeks after the first vaccine, two vaccines and at least two weeks after the second vaccine is not available in the format requested.

Public Health England monitors the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 after they have received one or two doses of the vaccine and these data are used to calculate vaccine effectiveness estimates which are published at regular intervals.

Helen Hayes:**[29098]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of covid-19 vaccines for people living with blood cancer.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Virus Watch, supported by NHS Test and Trace, provides information regarding patients' antibodies and this includes immunocompromised patients, such as those living with blood cancer as part of their cohort. The data suggests some protection against COVID-19.

Public Health England is monitoring the effectiveness of vaccinations in clinical risk groups which will include those with immunosuppression. From the evaluation of the vaccine programme, the data shows that completion of the two dose schedule correlates well with protection from both disease and severe outcomes, including hospitalisation and death.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has issued interim advice about a potential COVID-19 booster programme from September 2021, starting with those most at risk from serious disease. This will include clinically extremely vulnerable adults and those who are immunosuppressed. The JCVI will continue to review evidence on the use of vaccines in those with immunosuppression and will update its advice as necessary.

Justin Madders: [\[29826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the European Commission on the recognition of certain AstraZeneca batches by the EU Digital Covid-19 Certificate.

Fleur Anderson: [\[29925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on ensuring that recipients of the AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine are treated equitably within international travel arrangements.

Nadhim Zahawi:

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

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

■ Defibrillators: Public Places

Emma Hardy: [\[29880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making it mandatory to have defibrillators in public places.

Jo Churchill:

With growing public awareness and acceptance, many community defibrillators have already been provided in public locations. Since May 2020, the Government has

required all contractors refurbishing or building new schools through centrally delivered programmes, to provide at least one defibrillator.

The Government recognises that better provision of defibrillators and increasing the number of people trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation could help save more lives of those who have a cardiac arrest outside a hospital setting. We therefore encourage organisations to consider purchasing a defibrillator as part of their first-aid equipment, particularly for places where there are high concentrations of people.

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes: [\[29102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle challenges in accessing dental care during the covid-19 outbreak.

Emma Hardy: [\[29881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase the availability of NHS Dentist appointments.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to increase access, including for routine care, taking into account the ongoing infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements. In resuming services, a careful balance is needed between increasing dental activity and ensuring patients and staff are protected from ongoing infection risk.

National Health Service dentists 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. The NHS has also issued guidance on flexible commissioning to share best practice on targeting the available capacity at those most in need. The Department has asked NHS England and NHS Improvement to lead on the next stage of NHS dental system reform, working closely with the British Dental Association. This will seek to build on the learning from the dental contract reform programme and improve patient access.

■ General Practitioners: Internet

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[29921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department plans to ensure that people who are not digitally literate will be guaranteed the same access to GP appointments as those who are able to book online.

Jo Churchill:

Patients can book appointments via the telephone and through NHS 111 and the service has the same features as available online. In addition, a family member or carer who has access to the internet can book appointments for an individual on their behalf.

■ General Practitioners: Isle of Wight**Bob Seely:** [\[902656\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to help improve the service provided by GP practices on the Isle of Wight.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Hampshire, Southampton and Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group is responsible for commissioning healthcare services from general practitioners and other providers and supporting them to continually improve services.

To support local commissioners to provide high quality primary care services, we committed a record level of additional investment in primary and community care of an extra £4.5 billion per year by 2023/24.

■ HIV Infection**Caroline Lucas:** [\[30340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what reports his Department plans to publish on progress made on (a) reducing new cases of HIV in England by 80 per cent by 2025 and (b) ending new cases of HIV in England by 2030; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The new United Kingdom Health Security Agency will publish an update on HIV in their annual report to be published around World AIDS Day, on 1 December 2021.

The report will include data on England's progress towards reducing new cases of HIV by 80% by 2025 and ending HIV transmission by 2030.

■ Influenza**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[28112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of reported anticipated higher number of flu cases in the winter of 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Public Health England will continue to monitor flu activity each week and identify any unexpected changes. We are delivering an expanded flu vaccination programme this winter. This includes a continued offer of vaccination for 50 to 64 year olds and the children's programme.

■ Long Covid**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[28296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to (a) his oral statement on covid-19 update on 5 July 2021, Official Report, col 584, and (b) the planned lifting of covid-19 restrictions during increasing covid-19 cases, what recent

estimate his Department has made of the number of people projected to suffer from long covid.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: As part of NHS England's 'Long COVID: the NHS plan for 2021/22', published on 15 June, a modelling assumption was developed to estimate how many people who have contracted COVID-19 might require follow up in a 'long' COVID-19 service. There was clinical consensus that provisionally, approximately 2.9% of people who had COVID-19 would go on to need National Health Service support.

The Plan included an additional £100 million expansion of care for patients with 'long' COVID-19 in England. Over £30 million has already been committed to 'long' COVID-19 research projects and a further £20 million is available for a further research call.

■ **Maternity Services: Hospital Beds**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[29809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of bed capacity in NHS labour wards in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: We have made no such assessment.

■ **Medical Records: Digital Technology**

Peter Dowd:

[\[27184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make further funding available to digital aspirants in relation to Electronic Health Records.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Details of the next round of funding to support digital aspirants with their Electronic Health Record implementation will be published shortly, as part of the NHSX Unified Technology Fund prospectus.

■ **NHS and Social Services: Protective Clothing**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that all NHS and Social Care staff are provided with the PPE they require for the next phase of the covid-19 outbreak and continue with current infection control measures.

Jo Churchill:

We are ensuring many millions of additional personal protective equipment (PPE) items reach those on the frontline through the PPE portal. The order limits on the portal have increased so that primary and social care providers will be able to meet their PPE needs, free of charge until the end of March 2022.

To further build resilience, we have significantly increased manufacturing, signing contracts for almost 3.9 billion items of PPE with over 30 United Kingdom based companies.

■ **NHS: Software**

Chi Onwurah: [\[29040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have deleted the NHS Test and Trace app in each week for the last 10 weeks; and what information he holds on the number of people who are keeping that App but turning off bluetooth.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: We do not hold data on the number of people who have deleted the app or the number of people with the app but with Bluetooth turned off.

We are currently considering what further metrics we may be able to publish about app usage.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[29048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 20416 on NHS: Software, what data his Department holds on (a) the number of users of the NHS Covid-19 App and (b) changes in the number of users of that App in each of the last 12 months.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: We do not hold data on the number of users of the NHS COVID-19 app or changes in the number of users of the app in each of the last 12 months.

We are currently considering what further metrics we may be able to publish about app usage.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[29050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of users of the NHS covid-19 app that have paused or disabled the contact tracing function on the app.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: We do not hold data on the number of users of the NHS COVID-19 app with contact tracing paused or disabled. We are currently considering what further metrics we may be able to publish about app usage.

■ Omega Diagnostics Group

Philip Davies: [\[10266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the end date is of the contract with Omega Diagnostics signed in March 2021 for the manufacture of Lateral Flow Antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2; and what the value is of that contract.

Philip Davies: [\[10267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what market engagement exercise took place which led to the formation of the contract with Omega Diagnostics in March 2021 for the manufacture of Lateral Flow Antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2.

Philip Davies: [\[10268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of the equipment loaned by his Department to Omega Diagnostics; what the purpose is of each such loan; and what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the equipment is used exclusively for the purpose of delivering its contract with the Government formed in March 2021 for the manufacture of Lateral Flow Antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2.

Jo Churchill:

The end date for the Omega Diagnostics contract is March 2022, with the option for a further year extension if necessary. The contract is a flexible contract which does not contain any commitment to volume or value. Manufacturers worldwide with tests validated for use in the United Kingdom were invited to make proposals including licencing production and were evaluated on the basis of a range of criteria including cost, performance and location/ability to provide security of supply. We engaged with the UK Rapid Test Consortium and members were invited to provide capability statements on their ability to manufacture at scale. Based on these statements, qualified Consortium members were invited to enter precontract agreements and contract discussions.

The following table shows the equipment loaned to Omega Diagnostics and the purpose of each loan. The equipment loaned is specific mass production technology to allow increased production for lateral flow antigen tests. All equipment has been loaned under strict contractual arrangements that constrain its use solely for the purpose of Government need in addressing the pandemic. No other use of the equipment is permitted.

EQUIPMENT	FUNCTION/PURPOSE OF LOAN
Laminator	Laminating
Reel to reel	Plotting
Reel to reel	Plotting
Reel to reel	Plotting

EQUIPMENT	FUNCTION/PURPOSE OF LOAN
Laminator	Laminating
Reel to reel	Plotting
Foil wrapper	Wrapping
Thermal transfer printer	Wrapping
Automated assembler	Cassette assembling
Automated assembler	Cassette assembling
Converging conveyer	Wrapping
Desiccant dispenser	Wrapping
Foil wrapper	Wrapping
Thermal transfer printer	Wrapping
Automated assembler	Cassette assembling
Automated assembler	Cassette assembling
Converging conveyer	Wrapping
Desiccant dispenser	Wrapping
Cutter	Cassette assembling

■ Pancreatic Cancer: Medical Treatments

Thangam Debbonaire:

[28227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of pancreatic cancer patients were prescribed pancreatic enzyme replacement therapy in England in (a) 2015, (b) 2016, (c) 2017, (d) 2018 and (e) 2019.

Jo Churchill:

The information requested is not held centrally. While the NHS Business Services Authority holds prescription data relating to drugs dispensed within a community setting, no data is collected on the clinical condition of the patient.

■ Patients: Coronavirus

Dr Liam Fox:

[\[28934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what most recent data his Department holds on the number of patients in hospital with covid-19 who are (a) under 25 years old, (b) 25 to 50 years old, (c) 51 to 60 years old and (d) over 60 years old; and how many patients in each of those age categories had received (i) no covid-19 vaccine, (ii) one covid-19 vaccine and (iii) two covid-19 vaccines prior to their admission to hospital.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The monthly data publication, last published on 8 July, showing COVID-19 related hospitalisations by age is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-hospital-activity/>

Public Health England monitors the number of people who have been admitted to hospital who have received one or two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination and will publish this data in due course.

■ Pregnancy: Children

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[28358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the rate of pregnancy is for those under 18 years old in (a) the UK, (b) England and (c) the North East in each of the last 10 years.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The Department does not collect this information. However, the Office for National Statistics collects information on the conception rate in women under 18 years old in England. The information requested for England and the North East in each of the last ten years for which data is available is shown in the following table.

Year	ENGLAND		NORTH EAST	
	Number of Conceptions	Conception rate per 1,000 women in age group	Number of Conceptions	Conception rate per 1,000 women in age group
2009	35,966	37.1	2,225	45.7
2010	32,552	34.2	2,032	43.5
2011	29,166	30.7	1,750	38.4
2012	26,157	27.7	1,600	35.5
2013	22,830	24.3	1,367	30.6

Year	ENGLAND		NORTH EAST	
	Number of Conceptions	Conception rate per 1,000 women in age group	Number of Conceptions	Conception rate per 1,000 women in age group
2014	21,282	22.8	1,332	30.2
2015	19,080	20.8	1,199	28.0
2016	17,024	18.8	1,023	24.6
2017	15,748	17.8	994	24.7
2018	14,736	16.7	986	24.9

■ Sickle Cell Diseases: Health Services

Janet Daby:

[\[902646\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of NHS treatment for sickle cell patients.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England has recently worked to understand, assess and provide information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on patients with sickle cell disease. We recently published the UK Rare Diseases Framework, outlining our priorities to improve the lives of those living with rare conditions, including sickle cell disease. One of these priorities is improving access to specialist care, treatment and drugs.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Paul Blomfield:

[\[24167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the value for money of covid-19 tests provided by private companies to the public for international travel.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no such assessment.

Since requirements were introduced for international travel testing, the costs of testing have fallen significantly. We are committed to working with the travel industry and private providers to reduce the cost of travel testing and we have made NHS Test and Trace tests available at the market mid-point.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[24890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish all the public health risk assessments which were carried out to inform the decision on permitting

privileged access for people from foreign countries to visit the UK for the purpose of being spectators at European Football Championship matches; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: We are unable to provide the information requested as it related to the ongoing formulation of Government policy. However, there continues to be a robust public health risk assessment which informs the regular review of the travel restrictions and the exemptions on foreign visitors to the European Championships.

A limited number of accredited guests have been exempted from border restrictions to attend the latter stages of the tournament. These individuals will only be permitted to leave quarantine for official events, including matches or UEFA meetings and will be subject to strict public health mitigations, developed with the input of Public Health England and in line with other international events such as the G7. This will include regular testing, use of designated accommodation and private transport and compliance with all other COVID-19 restrictions, including social distancing, face coverings and test, trace and isolation.

Gordon Henderson:

[\[27141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to review the adequacy and practicality of (a) the condition requiring applicants to apply for an exemption 14 days before their visit and (b) other conditions attached to the exemptions granted to people travelling from red list countries to the UK to visit dying relatives during the period of covid-19 travel restrictions.

Jo Churchill:

The condition for individuals to apply at least 14 days in advance of their arrival is required due to the volume of exemption applications we are currently receiving and is necessary to ensure that all exemption requests, including the most complex cases, are treated with the appropriate care and attention. In complex cases, the process may involve requests for additional information, for which applicants need sufficient time to respond.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[27349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will launch an investigation into Atruchecks for alleged failures to provide covid-19 test kits to people travelling overseas.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has investigated Atruchecks and they have currently been removed from the private providers lists on GOV.UK. Providers may be reinstated to the list once they have undertaken corrective action and provided the Department with evidence of improvement.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[28108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that people who have been vaccinated against covid-19 with the

AstraZeneca vaccine batches produced in India are able to travel to Europe under the digital covid certificate scheme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

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

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

■ **Travel: Quarantine**

Sir Robert Neill:

[\[18510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will publish weekly data on the number of people who test positive for covid-19 while required to quarantine in a managed quarantine hotel.

Jo Churchill:

The information requested is not currently available as it is being centrally validated ahead of publication later in the year. The data will be published in a weekly format.

Sarah Owen:

[\[18603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish in any format available the total number of people who have completed covid-19 hotel quarantine to date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 June 2021]: Data provided by Corporate Travel Management to the Department shows that to 1 July, 127,074 travellers have completed hotel quarantine, across 73 hotels.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[24307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to allow officials from the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) waivers from covid-19 quarantine requirements when arriving in the UK from overseas; what criterion are being used for exemption from quarantine requirements for those attending UEFA events; and what assessment he has been made of the implications for public health in the UK of waiving quarantine requirements for UEFA events.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: A limited number of accredited guests have been given an exemption from COVID-19 borders restrictions to attend the latter stages of the tournament. These individuals will only be permitted to leave quarantine for official events, including matches or UEFA meetings and will be subject to strict public health mitigations, developed with the input of Public Health England, in line with other international events such as the G7. This will include regular testing, use of designated accommodation and private transport and compliance with all other COVID-19 restrictions, including social distancing, face coverings and test, trace and isolation.

Mr Steve Baker:**[R] [26108]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish an assessment of the effect of covid-19 quarantine requirements on the availability of overseas labour in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no specific assessment and have no plans to do so.

Alex Sobel:**[28303]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the covid-19 traffic light quarantining rules apply to fans attending the European Championship Final at Wembley on 11 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The Government's border restrictions apply to fans intending to travel from overseas to attend the UEFA European Championships (EURO 2020) Final on 11 July. Any fans who have travelled or transited through a 'red' or 'amber' list country in the last 10 days, must have arrived in the UK in time to complete their full testing and quarantine requirements. Only once they have been cleared from quarantine can they attend the final at Wembley. If someone seeks to enter the country with the clear intention of breaching quarantine, they may be denied entry and their tickets may be cancelled.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Housing****Marsha De Cordova:****[28324]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the availability of volume of adequate accommodation for people seeking asylum.

Kevin Foster:

The current global pandemic has presented significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation, including sourcing sufficient suitable accommodation to meet demand. The use of hotels and wider government facilities is

a short-term measure and we are working with our accommodation providers to move people to longer-term dispersal accommodation as soon as it becomes available.

The Home Office has been working with asylum accommodation providers, Local Authorities and Strategic Migration Partnerships to increase the amount of accommodation available for asylum seekers so we can eliminate the need for the use of contingency accommodation.

We are grateful to those local authorities who participate in the dispersal scheme and will continue to work in partnership with them to procure suitable accommodation.

Sadly, many local authorities do not currently participate in the dispersal scheme, making it harder to procure sufficient dispersal accommodation. I would encourage them to step up and play their part in the UK-wide effort to provide accommodation to those seeking asylum who would otherwise be destitute.

■ Birth Certificates: LGBT People

Thangam Debonnaire: [\[28235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 20434, what impact assessment she has conducted on people being unable to retrospectively amend their birth certificates to include two same-sex parents.

Kevin Foster:

The birth certificate records the facts as collected at the time of registration.

The General Register Office has not therefore conducted an impact assessment on people being unable to retrospectively amend their birth certificates

■ British Nationality: Assessments

Stephen Farry: [\[28368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average score is of people taking the Life in the UK test.

Stephen Farry: [\[28369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what criteria was used to decide questions for the Life in the UK test; and whether any assessment has been made of the performance of UK citizens in that test.

Kevin Foster:

The average score of customers taking the Life in the UK (LitUK) test in the last 12 months is 19 out of a possible score of 24.

The LitUK test questions are based on the content of the LitUK handbook, which is available for all applicants to study as part of their test preparation. PSI Services (UK) Limited who operate the LitUK test centres on behalf of UKVI, created a pool of test questions covering the content of the handbook.

As the LitUK test is only for customers applying for British Citizenship or certain categories of settlement, there is no requirement for UK citizens to take the LitUK test and so there has been no assessment of their performance in the test.

■ Knives: Crime

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[28163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent steps she has taken to reduce knife crime among young people through working with schools.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to reducing serious violence, including knife crime, and prevent the tragedies affecting our communities. We are taking a whole system approach - this involves working with a wide range of partners to combat crime, including schools.

We have invested £105.5m over three years into to establish and develop 18 multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs), which bring together key partners across health, education, policing, housing, and others to address the root causes of serious violence in the worst affected areas. These VRUs commission a range of interventions to intervene early and prevent crime, including close working with schools to support vulnerable young people, such as through mentoring programmes, sports-based interventions, and behavioural therapy. With an additional £30 million this year for 'Grip' funding, to bolster operational problem-solving police activity work, some forces are also carrying out interventions, engagement and education work in schools alongside the VRUS. We have also invested £200 million in early intervention and understanding what interventions work best to reduce violence, through the 10-Year Youth Endowment Fund (YEF). YEF's funded projects ensure those most at risk are given the opportunity to turn away from violence and lead positive lives; and will provide robust evidence about the effectiveness of different interventions.

The Government also supports Operation Sceptre's knife crime weeks of action conducted by police forces across England and Wales, which include knife crime awareness session in education establishments. In the last week of action beginning 26 April, police forces conducted 1,481 school engagement events.

In addition, in 2020 the National Police Chiefs' Council published guidance to schools on 'When to call the police' which provides advice regarding incidents on schools and colleges premises if a potential crime has been committed. This covers weapons enabled crime and also how to identify vulnerable children. It should be read alongside DfE's statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

■ Motor Vehicles: Theft

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[28164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on encouraging vehicle manufacturers to take steps to help prevent the theft of keyless vehicles.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to tackling vehicle crime as a priority. We continue to work closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for vehicle crime, through the National Vehicle Crime Working Group, which includes representatives from the motor industry and Department for Transport, to take forward a programme of work. This work is overseen by the Government's Crime and Justice Taskforce.

As part of this programme, the National Vehicle Crime Working Group has established a horizon-scanning group to identify potential future trends, threats and vulnerability in vehicle security and vehicle-related crime. We will continue to engage closely with academics, vehicle manufacturers and policing leads to undertake research and implement actions to mitigate future opportunities to criminally exploit technological and design changes in the automotive industry.

Police: Boats

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of the police was procured from.

Kit Malthouse:

We do not hold this information in the Home Office.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**Arms Length Management Organisations**

Rachael Maskell: [\[30376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to protect leaseholders from being overcharged by freeholders for maintenance and property enhancements by their housing management companies.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to ensuring that those living in the leasehold sector are protected from abuse and poor service.

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.

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.

■ Community Renewal Fund

Steve Reed: [\[30362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what his timeline is for delivery of funding through the Community Renewal Fund.

Luke Hall:

The UK Government is providing an additional £220 million funding through the UK Community Renewal Fund to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

The deadline for bid submission has now passed. Officials are currently assessing the bids received and funding decisions will be announced in due course. Successful project applicants will have until 31 March 2022 to deliver their projects.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [\[30389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with Public Health England on protecting people in the community from covid-19 infection.

Luke Hall:

Ministers and officials from my Department have regular discussions with counterparts in Public Health England on a range of matters including protecting people in the community from Covid-19 infection. The £23.75 million 'Community Champions' scheme has supported those groups at greater risk of Covid-19, to ensure key public health advice is understood, safer behaviours are followed and vaccine take-up promoted.

■ First Time Buyers

Mr Steve Baker: [\[28171\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made on the financial impact of First Homes on property developers, including the receipts for sale of First Homes.

Christopher Pincher:

Our assumption is that First Homes will have minimal financial implications for property developers. This is because First Homes will only change the tenure mix that developer contributions are spent on, not the overall value of those contributions. In future, 25% of all affordable homes delivered by developers as part of their obligatory contributions will be First Homes.

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[28173\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what additional financial support the Government plans to provide to property developers to support the development of First Homes.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government does not plan to provide any additional financial support to property developers to support the development of First Homes through the planning system. First Homes will be delivered via developer contributions and First Homes exception sites. National Planning Policy was altered on 28 June 2021 to require that at least 25% of all the affordable homes funded through contributions by developers are First Homes, and to replace entry-level exception sites with First Homes exception sites. This will result in no change to property developers' financial contributions to affordable housing and no additional financial support will be provided

We will also announce further information on the delivery of 1,500 homes via a pilot shortly, which will involve some financial support being provided to developers in the form of grant payments.

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[28174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the impact of the price cap of First Homes on the (a) variety and (b) local suitability of homes produced for the scheme under Section 106 obligations.

Christopher Pincher:

It is important that the price caps for First Homes retain an element of clarity and consistency to support consumers, developers and mortgage lenders who may operate across multiple local areas. The two-tier price cap system the Government has instigated provides this clarity, while the values of £250,000 in England and £420,000 in Greater London have been set to ensure that at least 25% of all properties purchased by first-time buyers in every local authority in England and greater London would be captured.

Local authorities have the flexibility to lower these price caps if appropriate for their local housing markets or, crucially, to raise the minimum discount required to either 40% or 50%, to ensure that high-value areas are able to capture a greater variety of housing types and sizes.

■ First Time Buyers: Affordable Housing

Mr Steve Baker:

[\[28170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the impact of First Homes on (a) developers' ability to provide other forms of affordable housing through Section 106 obligations and (b) the total number of such affordable homes provided under a given development plan.

Mr Steve Baker:

[28172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the impact of sales of First Homes on the sales of other forms of affordable housing including shared ownership.

Christopher Pincher:

In our Equality Impact Assessment

(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975121/EQIA_First_Homes.pdf) we have published the implications we expect First Homes to have for other affordable home schemes.

■ Hospitals: Parking

Damien Moore:

[28318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending the covid-19 Parking Pass to healthcare support staff.

Luke Hall:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer I gave to PQ16235 on 21 June 2021.

■ Housing: Older People

Peter Aldous:

[28179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a new taskforce to assess how to accelerate the delivery of housing for older people.

Christopher Pincher:

Both the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department of Health and Social Care are committed to further improving the diversity of housing options available to older people. We are engaging closely with both the sector and a range of other stakeholders on this issue. This includes considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models including proposals from the sector for a cross-Government taskforce.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Alan Brown:

[28246]

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 much funding he plans to allocate through the first round, for which applications closed on 18 June 2021.

Luke Hall:

The Levelling Up Fund is a competitive fund, with funding distributed to places across the UK on the basis of successful project selection. The Fund will set aside at least

£800 million across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland over four years from 2021-2022 to 2024-2025.

For the first round of funding, at least 9% of total UK allocations will be in Scotland, 5% in Wales, and 3% in Northern Ireland.

It is expected that investment decisions will be made by the UK Government for the first round of funding by autumn 2021.

■ **Local Government: Powers**

Steve Reed:

[\[30360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of enforcement powers provided to local authorities to take action against premises that do not comply with covid-19 secure rules.

Luke Hall:

The Government keeps the enforcement measures of local councils under regular review to ensure that councils are equipped to ensure businesses are seeking to reduce Covid-19 transmission risk.

■ **Local Government: Staff**

Steve Reed:

[\[30359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what data his Department holds on the number of people employed by local authorities in England.

Luke Hall:

The Office for National Statistics collects and publishes this information in the Quarterly Public Sector Employment Survey. This information is available at national, regional and local authority level, with the latest figures published for March 2021.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: First Aid**

Grahame Morris:

[\[28150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many and what proportion of staff of his Department, excluding those working in its executive agencies, hold current certificates for (a) First Aid at Work and (b) Emergency First Aid at Work, by office.

Grahame Morris:

[\[28151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department undertook a first aid at work needs assessment for any of its workplaces from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Grahame Morris: [\[28152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to undertake a first aid needs assessment for each of its workplaces before 19 July 2021.

Grahame Morris: [\[28153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department's offices will have appropriate first aid cover each day of the week from 19 July 2021 onwards.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department's risk assessment defines what is considered to be appropriate cover for each of the offices it occupies, taking into account guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive. The Department will continue to ensure that there is appropriate cover in place.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Protective Clothing**

Grahame Morris: [\[28154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department's staff working in 2 Marsham Street are advised to wear face coverings when (a) entering and (b) leaving the building by (i) the doors and (ii) capsules that close around an individual.

Grahame Morris: [\[28155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether an independent assessor has assessed his Department's offices at (a) Birkenhead, (b) 2 Marsham Street, (c) Manchester, (d) Bristol, (e) Cambridge, (f) Exeter, (g) Hastings, (h) Hemel Hempstead, (i) Leeds, (j) Newcastle, (k) Nottingham, (l) Plymouth, (m) Sheffield, (n) Truro and (o) Warrington to be safe for use during the covid-19 outbreak.

Eddie Hughes:

All MHCLG offices were Covid-19 risk-assessed by independent accredited health and safety risk-assessors. The offices were assessed as safe for use during the Covid-19 outbreak subject to appropriate mitigations being put in place. The Department has put into place the mitigations. The Department keeps the assessments under review and, where necessary, updates them.

■ **Towns Fund**

Steve Reed: [\[30361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, by what date he plans to agree heads of terms with all 101 towns offered a Town Deal.

Luke Hall:

We hope to announce the remaining Town Deals very soon. Towns have up to three weeks following their Town Deal offer to agree Heads of Terms with the department.

■ Travellers: Caravan Sites**Navendu Mishra:** [\[28355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many bids have been successful and how much funding has been allocated through the Affordable Homes Programme to support the provision of permanent traveller sites.

Christopher Pincher:

Between 2011 and March 2015, the Homes and Communities Agency spent around £44 million delivering more than 500 new pitches and refurbishing and nearly 400 more refurbished pitches, through the Traveller Pitch Funding programme

In addition, Under the 2015-18 Affordable Homes Programme allocations were agreed for 76 new pitches with £4.9 million funding. A further 2 allocations have been made as part of the 2016-21 Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme, delivering a total of 30 pitches.

JUSTICE**■ Pets: Theft****Mr David Lammy:** [\[28049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of pet thefts resulted in a prosecution being brought in each of the last 10 years.

Mr David Lammy: [\[28050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders were convicted of pet theft in each of the last 10 years.

Mr David Lammy: [\[28051\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many offenders were sentenced to four years or more for the theft of a pet in each of the last 10 years.

Mr David Lammy: [\[28052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of offenders found guilty of the theft of a pet received a custodial sentence in each of the last 10 years.

Mr David Lammy: [\[28053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average fine given to an offender guilty of pet theft was in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

The government recognises the deep distress which the theft of a much-loved pet can cause. All reported crimes should be investigated and, where appropriate, taken through the courts and met with tough sentences. Theft is a criminal offence under the Theft Act 1968 and the maximum penalty is seven years' imprisonment. The sentencing guidelines for theft, acknowledge that theft which causes emotional distress, or where the items stolen were of substantial value to the loser, regardless

of monetary worth, will indicate a higher level of seriousness and the offender should be sentenced accordingly.

There are a range of offences under the Theft Act 1968 which could relate to the theft of a pet depending on the individual circumstances of the case. Centrally held information on theft offences does not identify if a pet specifically was stolen. The information may be held on court record but to be able to identify cases in which pets were stolen would require access to individual court records which would be of disproportionate cost.

■ Prisons: Ventilation

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[30344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the adequacy of ventilation in prisons and management of the risk of covid-19 infection, what guidance he has issued or plans to issue to prison governors on that matter; to what standards prison governors should plan and measure such ventilation; what enforcement activity he plans to undertake to ensure such guidance is followed; and whether he proposes to make funds available to improve standards of ventilation.

Alex Chalk:

Updated guidance "*Ventilation in Prisons and Approved Premises during COVID-19 Operating Conditions Guidance (Version 2)*" was issued to all prison governors in March 2021. MoJ Property Directorate, working with facilities management providers, is responsible for the management of the ventilation systems. They continuously monitor these systems and identify where any improvements may be needed which would normally be funded from within existing budgets.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Members: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan:

[\[30317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many items of written correspondence from hon. Members sent to Ministers of his Department have been (a) received and (b) replied to since 1 April 2020; and how many of those responses were responded to by (i) Ministers and (ii) officials of his Department.

Mr Robin Walker:

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

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

TRANSPORT**■ Buses: Ventilation**

Grahame Morris: [\[30342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effectiveness of (a) the new filter used in the ventilation system of Reading Buses and (b) the potential merits of that system across the UK in preventing covid-19.

Rachel Maclean:

Officials have been engaging with the Confederation of Passenger Transport and their members regarding ventilation on buses. Buses typically rely on opening windows for passenger ventilation and the industry uses a range of methods to ensure windows are kept open. The Department does not hold information on Reading Buses specifically.

More widely, guidance on ventilation is included within the Department's 'Safer Transport Guidance for Operators'.

■ Cars: Exhaust Emissions

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[28953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of cars on the roads that are exceeding legal emission limits.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[28960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce the number of cars on the roads that are exceeding national emissions limits.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government continues to work with a number of local authorities to deliver compliance with legal limits for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in the shortest time possible. Local authorities are responsible for identifying the appropriate solution to achieve this, and in some areas this will require the introduction of Clean Air Zones (CAZs). CAZs are designed to encourage drivers switch to cleaner vehicles or more sustainable modes of transport. Where a CAZ is needed, Government will work with local authorities to implement the zone and will provide funding to help local businesses/drivers adapt including support to upgrade vehicles.

In addition, most cars undergo an annual MOT test, which includes a tail pipe emissions test and specific checks of all visible and identifiable emissions control equipment. Vehicles that fail to meet the required limits for the fuel type and age of the vehicle, or where emissions control equipment fitted by the manufacturer is missing, obviously modified, or defective, will fail the test.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) also takes emissions control very seriously. Its Market Surveillance Unit investigates retailers and test stations to ensure that vehicles and products in the UK market meet the required standards.

In addition, the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations make various offences for using vehicles in ways that do not meet in-use standards. The potential penalties for failing to comply with these regulations are significant, with fines of up to £1,000 for a car.

■ **Cars: Exhaust Systems**

Feryal Clark: [\[29158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to ban the sale of car exhaust noise amplifiers.

Feryal Clark: [\[29159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle the nuisance of car exhaust noise amplifiers on (a) residential and (b) A roads; and what enforcement powers (i) police and (ii) local authorities have to tackle that nuisance.

Feryal Clark: [\[29160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a rollout of acoustic cameras to tackle the nuisance of car exhaust noise amplifiers on residential and A roads.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department is aware of nuisance caused by excessively noisy car exhausts. New vehicles are required to meet strict noise limits before being first placed on the market and once on the road, exhausts and silencers are not permitted to be altered to increase noise such as the fitment of noise amplifiers.

The police have powers to take action under the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended) if they believe excessive vehicle noise could have been avoided through reasonable driver care. Local authorities can issue a Community Protection Notice if an individual's behaviour is having a negative impact on the community. In both cases, failure to comply can result in a fine or a fixed penalty notice.

The Department is currently considering the outcome of a preliminary trial of a prototype acoustic camera. Due to the early stages of testing and prototype nature of the technology it is too early to assess the potential impact of widespread deployment, but we are optimistic that it will provide an effective enforcement tool in the future.

■ **Department for Transport: Information**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[29027\]](#)

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

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The relationship between an arm's length body and the department should be set out in a framework document.

Managing Public Money explains that:

"3.8.2 The framework document (or equivalent) agreed between an ALB and its sponsor always provides for the sponsor department to exercise meaningful oversight of the ALB's strategy and performance, pay arrangements and/or major financial transactions, eg by monthly returns, standard delegations and exception reporting. The sponsor department's accounts consolidate those of its ALBs so its accounting officer must be satisfied that the consolidated accounts are accurate and not misleading".

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money>

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

The accounts of a non-departmental public body are usually consolidated with those of their sponsoring department. In the case of regulatory bodies, the annual report and accounts serve the same purpose and are laid before Parliament, but may not be consolidated depending on the classification of the body.

■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes**Fleur Anderson:****[29929]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions have taken place with (a) community stakeholders and (b) disabled stakeholders on the introduction of e-scooter trials.

Rachel Maclean:

The department has taken a keen interest in the trials and how they may affect those with disabilities and accessibility needs and have engaged frequently with a range of key stakeholders. For example, I met with the Inclusive Transport Stakeholder Group last year, to discuss e-scooters and our local trials. Membership of this group includes representatives from: Age UK, Scope, Alzheimer's Society, National Autistic Society, Disability Rights UK, DPTAC, Guide Dogs and Leonard Cheshire. Since then I have hosted four e-scooter roundtable discussions - the most recent on 7 June - attended by several groups that represent the interests of disabled people and older people to update them on the progress of the trials and listen to their concerns.

The Department has in place a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme for the trials. This evaluation includes a range of data sources and approaches including data sharing arrangements with operators, surveys, interviews and focus groups with users and non-users and interviews with key local and national stakeholders.

Local authorities are responsible for running the trials and we have instructed them to engage throughout the trial period with disability groups in their areas to ensure their concerns are being heard.

■ High Speed Two: Compulsory Purchase

Esther McVey:

[\[29790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many homes have been compulsorily purchased by HS2 Ltd.

Andrew Stephenson:

Using compulsory purchasing powers, HS2 Ltd have permanently acquired 27.28 sq km of land on Phase 1. As an acquisition may be land only or may contain a mixed-use property or properties, HS2 Ltd do not record how many contain 'homes'. For example a farm can be (or have within it properties which are) residential, commercial, and/or agricultural, whilst the land itself could be agricultural, industrial and/or woodland. Similarly, a pub can be (and often is) both residential and commercial.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Highlands of Scotland

Drew Hendry:

[\[30373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to expand the availability of Theory and Hazard Perception testing for learner LGV drivers in the Scottish Highlands.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is aware that demand for theory tests in Scotland is currently high and it is doing all it can to offer more tests at centres by increasing opening hours and running tests on extra days where possible. The provision of additional testing is dependent upon the availability of venues and agreements with landlords. The DVSA is working with its theory test provider, Pearson VUE, to explore further ways in which it can further increase theory test capacity.

The DVSA is continuing to work with the Scottish Government but as a result of the 2 metre physical distancing restrictions required by the Scottish Government, it is unable to increase the number of desks used to take tests. This has reduced capacity at most theory test sites by 50%.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Roads

Catherine West:

[\[29120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department made of the potential effect on road safety of the decision to temporarily extend operating hours limits for heavy goods vehicle drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

It is important to remember that the relaxations are limited in nature. No requirements of the rules for breaks during the day, daily & weekly rest periods, and weekly & fortnightly driving limits have been removed. They have been relaxed in a controlled way. In addition, the relaxations are time limited and only made due to exceptional circumstances.

Our issued guidance makes clear that driver safety must not be compromised. Drivers should not be expected to drive whilst tired and employers remain responsible for the health and safety of their employees and other road users.

In addition, drivers remain bound by the requirements in the Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations 2005. This ensures that drivers do not work long hours, by limiting their overall working hours (which includes driving and any other work), to an average of 48 hours a week over a 17 to 26-week reference period. These regulations also limit drivers to a maximum of 60 hours in any given week, provided the average is still 48 hours. This guarantees drivers are not working continuously long hours, even if working under a temporary relaxation of the drivers' hours rules.

There have not been any reported accidents identified to the Department involving drivers working under a drivers' hours relaxation, although there is no specific reporting requirement.

■ Motor Vehicles: Hydrogen

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[28954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the viability of the use of hydrogen fuel cell cars in Britain.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[28961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the viability of the use of hydrogen fuel cell cars in the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

Hydrogen is likely to be fundamental to achieving the full decarbonisation of UK transport. It is likely to be most effective in the areas 'that batteries cannot reach' and where energy density requirements or duty cycles and refuelling times make it the most suitable low carbon energy source. This might include use in HGVs, buses, rail, shipping and aviation.

The UK already has one of the largest hydrogen refuelling station networks in Europe, with fourteen publicly accessible stations that provide hydrogen suitable for

use by cars, vans, trucks and buses. Government's £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is supporting the deployment of hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles and growing the refuelling network by delivering new refuelling stations and upgrading some existing stations.

The £3m Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub is supporting hydrogen fuel cell vehicle deployments in the region and infrastructure investments by co-locating transport end-users with hydrogen production and refuelling. In addition, the Department for Transport's £20m Zero Emission Road Freight Trials and the government's 4,000 Zero Emission Buses commitment may also provide the potential for an increase in hydrogen refuelling stations within the UK, subject to future years spending.

In June, the Government announced £20 million for zero-emission vehicle competition winners to power up the electric vehicle transport revolution. The winning bids included projects supporting the development of hydrogen fuel cell vehicle technology.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[28955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing further support to the building of hydrogen re-fuelling sites.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[28962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing further support to the building of hydrogen re-fuelling sites.

Rachel Maclean:

Hydrogen is likely to be fundamental to achieving the full decarbonisation of UK transport. The UK already has one of the largest hydrogen refuelling station networks in Europe with fourteen publicly accessible stations that provide hydrogen suitable for use by cars, vans, trucks and buses.

The Government's £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme is already supporting the deployment of hundreds of new hydrogen vehicles and growing the refuelling network by delivering new refuelling stations and upgrading some existing stations.

The £3m Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub is supporting hydrogen fuel cell vehicle deployments in the region and infrastructure investments by co-locating transport end-users with hydrogen production and refuelling.

In addition, the Department for Transport's £20m Zero Emission Road Freight Trials will support UK industry to develop cost-effective, zero-emission HGVs and their refuelling infrastructure in the UK, and aim to demonstrate multiple potential technologies for decarbonising the largest road freight vehicles such as hydrogen, so that by the end of the decade we are able to start providing the necessary infrastructure for HGVs to meet our net zero targets.

The Zero Emission Road Freight Trials and the Government's 4,000 zero emission buses commitment may also provide the potential for an increase in hydrogen refuelling stations within the UK, subject to future years spending.

■ **Parking: Pedestrian Areas**

Damien Moore: [\[28315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to minimise the effect of pavement parking on individuals with sight loss.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department carried out a public consultation on possible solutions to the complex pavement parking problem. This closed on 22 November 2020 and received over 15,000 responses. The Department is now carefully analysing the responses and the results will inform decisions on the next steps.

■ **Railway Stations: Ellesmere Port and Neston**

Justin Madders: [\[29815\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many train stations per resident there are in (a) Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency and (b) England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Stations per parliamentary constituency are published by the Office for Rail and Road (ORR):

[Estimates of station usage | ORR Data Portal](#)

Estimates of population per parliamentary constituency are published on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) population estimates website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/parliamentaryconstituencymidyearpopulationestimates>

■ **Railways: North of England**

Justin Madders: [\[29814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to review rail transport options in (a) Ellesmere Port and Neston constituency, (b) Cheshire West and Chester and (c) the North of England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is looking at a range of measures to improve rail across the North of England including services between Cheshire and Manchester, which were part of the consultation on Manchester timetable changes held earlier this year. In a separate review, the Department is also asking the public for views on services along the East Coast Mainline. Neston station is expected to benefit from a more frequent service on the Wrexham – Bidston line in the coming year.

■ Trains: Protective Clothing

Rachael Maskell: [\[29842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing specific coaches on trains which require the wearing of masks during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The success of vaccine deployment has put the United Kingdom in a strong position to ease restrictions. At Step 4, 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. 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. It is for individual train operating companies to decide how best to manage their services, including assessing proposals such as mask-only carriages.

■ Travel Restrictions: United Arab Emirates

Justin Madders: [\[29825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the evidence supporting the placement of the United Arab Emirates in the red list for travel.

Robert Courts:

The Joint Biosecurity Centre continuously monitor the epidemiological situation in other countries to determine their status under the traffic light system. These system categorises countries based on risk to protect public health and the vaccine rollout from variants of COVID-19.

A summary of the JBC methodology has been published on GOV.UK, alongside key data and evidence from publicly available platforms such as GISAID, the World Health Organization and host government websites.

TREASURY

■ Labour Market

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[28065\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps he is taking to support labour market growth.

Steve Barclay:

We are helping people find new jobs by doubling the number of work coaches, and have introduced additional tailored support such as the £2bn Kickstart scheme and £2.9bn Restart programme.

The Government has provided funding to triple the number of traineeships and sector-based work academies from their pre-pandemic level, introduced expanded incentives for employers to hire apprentices, and introduced support for school leavers to take high value training courses where employment opportunities are not immediately available.

The Budget also announced £1 million to pilot a jobs-matching platform for work coaches to help people find work across sectors .

WALES

■ Free Zones: Wales

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[29950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the (a) process of, (b) timeframe for and (c) allocation of funding for the establishment of a freeport in Wales.

Simon Hart:

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.

I have regular discussions with the Welsh Government on a range of issues, including Freeports. The UK Government remains committed to establishing at least one Freeport in Wales. We wrote to the Welsh Government on 11 July and I would 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. Through the application of the Barnett formula at the 2020 Spending Review, the Welsh Government is receiving around £123 per head in 2021-22 for every £100 head spent by the UK Government on devolved matters in England. However, it is 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.

■ Wales Office: Information

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[29025\]](#)

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

David T C Davies:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Wales (OSSW) receives information from a wide range of regulatory bodies and non-departmental public bodies. The Office scrutinises and checks the information it receives as part of the normal course of business. OSSW itself has no arms-length bodies.

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Maintenance****Marion Fellows:**[\[29834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of parents who receive child maintenance and are exempted from the £20 application fee for the Child Maintenance Service collect and pay service on grounds of domestic abuse are (a) men and (b) women.

Guy Opperman:

The information requested is not readily available and would incur disproportionate cost to provide.

Marion Fellows:[\[29835\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of parents who receive child maintenance and are exempted from the £20 application fee for the Child Maintenance Service collect and pay service are (a) men and (b) women.

Guy Opperman:

The information requested is not readily available and would incur disproportionate cost to provide.

■ Disability**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[30407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to publish its National Strategy for Disabled People before the summer recess.

Justin Tomlinson:

The National Disability Strategy will be published in the coming months. The strategy will take into account the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people and will focus on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects of life, including employment, transport, housing and education.

■ Employment: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[30387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the level of risk to employees of suffering from long covid due to a return to the workplace; if she will take steps to encourage workers to continue to work from home

where possible; and what steps she is taking to ensure that workplaces encourage (a) high hygiene standards, (b) use of face coverings and (c) social distancing.

Mims Davies:

The Department of Health and Social Care is the policy lead for Long COVID and, as this is a relatively new condition, is working to further inform wider understanding across government. The Government is also keeping a watching brief on this through the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

In addition, The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is keeping the potential implications of Long COVID under review and has proactively commissioned its own work to be better informed of the issue. HSE's Chief Scientist and its health and occupational health experts are involved in wider discussions in this space and HSE is also in contact with various professional networks in order to keep abreast of continuing developments.

Throughout the pandemic, HSE has encouraged businesses to manage risks in order to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in workplaces; including through the provision of detailed guidance (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>). This includes guidance on the importance of cleaning, hygiene and handwashing, providing adequate ventilation and social distancing.

Face coverings are a public health protection measure largely intended to help protect others. They are not classified as personal protective equipment (PPE) and are therefore not covered by health and safety legislation. HSE has a web page explaining the difference between face coverings and surgical face masks (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/face-coverings-and-face-masks.htm>).

■ **Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[30386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Health and Safety Executive is adequately resourced to tackle the concerns over the rise in covid-19 infections under the protections in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Mims Davies:

As part of the Spending Review 2020 process, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was provided with an additional £14m for financial year 2021/22, to continue to support the government in its national response to the global Covid-19 pandemic. This funding is in addition to HSE's regular government funding to deliver its wide-ranging regulatory functions.

The additional funding has enabled HSE to increase the resource supporting the Working Safely Advice line for businesses and workers, undertake a proactive Spot Check programme and ongoing Spot Check collaboration with local authorities. During April to June 2021, there have been more than 88,000 Covid-19 compliance spot checks.

HSE is funded to deliver its wide-ranging regulatory functions and continues to redirect resource, when required, to ensure transmission of coronavirus is reduced in the workplace.

Rachael Maskell:

[30388]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with Public Health England on how employers should implement measures under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Mims Davies:

Officials from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Public Health England (PHE) have met regularly to discuss the Working Safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) [guidance](#). These discussions have addressed the measures necessary to control the risk of coronavirus transmission in the workplace. HSE has also supported PHE and other public health bodies in responding to COVID-19 outbreaks. The Secretary of State has not been involved in these discussions.

HSE is an independent regulator and throughout the pandemic they have supported Great Britain's public health response in the workplace by adopting a risk-based approach. HSE has used health and safety at work legislation, government guidance and best available evidence to ensure dutyholders are aware of, and take, the necessary controls to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace.

Rachael Maskell:

[30430]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Health and Safety Executive is taking to ensure that employers put in place infection control measures to prevent the transmission of covid-19.

Mims Davies:

Businesses must take reasonable steps to control risks in their workplace; including those arising from COVID-19. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published detailed guidance, on its website, in respect of COVID risk assessments (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm>) which complements information on Gov.UK about Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>) and that published by the Welsh (<https://gov.wales/keep-wales-safe-work-html>) and Scottish (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-returning-to-offices/>) Governments. Businesses are responsible for implementing any controls identified by their risk assessments.

HSE and Local Authorities use a range of interventions to influence, encourage and advise business and, where necessary, hold to account those who fail to meet their responsibilities. Throughout the pandemic, HSE has engaged with businesses through its Spot Check procedures, which include phone calls and, where face to face contact is necessary, site visits. Determining whether businesses have carried out, and where appropriate implemented the controls identified by, their risk assessment is a central part of the process.

■ Job Creation

Dr Rupa Huq:

[30405]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will publish data by ethnicity on the number of jobs created by the Government's job creation schemes.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [21984](#).

■ Kickstart Scheme

David Linden:

[28298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many kickstart scheme jobs have been (a) approved and (b) started in each region from 6 May 2021 to the most recent date for which information is available.

Mims Davies:

Between 06/05/2021 and 30/06/2021, over 39,400 new jobs were approved by the Department for Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme. We are unable at present to provide data on the number of approved jobs by region, as at that stage in the process we do not hold information about the exact location of a job, only the head office of the employer.

Between 03/06/2021 and 30/06/2021 an average of 500 young people started a Kickstart job each working day.

The table below shows a breakdown of the increase in starts by location between 06/05/2021 and 30/06/2021. Figures have been rounded according to departmental standards.

LOCATION	NEW STARTS 06/05/2021-30/06/2021
East Midlands	1,260
East of England	1,560
London	4,390
North East	950
North West	2,330
Scotland	1,790
South East	2,130
South West	1,340
Wales	1,120
West Midlands	1,740

LOCATION	NEW STARTS 06/05/2021-30/06/2021
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,490

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system, which has been developed quickly.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Mark Tami: [\[28072\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 2 March 2021 to Question 156258, for what reason it is her Department's policy that claimants with an award of Personal Independence Payment from the First Tier Tribunal are required to apply for PIP again by completing a PIP2 form when their award comes to an end, while claimants with an award of PIP directly from the Department itself are instead sent a PIP review form asking if anything has changed since their last award.

Justin Tomlinson:

As explained in my answer to Question [156258](#) on 2 March, a First Tier Tribunal considering an appeal against a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decision also considers the length of any award it may make. The length of award will be based on the individual's needs and the likelihood of those changing. If the Tribunal gives a short, fixed-term award then it is indicating that the claimant's limitations are likely to improve to the point they would not be entitled at the end of their PIP award. As claimants can continue to receive benefit under a new award in a similar way to someone having their award reviewed, no requirement for an Impact Assessment was established. The Department is currently reviewing the approach to Fixed Term Awards including where awarded after Tribunal.

Mark Tami: [\[28076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she conduct an impact assessment for her Department's policy requiring people whose entitlement to Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for a fixed period was established by the First Tier Tribunal to reapply for that benefit rather than have it reviewed through a PIP review form; and if she will make an assessment of the effect of that policy on the ability of disabled people to meet the additional costs of their disability or condition.

Justin Tomlinson:

As explained in my answer to Question [156258](#) on 2 March, a First Tier Tribunal considering an appeal against a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) decision also considers the length of any award it may make. The length of award will be based on

the individual's needs and the likelihood of those changing. If the Tribunal gives a short, fixed-term award then it is indicating that the claimant's limitations are likely to improve to the point they would not be entitled at the end of their PIP award. As claimants can continue to receive benefit under a new award in a similar way to someone having their award reviewed, no requirement for an Impact Assessment was established. The Department is currently reviewing the approach to Fixed Term Awards including where awarded after Tribunal.

■ Social Security Benefits

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[28294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to provide support to families required to make repayments as a result of being overpaid by her Department in error.

Will Quince:

Following the introduction of the 2012 Welfare Reform Act, all overpayments of Universal Credit and new style benefits paid in excess of entitlement are recoverable.

Where recovery is made by deduction from Universal Credit, there is a limit placed on the overall amount that can be deducted in circumstances where, for example, a claimant may have multiple deductions to be considered. In recent years we have seen two successive reductions in the maximum that may normally be deducted – from 40% of the UC Standard Allowance to 30% and now 25% from April 2021.

Where requested deductions exceed the 25% maximum, or there is insufficient Universal Credit in payment for all deductions to be made, a priority order is applied, which determines the order in which items should be deducted. 'Last resort' deductions, such as rent or fuel costs, are at the top of the priority order, ensuring that claimant welfare is prioritised, followed by social obligation deductions, such as fines and child maintenance, and finally benefit debt, such as Social Fund loans and benefit overpayments.

This ensures that benefit claimants repaying debt are left with more of their benefit, striking a balance between the Department's responsibility to recover overpayments whilst not creating undue financial hardship.

Anyone with overpayment deductions who does experience financial hardship is encouraged to contact the Department's Debt Management unit. Where a person cannot afford the proposed rate of these deductions repayment a lower amount can be negotiated.

In exceptional circumstances, discretion not to pursue recovery of overpayments can also be applied under guidelines set out by HM Treasury. Typically, this would be where the continuing recovery would cause severe hardship or risk to the customer and/or their family. Further details of which are publicly available in HM Treasury's Managing Public Money.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/994902/MPM_Spring_21_with_annexes_180621.pdf

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Business Update

UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency and Minister of State (Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change) (Anne-Marie Trevelyan): [\[HCWS176\]](#)

As we look ahead to publishing our comprehensive Net Zero Strategy and hosting COP26 in the autumn, we must focus on how we invest in the UK's most important asset – our workforce – so that people have the right skills to deliver the net zero transition and thrive in the jobs it will create. This builds on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution set out in November 2020 - the first step in capturing the once in a lifetime opportunity to lead the charge and pursue a global green recovery, level up the country, and support jobs throughout the UK as we accelerate on our path to reach net zero by 2050.

Today, together with my honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills Gillian Keegan, we welcome the publication of the independent Green Jobs Taskforce's report. The report brings together evidence on the skills needed in the green economy and sets out their independent recommendations for how government, industry and a wide range of stakeholders can work together to meet the important challenges and grasp the opportunities they have identified.

We are also pleased to announce the formation of a cross-cutting delivery group to maintain the momentum generated by the Taskforce and drive action across the green skills agenda.

BEIS and DfE convened this Taskforce of 17 individuals from diverse backgrounds in industry, academia, unions, and the education and skills sector to come together to advise government, industry and the education sector. Government will now consider the Taskforce's rich evidence base and comprehensive recommendations ahead of setting out, later in the year, our Net Zero Strategy.

But we are taking the first steps to ensure that green jobs are good quality, that they can be accessed by people of all backgrounds and in all parts of the country, and that workers in sectors and industries undergoing change can re-apply their skills and expertise towards this new challenge.

In England, the reforms to the skills system set out in the recently published *Skills for Jobs* White Paper provide the foundation on which we can build. This programme of reform, which placed employers at the centre of our technical education system, includes the introduction of new T Levels, flexible apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps and occupational traineeships. Earlier in the year, we marked a major milestone in the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, with the roll out of almost 400 qualifications which are now

available and fully-funded for any adult who has not already achieved a Level 3 (A Level equivalent) qualification.

We will ensure that these programmes are directed to support more people to get the skills they need to move into green jobs, and consider where we might need to go further or faster to fill skills gaps identified by the Taskforce. We are already making progress – Skills Bootcamps will, from July this year, support flexible training in key green sectors such as construction and nuclear; a Green Apprenticeship Advisory Panel is identifying existing apprenticeships that best support green career pathways; our Free Courses for Jobs offer is supporting more adults to study fully-funded qualifications in subject areas crucial for green jobs, such as construction, forestry and engineering; and a new Emerging Skills Electrification Project will identify cutting-edge skills in the battery/electrification sector, develop short, modular content to meet the needs of employers and upskill the teaching workforce.

This report also highlights how supporting people to develop the right skills to thrive in this transition cannot be the responsibility of government alone. We want to see businesses step up and invest in training the green workforce, and so we urge them to reflect on the Taskforce's work and use it to inform how they can benefit from and contribute to the green industrial revolution.

Government will continue to work closely with industry to ensure the employer-led skills system we are building through our ongoing reforms meets employers' needs and reflects the fast-changing shape of the UK labour market.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Publication of the Online Media Literacy Strategy

Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Caroline Dinenage):

[\[HCWS175\]](#)

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government is today publishing our [Online Media Literacy Strategy](#). This strategy is a complementary measure to the proposed Online Safety Bill and will play a critical role in allowing us to meet our ambition of making the UK the safest place in the world to be online.

Through this Strategy, we want to improve media literacy across the country by providing direction to the sector. We also seek to highlight the challenges that all citizens face in navigating an increasingly complex media landscape, with an amplified focus on vulnerable and disabled users.

The Strategy sets out our plans to ensure a coordinated approach to online media literacy education. We have established a Media Literacy Framework that enumerates the skills we want citizens young and old to learn in order to navigate the online media landscape safely. We set out the key user groups on which we will direct particular focus to ensure an inclusive approach to media literacy. We lay out six media literacy challenges to provide direction to the media literacy sector. We also highlight the specific issue of misinformation and disinformation, and the potential for media literacy by design to assist media literate online behaviour.

We have engaged with a broad range of stakeholders from academia, regulators, civil society and industry, drawing upon their expertise to inform the Strategy. This is only the beginning of our engagement with the sector, and we will look to work even more closely with these organisations and more to ensure the maximum possible impact from media literacy activity.

As our attention turns to delivery of the Strategy, we will focus on taking forward a number of different initiatives. Alongside the Strategy we are publishing the first annual Online Media Literacy Action Plan for the Financial Year 2021/22. The Action Plan sets out a number of initiatives to enact the Strategy, from establishing a cross-sector Media Literacy Taskforce, to working with teachers to help embed media literacy in schools, to collaborating with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Administrations through a UK Media Literacy Forum.

It will be important we work productively with other key stakeholders across the sector. Ofcom has an existing statutory duty to promote media literacy. The Government's efforts in the media literacy landscape will play a supportive and complementary role to that of Ofcom, by providing focus for organisations across the sector. We will continue to engage closely with Ofcom where there is a potential to increase the impact of our efforts.

Media Literacy is a devolved policy and so the initiatives contained in the Strategy will only apply directly to England. However, we are working closely with the Devolved Administrations and intend to establish a UK Media Literacy Forum to engage with our counterparts in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast and ensure we are achieving the greatest possible impact across the whole UK.

A copy of the strategy will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

EDUCATION

■ Level 3 Qualifications Reform

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills (Gillian Keegan): [\[HCWS177\]](#)

Today, I am pleased to announce the next stage of the government's reforms to post-16 qualifications at level 3 in England.

Reforming post-16 education and skills is at the heart of our plan to build back better and level up the country by ensuring that students everywhere have access to qualifications that will give them the skills to succeed. We have already improved the quality of level 3 study by reforming A levels, redeveloping apprenticeship standards and introducing T Levels. This work is vital to the reforms and will create a coherent system in which all classroom based qualifications that sit alongside A levels and T Levels are good quality.

These reforms build on the Skills for Jobs white paper, which set out our ambition to improve the opportunities for young people and adults to progress into skilled employment by linking technical qualifications to employer led occupational standards.

These standards form the core of new T Levels and the reforms published today will ensure that this will also be the case for other technical qualifications on offer at level 3.

High quality qualifications are essential to helping everyone, whatever their age, to get good jobs and realise their ambitions. Whether they want to go into skilled employment or into higher education (HE), achieving a level 3 qualification will be an important stepping-stone. The system also needs to be adaptable, so that we train people for the jobs of the future.

We are grateful for the thoughtful contributions to our second stage consultation on level 3 qualifications, and for the high level of interest in these important issues. Though our goal of a slimmed-down, higher quality system remains the same, we have listened carefully to feedback on the range of qualifications that are needed. Our policy statement sets out where we see the value in qualifications that can be taken as part of mixed study programmes alongside A levels, as well as the limited range of subjects where it is justified to take specialist alternatives, such as in performing and creative arts.

Our reforms are bold and will lead to significant change from the current system. We continue to be unapologetic about both the need and our commitment to raise standards in technical education, as we have already done for GCSEs, A levels and apprenticeships. It is vital that in a fast moving and high tech economy technical education closes the gap between what people study and the needs of employers. We are proposing to put many of these changes into law through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill.

We will streamline and improve the quality of the level 3 system. We are strengthening the pathways to progression, creating clearly defined academic and technical routes with qualifications leading to academic study, and/or skilled employment. This clarity of purpose will allow students to see more easily how their study will help them to progress.

We will ensure that all qualifications sitting alongside A levels and T Levels provide progression for learners, respond to the needs of employers and meet rigorous quality standards. Funding approval will be removed for technical qualifications overlapping with wave 1 and 2 T Levels from 2023, and with wave 3 and 4 T Levels from 2024. We have listened carefully to feedback on the pace of implementation of these reforms and will phase the introduction of reformed qualifications, starting with a Digital pathfinder for introduction from 2023, scaling up in the following year and completing the reforms by 2025.

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) and Ofqual will work to ensure that qualifications approved for funding are high quality, meet the needs of employers and stay up to date with our evolving economy. The Education and Skills Funding Agency will continue to have overall responsibility for funding decisions.

We also recognise that getting a quality offer at level 2 and below is key to making sure that students have clear lines of sight to level 3, apprenticeships, traineeships, and directly into employment. As a result, we want to improve study at level 2 and below alongside our reforms to level 3 qualifications. We are considering feedback to the call for

evidence which ran from 10 November to 14 February and will consult on proposals for reform later this year.

TRANSPORT

■ Transport Decarbonisation

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS174\]](#)

Transport decarbonisation is a dull way of describing something much more exciting and far-reaching.

Because transport is not just how you get around. It is something that fundamentally shapes our towns, our cities, our countryside, our living standards, our health, and our whole quality of life.

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan that will be published today, the first in the world, is not about stopping people doing things: it's about doing the same things differently. We will still fly on holiday, but in more efficient aircraft, using sustainable fuel. We will still drive on improved roads, but increasingly in zero emission cars. We will still have new development, but it won't force us into high-carbon lifestyles.

Transport is the largest contributor to UK greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), with road transport alone accounting for almost a quarter of our total emissions in 2019. We must deliver a step change in the breadth and scale of our ambition to reduce transport's GHG emissions to reach net zero. In March 2020, "Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge" committed to bring together a Transport Decarbonisation Plan to deliver transport's contribution to carbon budgets and net zero across all forms of transport.

The plan published today is genuinely high ambition – technically and feasibly – for all areas of transport and notes that decarbonisation will rely, in part, on future transport technology, coupled with the necessary behavioural and societal change. Because of the pandemic, we are already seeing some of these changes in behaviour happen much faster than expected. We've seen homeworking change traditional commuter and leisure trips, video conferencing has changed business travel and we've seen a rise in cycling and walking all of which could save thousands of tonnes of carbon themselves.

In the sixteen months since March 2020, we have published ambitious policies to transform England for cycling and walking with an investment of £2 billion and more than 300 cycling and walking schemes already being delivered. We have published plans to fundamentally reshape our bus network along public service lines and have created Great British Railways to make services easier to use, to grow the network and build on the huge acceleration of electrification we've already seen since 2010.

The commitments set out today include linking local infrastructure funding to solutions that cut emissions - aligning that investment to our net zero programme, improving public transport, increasing support for active travel so mass transit and cycling and walking play a bigger role than ever, a net zero rail network by 2050, net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040 and leading the transition to green shipping.

The Plan also sets out a world-leading pledge to consult on the end of sale of all new, non-zero emission road vehicles by 2040 at the latest.

As a major step towards that, alongside the Plan we have published a consultation on phasing out the sale of all new non-zero emission heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) by 2040, demonstrating our commitment to tackle the second largest source of domestic transport carbon emissions and furthering our ambition to decarbonise UK roads.

This comes with a Green Paper, which will set out options for a new regulatory framework requiring vehicle manufacturers to improve the efficiency of new road vehicles. This will allow us to meet our phase out ambitions whilst creating new jobs for the automotive sector and delivering certainty to drivers.

To underpin our petrol and diesel phase out dates and help achieve them, we are also publishing a 2035 Delivery Plan today. This Plan brings together all of our committed funding streams and measures for decarbonising cars and vans, from across Government, into a single document. It outlines the key timelines, milestones and how we will monitor progress towards our commitment to deliver mass ownership of zero emission cars and vans.

Leading by example, our decarbonisation plan will increase the level of ambition for the whole central Government fleet, moving the target date for the 40,000-vehicle fleet to be fully zero emission forward to 2027.

Today we are also publishing the Government's response to the Electric Vehicle Smart Charging consultation. The response commits to laying legislation later this year to ensure that all private EV chargepoints meet smart charging standards. The transition to EVs is central to Government's net zero commitment but will also increase demand on the electricity system. Smart charging can help mitigate these impacts. This legislation will play an important role in driving the uptake of smart technology, which can save consumers money on their energy bills.

We also intend to tackle the challenges of decarbonising the aviation and maritime sectors head on. Today, we are also launching a Jet Zero consultation that commits the aviation sector to a net zero emissions target by 2050 and sets out our approach and principles to achieve this. The consultation focuses on the rapid development of technologies in a way that maintains the benefits of air travel and maximises the opportunities that decarbonisation can bring for the UK.

The decarbonisation plan sets out further commitments for our maritime sector, establishing our 'Course to Zero', consulting on how we get more ships plugging in to our decarbonised grid, exploring how we phase out emissions from vessels, and considering how we take advantage of the UK's strengths in the maritime sector to support growth in green technology and shipbuilding,

The government is also publishing its Rail Environment Policy Statement, which will set the direction for the rail industry on environment issues and inform the forthcoming Sustainable Rail Strategy. The document will look at traction decarbonisation, air quality,

decarbonising the rail estate and a range of other environmental-related issues on the railway, including biodiversity and waste.

This suite of announcements marks a major leap forward in delivering ambitions to decarbonise transport and we are the first country in the world to do this, taking a firm leadership position as we host COP26 later this year.

The Plan is ambitious, consumer friendly and world leading. It will create economic growth, new industries and jobs and help us Build Back Better and Greener.