



Daily Report

Monday, 19 July 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 19 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:32 P.M., 19 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

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Batteries: Safety Measures

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[33242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to require button batteries to be coated with a bitter agent to discourage children from putting them in their mouths and swallowing those batteries.

Paul Scully:

The UK has a comprehensive consumer safety and protection regulatory framework that covers button batteries, with obligations on producers, manufacturers, importers and distributors to ensure their products are safe before they are placed on the market.

The safety of button batteries is regulated by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSR) and there are specific requirements on button batteries used in toys under the Toys (Safety) Regulations 2011.

The Government commissioned the British Standards Institution (BSI) to publish a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) standard on the safe use of button batteries. Developed with technical experts drawn from a wide range of stakeholders including consumers and businesses, it was published on 30 April this year and specifies safety requirements for button and coin batteries to mitigate the risk of ingestion.

We will continue to work with stakeholders and other interested parties to assess how technologies such as bittering agents and any other options available can be used to enhance safety.

■ Business Premises: Rents

Seema Malhotra:

[\[32400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to his Department's announcement of 16 June 2021, Eviction protection extended for businesses most in need by the Department, what plans he has to support businesses unable to pay their rents who have received County Court judgments for rent arrears.

Paul Scully:

The Government has implemented a range of measures to support commercial property tenants including extending the moratorium on the landlord's right of forfeiture for non-payment of rent, introducing restrictions on winding-up petitions, including on the basis of a statutory demand, and extending restrictions on the use of the Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery (CRAR), which affects the ability of landlords to seize goods owned by the tenant in lieu of rent owed.

Whilst we recognise that landlords are increasingly using County Court judgments as a means of debt recovery, they have a reduced impact on businesses due to the measures introduced.

The measures that we have put in place are intended to protect otherwise viable businesses from the immediate threat of eviction due to the trading restrictions introduced to combat the spread of Coronavirus. It has never been the Government's policy intent to restrict all remedies that landlords have available to collect rents and service charges. We are seeking to strike a fair balance between providing ongoing support to tenant businesses and those who own the properties.

In addition, the government will introduce legislation in this Parliamentary session to support the orderly resolution of rental payments accrued by commercial tenants affected by non-pharmaceutical interventions during the pandemic, and the details of the process will be released in due course.

As we develop a long-term solution to these challenges, we urge landlords and tenants to negotiate and reach an agreement which is in the best interests of both parties. In the meantime, we expect businesses that are open and trading as normal to pay their full rent unless otherwise agreed as periods of normal operation will not be covered by further legislation.

■ **Business Travel: Coronavirus**

Dan Jarvis:

[32395]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) Home Secretary and (b) Secretary of State for Transport on the effect of quarantine rules on British (i) businesses and (ii) employees that are required to travel to red and amber list countries to fulfil business contracts.

Paul Scully:

Business travel is permitted in accordance with rules about access and quarantine that have been agreed across Government. The rules relating to red and amber list countries can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>. From the 19th of July, individuals arriving in England from amber list countries who are fully vaccinated with an NHS administered vaccine (plus 14 days) will be exempt from self-isolation and day 8 testing.

■ **Business: Certification Quality Marks**

Matt Western:

[32475]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will delay the deadline for businesses to switch to UK conformity assessments for pyrotechnics by at least one year.

Paul Scully:

We are working closely with the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) to ensure that a UK approved body for pyrotechnics is accredited as soon as possible.

We are also aware that pyrotechnics bodies are currently engaging with UKAS and are in the process of getting accredited.

■ Carers: Leave

John Lamont: [\[31517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent progress he has made on introducing carer's leave.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to delivering the manifesto commitment to introduce a new right to an additional week of leave for unpaid carers.

The consultation on Carer's Leave ran from March to August 2020, setting out detailed policy proposals to create a new employment right for one week's unpaid leave.

The Government response to the consultation will be published in due course, setting out the way forward.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Billing

Seema Malhotra: [\[32399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the average length of time is between his Department receiving and paying invoices; and what that length of time is for (a) SMEs and (b) large businesses.

Amanda Solloway:

The average number of working days to pay BEIS invoices each month in the year to date is given below.

MONTH	AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS TO PAY
January 2021	5.46
February 2021	3.97
March 2021	3.58
April 2021	4.26
May 2021	3.52
June 2021	4.75
Year to Date	4.26

The Department does not identify the size of business in its invoice payment system, so we are unable to distinguish between SMEs and large businesses.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Re-employment

Andy McDonald:

[\[33234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, what steps have been taken by the Department to (a) investigate the use of fire and rehire tactics by executive non-departmental public bodies, (b) communicate the Government's policy on fire and rehire tactics to those bodies and (c) discourage the use of fire and rehire tactics by those bodies.

Paul Scully:

Non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) have a role in the process of national government but are not part of a government department. They operate at arm's length from Ministers, though a Minister will be responsible to Parliament for the NDPBs.

Although we have not targeted NDPBs specifically in our communications, this Government has been clear that we expect all employers to treat their employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership. Using threats about firing and rehiring as a negotiation tactic is unacceptable. We expect employers and employees to negotiate new terms and conditions and there are laws around how this must be done, and protections in place when firms are considering redundancies.

Last year, we asked the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) to collect evidence into how fire and rehire is being used by employers. This report was published on 8 June. We have asked Acas to produce better, more comprehensive, clearer guidance to help all employers explore all the options before considering 'fire and rehire' and encourage good employment relations practice. This will be relevant to all employers.

■ Electric Vehicles

Seema Malhotra:

[\[32401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to make electric vehicle ownership more affordable.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government's current intervention in the electric vehicle market aims to accelerate upfront price parity between electric and internal combustion engine equivalents, making electric vehicles more affordable for all consumers.

The Government had already committed £1.5 billion to support the early market and remove barriers to zero emission vehicles ownership. Alongside the new phase out dates we have pledged a further £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles.

The Government is providing grants for homeowners, businesses and local authorities to install chargepoints and is also supporting the deployment of rapid

chargepoints. The Government will provide £1.3 billion over the next four years to support the continued roll-out of chargepoints on motorways and major A roads, in homes and businesses and on-street.

Since 2011, the Government has provided around £1.3 billion in grant funding to bring ultra-low emission vehicles onto UK roads, reducing the upfront cost of over 300,000 ultra low emission vehicles, of which over 200,000 are zero emission vehicles. The plug-in vehicle grant scheme was renewed last year, with £582 million of funding intended to last until 2022-23.

Drivers of ultra-low emission vehicles also receive other benefits, including lower tax rates and grants towards the installation of chargepoints. For example, all zero emission models will pay 1% company car tax in 2021-22 and a rate of 2% in 2022-23 through to 2024-25. Additionally, all zero emission cars are exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED).

Local authorities may also provide incentives, such as free parking or exemption from the congestion charge.

■ Energy: Housing

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[33099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish the Standard Assessment Procedure for Energy Rating of Dwellings.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The next version of SAP will come into force with the uplift to Part L of the Building Regulations next year. We published an early draft of it in 2018 (SAP 10) and will publish an updated version (SAP 10.2) shortly.

■ Energy: Meters

Chi Onwurah:

[\[32389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 26 May 2021 to Question 2971 on Energy: Meters, what data is required for regulated purposes, such as accurate billing; and how consumers can monitor and control how that data is shared.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The smart metering Data Access and Privacy Framework protects consumers' privacy and set outs the levels of access to energy consumption data from smart meters permitted for different parties. The Framework ensures that households have control over who can access their energy consumption data and for what purposes, except where this is required for regulated purposes.

Energy suppliers and networks are permitted under their Licence Conditions to access energy consumption data for narrowly defined regulatory purposes.

Energy suppliers can access data for purposes including billing, meeting a customer request for access to their data, responding to an enquiry or complaint by a customer, and where they have reasonable grounds to suspect and investigate theft.

Energy networks can access granular consumption data to support the safe and efficient management and reinforcement of energy networks, provided they have a consumer's consent or implement strict data protection procedures approved by Ofgem.

Information must be made available to consumers on which energy consumption data will be accessed and for what purpose.

■ Government Departments: Impact Assessments

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[33108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure Government Departments comply with the Principles of the Better Regulation Framework, interim guidance, published in March 2020, on impact assessments; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Better Regulation Framework as agreed across government is clear on the requirements for impact assessments, and we continue to push departments to adhere to these requirements.

We do this through support from the Better Regulation Executive (BRE) in providing extensive support and guidance on better regulation and impact assessments, and through a Cross-Whitehall training delivered by jointly by BRE and the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC), which covers everything from better regulation policy to conducting an impact assessment is also available and offered to departments.

We also encourage departmental engagement with the RPC in the early stages of the policy development process for their advice on the proposed analysis to support the policy.

We are confident that efforts by the Better Regulation Executive and the Regulatory Policy Committee will continue to improve the regulatory impact assessment process, while the impending reforms to the better regulation framework will also look to enhance the process.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Valerie Vaz:

[\[33212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to achieve the UK's new Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We will publish our comprehensive Net Zero Strategy ahead of COP26, setting out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy, and raising ambition

as we outline our path to meet net zero by 2050, our Carbon Budgets and 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

■ **Heating: Non-ionizing Radiation**

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[33096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to the development of infrared heating solutions.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Achieving net zero carbon emissions will require almost all UK homes to be supplied with low-carbon heating by 2050, and electrification will be an important part of that transition. Extensive government and independent analysis indicate that heat pumps are a cost-effective solution and will be a principal means of decarbonising heat in buildings through electrification over the next decade. There may be a role for alternative technologies, like infrared heating, but research to date – including our 2019 report ‘Evidence gathering for electric heating options in off gas grid homes’ – suggests this should be limited to specific use cases, such as smaller homes with low heat demand.

We continue to encourage innovation in new technologies. Support is available for developing technologies, such as infrared heating solutions, through programmes like the BEIS Energy Entrepreneurs Fund (EEF) and Clean Growth Fund (CGF). The EEF is a competitive grant funding scheme to support the development and demonstration of technologies, products and processes in power generation, energy efficiency and storage technologies, while the CGF aims to accelerate the deployment of innovative clean technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, by making direct investments in companies seeking to commercialise promising technologies.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[33097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing Government financial support for the development of infrared heating systems.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Achieving net zero carbon emissions will require almost all UK homes to be supplied with low-carbon heating by 2050, and electrification will be an important part of that transition. Extensive government and independent analysis indicate that heat pumps are a cost-effective solution and will be a principal means of decarbonising heat in buildings through electrification over the next decade. There may be a role for alternative technologies, like infrared heating, but research to date – including our 2019 report ‘Evidence gathering for electric heating options in off gas grid homes’ – suggests this should be limited to specific use cases, such as smaller homes with low heat demand.

BEIS officials continue to assess the merits of different heating technologies and support to develop these technologies is available through schemes including the

Energy Entrepreneurs Fund and Clean Growth Fund. I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I have given him today to Question 33096 for further information on these schemes.

■ Hospitality Industry: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[33333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the hospitality industry on providing financial support to those businesses that have had to (a) close and (b) reduce trading capacity due to their staff having to self-isolate during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Department has and continues to regularly meet with representatives from across the Hospitality sector to discuss how it can recover and build back from the pandemic. We have provided an unprecedented support package of £352 billion including grants, loans, business rates relief, VAT cuts and the job retention scheme.

■ Hydrogen

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[33100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using retired nuclear power stations for the development and production of hydrogen.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government believes that nuclear could have a role in low-carbon hydrogen production and is aware of industry proposals showing how current nuclear technologies could play a role during the 2020s, while small and advanced modular reactors could unlock further efficiencies in future hydrogen production.

In terms of using former nuclear sites, the first priority is to ensure their safety and continued decommissioning, however we regularly engage with opportunities for future re-use where appropriate and this does include alternative energy production.

The Government is developing the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy which it aims to publish shortly. This will set out the key steps needed in the 2020s to deliver our 5GW ambition and set the context for further scale up on the way to net zero.

■ Intellectual Property

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[32353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to change the rules relating to the exhaustion of intellectual property rights.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government is currently consulting on what the UK's future IP exhaustion regime should be, and if there is to be a change, how any change should be implemented. This consultation closes on 31 August 2021. At the present time, no decisions have

been made as to whether a change from the current system is in the best interests of the UK.

■ **Merchant Shipping: Pensions**

Matt Rodda:

[\[33323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 18565 on the Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund Scheme, if he will make an estimate of the future cost to the public purse in the (a) short-term and (b) long-term in relation to the Natural Environment Research Council and British Antarctic Survey's role as a sponsoring employer of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund pension scheme.

Amanda Solloway:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 24 June 2021 to Question [18565](#).

■ **Nursing and Midwifery Council: Insolvency**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[33131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what changes have been introduced as a result of the investigation by the Financial Reporting Council into NMC Health's insolvency in 2020.

Paul Scully:

The Financial Reporting Council's investigation into the audit of the accounts of NMC Health for the year ended 31 December 2018 was launched in May 2020 under the FRC's Audit Enforcement Procedure and is ongoing. The Government is committed to restoring trust in audit and corporate governance as set out in the white paper published in March this year. The Government will consider the findings of the Financial Reporting Council's investigation when it is concluded.

■ **Oil: Shetland**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[33291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he is taking steps to prevent the extension of the Cambo heavy crude field; and what discussions he has had with the Oil and Gas Authority on the environmental impact of those proposals.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

While we are working hard to drive down demand for fossil fuels, there will continue to be ongoing demand for oil and gas over the coming years as recognised by the independent Climate Change Committee. The UK is a net importer of both oil and gas and reducing domestic production would only lead to higher imports from other countries on a net basis.

The Cambo field was licensed in 2001 and 2004 and consent to proceed to production will be a matter for our expert regulators, the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA), and the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED), following their standard regulatory processes. As is normal for such a site, our regulators submit these proposals to extensive scrutiny, including a full environmental impact assessment and a public consultation. This process is currently underway.

■ Parental Leave

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[32423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Paymaster General on 1 March 2021, Official Report, column 51, what progress the Government has made on its legislative proposals for shared parental leave and adoption leave; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

Shared Parental Leave and Pay was introduced in Great Britain in 2014 for parents of children who were due or placed for adoption from April 2015. We are currently evaluating the scheme and will report on the evaluation later this year. Statutory Adoption Leave and Pay has been available to eligible employees since 2002, and in 2014 we made changes to the scheme to bring it into line with arrangements for Maternity Leave and Pay. Since 2014, Adoption Leave has been a “day 1” right and the first six weeks of Statutory Adoption Pay have been paid at an earnings-related rate (90% of the employee’s weekly earnings with no upper limit).

As part of the evaluation of Shared Parental Leave and Pay we commissioned large, representative, surveys of parents and employees which asked about a broad range of parental leave and pay entitlements. We have also consulted on high-level options for reforming parental leave and pay. The information that we have collected through these surveys and the consultation will give us a fuller picture of how well the current system of parental leave and pay is working for parents and employers.

We are currently processing and analysing this information and we will publish our findings later in the year.

■ Post Offices

Feryal Clark:

[\[33369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) community, (b) main and (c) Crown Post Offices in (i) the Enfield North constituency and (ii) the UK.

Paul Scully:

While Post Office Limited is publicly owned, it operates as an independent, commercial business. Therefore, details regarding the number of community and Crown Post Offices in the Enfield North constituency and the United Kingdom as of 15 July 2021, are an operational matter for Post Office Limited.

■ Post Offices: Rural Areas

Drew Hendry: [\[32431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has had with the Post Office on the potential effect on rural postmasters in the moving from a volume-based payment model to a value-based payment model for their remuneration for delivering postal services.

Drew Hendry: [\[32432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure rural postmasters incomes are protected during any reassessment of payment models by the Post Office.

Paul Scully:

The Government continues to safeguard the Post Office network and protect existing rural services through the access criteria that Government sets. While postmaster remuneration and the changes resulting from the second Mails Distribution Agreement agreed recently between Post Office and Royal Mail is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd, Government recognises the importance of supporting postmasters and ensuring they are rewarded fairly for the services they provide.

The Government expects Post Office to listen carefully to the feedback received during the recent consultation on the proposed changes to ensure that running a Post Office remains an attractive proposition.

Post Office has committed to communicating the final changes to postmaster remuneration in September.

■ Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme: Non-ionizing Radiation

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[33098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department is making an assessment of the inclusion of infrared heating technology in the renewable heat incentive.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

There are no plans to make an assessment of the inclusion of infrared heating in the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). In the first instance, the primary legislation that underpins the RHI, Section 100 of the Energy Act (2008), places strict parameters on the categories of technology that can be supported under the scheme. In addition, the non-domestic RHI has already closed to new applications, and the domestic RHI is scheduled to close to new applications at the end of March 2022. Before a new technology could be introduced into the domestic scheme a formal evidence review would be required, followed by a public consultation. Legislation would then need to be taken through Parliament. This would take longer than the remaining lifetime of the scheme.

CABINET OFFICE**Blood: Contamination****Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[32330\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Written Ministerial Statement on Infected Blood Update, published 25 March 2021, if he will detail the process that was used by the different nations of the UK infected blood support schemes to calculate parity payments.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[32331\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Written Statement of 25 March 2021 HCWS895 on Infected Blood Update, if he will publish the appeals processes to be used by the devolved Nations of the UK in respect of infected blood support schemes where people disagree with an assessment.

Penny Mordaunt:

Discussions were held between officials from across the United Kingdom to understand the current non-discretionary support offered by the four support schemes and the changes that would be required to bring greater parity of support for those infected and affected by the contaminated blood tragedy. During discussions the principle of uplifting beneficiaries to the most generous support provided across the four schemes where possible was applied, resulting in the changes announced on 25 March 2021.

The support schemes are devolved and each scheme has its own appeals process, except for Northern Ireland, who use the English appeals panel. These processes are stated on their respective websites, which are publicly available. Northern Ireland has a bespoke process and the details are available directly from the Scheme manager.

Cybercrime**Lisa Nandy:**[\[32376\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on updating the 2016 National Cyber Security Strategy; and when does he expect the Government's new comprehensive Cyber Strategy to be launched.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ23089](#) on 1 July 2021.

Elections: Proof of Identity**Cat Smith:**[\[32424\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Government's voter ID plans, what steps people in assessment and treatment units, between homes or in other forms of insecure housing and without documentation of a fixed address will need to take to obtain an elector card.

Cat Smith:[\[32425\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to research published in July 2021 by the Albert Kennedy Trust on LGBTQ+ youth homelessness, what assessment the Government has made of the effect of its voter ID proposals on the voting freedoms of homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Chloe Smith:

A broad range of documents already in use will be accepted as identification for voting purposes - it will not be limited to UK passports or driving licences. This will include, for example, various concessionary travel passes, Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) cards, and photocard parking permits issued as part of the Blue Badge scheme. In addition, expired photographic identification will be accepted as long as the photograph is of a good enough likeness to allow polling station staff to confirm the identity of the holder.

We recognise that, notwithstanding this broad approach, a small minority of electors may not currently hold one of the required forms of photographic identification. For those people, a free, local Voter Card will be available from their local authority. A fixed address will not be a requirement to receive a Voter Card, in the same way that it is not a requirement to register to vote.

We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and other stakeholders, including Local Authorities and a wide range of charities and civil society organisations, to make sure that voter identification is rolled out in a way that is inclusive for all eligible voters, including those who are homeless and those who are LGBT+.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Seema Malhotra:[\[32403\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what target each Department has for the proportion of their spending that is contracted with SMEs.

Julia Lopez:

Government is committed to increasing spend with SMEs.

The latest procurement figures for 2019/20 show that across government, £15.5bn was paid to small and medium sized businesses to help deliver vital public services. This is an increase of £1.3bn on the previous year and the highest since records began in 2013.

Central government departments have dedicated SME action plans setting out specific actions being taken to promote increased spend with SME organisations.

■ Infrastructure: Procurement

Jack Dromey:

[\[32344\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the value of procurement contracts awarded to British companies as part of the Government's National Infrastructure and Construction Procurement Pipeline 2020-21.

Jack Dromey:

[\[32345\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many procurement contracts were awarded to British companies as part of the Government's National Infrastructure and Construction Procurement Pipeline 2020-21.

Julia Lopez:

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) will publish the next iteration of its annual National Infrastructure and Construction Pipeline in 2021, as stated in the NIS, and this will list future planned investments and procurements across infrastructure and construction.

The Pipeline is a tool provided by the government to support all companies across the UK to make critical business decisions and provide them with the certainty needed to invest in innovation and skills. The IPA is not the custodian of the data included within the Pipeline as this is owned by individual contracting authorities spanning both public and private sector. The procurements included within the Pipeline are only those with a high confidence of delivery and by including them within the Pipeline contracting authorities are providing a commitment to seek to deliver them as planned.

■ Legislation: Public Consultation

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[32415\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of publishing in full the submissions made to legislative consultations.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[33241\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to improve the engagement rate with Government consultations from historically under-represented groups.

Chloe Smith:

The Cabinet Office is responsible for the Government Consultation Principles, which provide departments with guidance on conducting consultations. Individual departments are responsible for their own consultation practice. The Principles are published at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691383/Consultation_Principles_1_.pdf

The Consultation Principles are clear that consultations should be targeted. This should include consideration of how to tailor consultation to the needs and preferences of particular groups affected by a policy. The Principles also state that in responding to a consultation the government should explain the responses that have been received, state how many responses have been received and how these have informed the policy. Decisions on the potential merits of publishing individual responses to consultations are for consulting departments.

■ Re-employment

Andy McDonald: [\[32409\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, on the Government's policy on the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactics, what steps his Department has taken to (a) investigate the use of and (b) discourage the use of fire and rehire negotiation tactics by executive non-departmental public bodies; and what steps he has taken to communicate the Government's policy on those practices to those bodies.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 15260](#) on 17 June 2021.

■ Subversion: Russia

Lisa Nandy: [\[33213\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to undertake a retrospective assessment of alleged Russian interference in the 2016 EU referendum as recommended by the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia published on 21 July 2020.

Lisa Nandy: [\[33217\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to ensure that the Electoral Commission has sufficient powers to ensure the security of democratic processes where hostile state threats are involved as recommended by the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia, published on 21 July 2020.

Chloe Smith:

As set out in the Government's response to the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia, we have seen no evidence of successful interference in the EU Referendum.

The Government continues to work closely with the Electoral Commission, and others, to protect the integrity, security and effectiveness of UK referendums and elections. The Electoral Commission has a wide range of investigatory and civil sanctioning powers available to it and is able to refer more serious matters to the police or the National Crime Agency.

■ Treasury: Staff

Grahame Morris:

[\[33206\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) employees, (b) limb (b) workers, and (c) independent contractors, broken down by region.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ33206 [UKSA's final response to PQ33206 (1).pdf]

■ United Kingdom Security Vetting: York

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32443\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) relevant stakeholders on (i) keeping and (ii) expanding the National Security Vetting Agency in York.

Julia Lopez:

United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) now sits within the Government Security Group in Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office is committed to growth in both York and Glasgow. The majority of new roles within UKSV will be advertised in York and Glasgow although some specialised roles may be advertised elsewhere, for example such as in Milton Keynes, an original FCO location.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Interpreters

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[32297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of Afghan interpreters who have settled in the UK in the last ten years.

Leo Docherty:

As at the 15 July 2021 through our relocation schemes, 1,646 former staff including their families have relocated to the UK so far, with several thousand more due to arrive over the summer. These have arrived through either the Ex Gratia Scheme (EGS), the Intimidation policy or the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

The EGS launched on 4 June 2013 with the first relocations occurring in August 2014. To date, under EGS 484 Afghan local staff have relocated to the UK, the majority of which were interpreters.

The ARAP launched on 1 April 2021, under the ARAP, 22 Local Staff have relocated to the UK. We are rapidly accelerating relocations under the ARAP, with thousands more Afghans and their families due to arrive in the UK over the Summer.

■ Air Force: Honours

Adam Holloway: [\[27053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the (a) Royal Air Force (Regular) and (b) Royal Auxiliary Air Force (Reserve) were awarded a State honour broken down by (i) date of award, (ii) rank of recipient and (iii) type of award in each of the last five years.

Adam Holloway: [\[27054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the (a) the Royal Navy (Regular and (b) Maritime Reserve (Royal Navy Reserve and Royal Marine Reserve) were awarded a State honour by (i) date of award, (ii) rank of recipient and (iii) type of award in each of the last five years.

Adam Holloway: [\[27055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many members of the (a) Army (Regular) and (b) Army Reserve were awarded a State honour by (i) date of award, (ii) rank of recipient and (iii) type of award in each of the last five years.

Leo Docherty:

Please find attached tables outlining State honours awarded to Armed Forces Regular and Reserves personnel.

All information on the table provided is consistent with notifications for honours published in the London Gazette at the time of release.

Attachments:

1. 27053 - Royal Air Force Personnel State Awards [27053 - Royal Air Forces State Awards.docx]
2. 27054 - Royal Navy Personnel State Awards [27054 - Royal Navy Personnel State Awards.docx]
3. 27055 - British Army Personnel State Awards [27055 - British Army Personnel State Awards.pdf]

■ Ajax Vehicles

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Ajax Armoured Vehicles are air portable in a single lift in the (a) C-17 and (b) A400M aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

A single turreted, fully-armoured AJAX vehicle can be flown in a C-17 with minimal preparation. Two Ajax variant vehicles can be transported in a C-17, after further suitable preparation.

It is intended that all Ajax variants will be capable of air transportation in an A400M aircraft with some level of strip. Stripped items would be transported separately. Four stripped-down Ajax variant vehicles would be transported in four A400M aircraft and the stripped items in a further two A400M aircraft.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Ammunition**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[32310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the unit cost is of a round of 40mm armour piercing ammunition for the main armament of the Ajax Armoured Vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

The main armament of the Ajax armoured vehicle uses the Armour Piercing Fin Stabilised Discarding Sabot-Tracer (APFSDS-T) round. I am withholding the unit cost as its disclosure may prejudice commercial interests.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Procurement**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[33142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what alternative procurement options he has for the replacement of the capability envisaged from the Ajax Armoured Vehicle programme in the event that that programme is cancelled; and if he will make a statement.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence remains committed to Ajax.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Testing**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[32305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any compensation claims have been brought against his Department by personnel assessing the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

To date, no personal injury claims have been identified by the Department.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[32306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Institute for Naval Medicine's report commissioned in May 2020 on the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle has been made available to General Dynamics.

Jeremy Quin:

The Institute of Naval Medicine's final report was shared with General Dynamics on 16 December 2020, having been received by Defence Equipment & Support on 10 December 2020.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[32308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what period of time elapsed between the provision of the Institute for Naval Medicine's report on AJAX to his Department and the cessation of the assessment of the AJAX armoured fighting vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

The full Institute for Naval Medicine report was received in late November 2020 after acceptance and conversion activity had been stopped.

The Institute for Naval Medicine's assessment of Noise and Vibration within the Ajax platform was conducted in August 2020. An initial report was provided in September 2020 which prompted the Army's Environmental Monitoring Team, together with Dstl, to conduct a specific assessment of in-ear noise in October 2020. The initial findings of this assessment resulted in a halt to all acceptance and conversion activity in early November 2020.

Mr Mark Francois:

[32315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any personnel involved in the trials of the Ajax armoured vehicle have subsequently required medical treatment.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer provided by my Noble Friend Baroness Goldie on 29 June 2021 HL1163. Work continues to ensure those who may have been put at risk by the trials are identified and offered medical intervention if appropriate.

As previously stated at the request of Ministers, the Permanent Secretary commissioned a Health and Safety review of the AJAX trials (which will include updating the number of personnel affected). The Secretary of State has confirmed that the summary review will be published.

Attachments:

1. HL1163 - Ajax Vehicle Testing [HL1163 - Ajax Vehicles Testing.docx]

■ **Armed Forces: Immigration**

Dan Jarvis:

[32398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Government plans to publish its response to the Immigration Costs for Armed Forces Personnel consultation launched on 26 May 2021.

Leo Docherty:

The Government aims to publish the response to the public consultation on waiving settlement fees for non-UK Service personnel within 12 weeks of the consultation closure date. The response will be published on the Government website.

■ Army Reserve

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the proposed total liability is of trained strength of the Army Reserves at the end of calendar year 2021.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the proposed total liability of the Army Reserve, including (a) trained strength and (b) recruits not yet trained, by the conclusion of 2021.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has plans to merge the categories of (a) trade trained strength, (b) trained strength and (c) recruits under training in calculating the total liability of the Army Reserve by the end of 2021.

James Heappey:

Under Future Reserves 2020, the Army Reserve has a structure (workforce requirement) of circa 31,650 which will remain the same in 2021.

Under the Defence Secretary's announcement and launch of the Defence Command Paper, we will see a more productive integration of the Army Reserve by 2025. Work to refine the exact breakdown of the future structure is still ongoing however, 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 either now or beyond the implementation of the Integrated Review.

■ Bahrain: Military Aid

Sarah Olney: [\[32473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the UK continues to provide military (a) training and (b) technical assistance to Bahrain despite reports of human rights abuses in that country.

James Heappey:

All training and assistance for Bahrain fully complies with our domestic and international human rights obligations and is kept under regular review. Bahrain is a human rights priority country. As such, HMG regularly raises human rights issues and individual cases with the Government of Bahrain.

■ Electronic Warfare: International Cooperation

Lisa Nandy: [\[32378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the recommendation of the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia published on 21 July 2020, what progress the Government has made in working with its international allies to develop a common international approach to offensive cyber.

James Heappey:

Working with international partners to deter and respond to malicious cyber activity is a core part of the Government's approach. As a responsible and democratic cyber power, the UK is at the forefront of developing a shared international understanding of the laws and norms that govern states' conduct in cyberspace. Earlier this year the UK submitted its national contribution on the application of international law to cyberspace to the UN's Group of Government Experts, for their consensus report on advancing responsible state behaviour in cyberspace. Furthermore, the UK was key to the establishment of a European cyber sanctions regime in 2019 and remains committed to working with our European allies to respond to malicious cyber activity.

■ HMS Diamond: Repairs and Maintenance

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the timescale for the repair of HMS Diamond's propulsion issue such that that ship can rejoin the Carrier Strike Group.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the nature is of the propulsion issue affecting HMS Diamond; and when that issue first occurred.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the length of time it would take for HMS Dragon to (a) put to sea to replace HMS Diamond as an escort to the Carrier Strike Group and (b) take up station with that Group.

Jeremy Quin:

While operating in the eastern Mediterranean, HMS DIAMOND experienced some technical issues and has detached from the Carrier Strike Group for maintenance, inspection and defect rectification. She is expected to re-join the Task Group during the Indo-Pacific phase of the deployment.

■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Guided Weapons

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[33136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of integrating a (a) ASRAAM, (b) Paveway IV guided bomb and (c) SPEAR 3 long-range precision weapon onto the F-35B Lightning II.

Jeremy Quin:

The estimated costs of integrating ASRAAM, Paveway IV and SPEAR Cap 3 weapons onto the F-35 Lightning are as follows: ASRAAM: £47 million, Paveway IV: £103 million, SPEAR Cap 3: £170 million.

■ **Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[32324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any delays were caused to the Crowsnest AEW helicopter programme by poor maintenance of the Merlin helicopter originally assigned to the trials programme.

Jeremy Quin:

Maintenance activities on the originally assigned helicopters, either scheduled or unscheduled, did not cause a delay to the trials programme. The aircraft successfully undertook ground-based trials to assess electromagnetic compatibility. In addition, the radar flight trials programme was not impacted.

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[32327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for the replacement of the Crowsnest AEW helicopter programme.

Jeremy Quin:

A number of options are being developed for consideration by the Ministry of Defence.

In partnership with the Royal Navy, the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) has launched the Look out! Maritime Early Warning Innovations competition, which aims to develop alternative future concepts for the Early Warning systems currently deployed in Maritime Task Groups.

■ **Military Aircraft: Helicopters**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[32325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for the procurement of a new Medium Lift helicopter.

Jeremy Quin:

Detailed work continues on the procurement strategy for the New Medium Helicopter; which remains under development.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Liverpool**

Bill Esterson:

[\[32371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department from Liverpool to Blackpool.

Leo Docherty:

In line with "A better Defence Estate", the Department announced in 2016 that it intends to consolidate its three Defence Business Services (DBS) establishments in the North West at one location to make the most efficient and cost-effective use of its property. A formal decision has not yet been reached, but I anticipate being able to announce a preferred location in the Autumn, at which point I will write to Honourable and Right Honourable Members in whose constituencies these sites are located.

■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[32307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of EU procurement law on his Department's procurement policy.

Jeremy Quin:

Amendments to the Defence and Security Public Contracts Regulations (DSPCR) came into force at the end of the Transition Period to ensure these rules operate effectively following the UK's departure from the EU. The main change is that legal rights of access to UK procurements are now limited to UK and Gibraltar based suppliers.

As set out in the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy published in March 2021, the Government is using the opportunity offered by our departure from the EU to develop a defence and security procurement regime tailored to better meet the UK's needs. We have embarked on a comprehensive review of the DSPCR, as part of the broader Cabinet Office led reforms of procurement regulations set out in the December 2020 Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement.

■ Ministry of Defence: Re-employment

Imran Hussain:

[\[33244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, on the Government's policy on the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic, what steps their Department has taken to (a) investigate and (b) discourage the use of fire and rehire negotiation tactics by their Department's executive non-departmental public bodies; and what steps they have taken to communicate the Government's policy on those practices to those bodies.

Leo Docherty:

The Government has been very clear that threatening fire and rehire as a negotiating tactic is completely unacceptable. MOD always expect employers to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership working with trade unions, where relevant, constructively. The Department is confident that MOD's non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) are aware of the Government's position on this matter.

The Department works constructively with each of the NDPBs we have responsibility for, and this includes when it comes to workforce management matters, however each is ultimately responsible for the management of their staff.

The relationship between the MOD NDPBs and the department, is established through their Framework Documents. Managing Public Money sets out that each of the boards of the MOD NDPBs have a responsibility towards its staff for the recruitment, retention and motivation of its staff.

■ Navy: Coronavirus

John Healey: [\[33117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect a covid-19 outbreak in the Carrier Strike Group 21 on cross-deck activities.

James Heappey:

The Carrier Strike Group 21 is carefully monitored and embarked personnel undergo regular routine testing for Covid-19. Cross deck activity is kept to a minimum, in line with operational requirements, and is authorised on the judgement of the CSG Commander.

John Healey: [\[33118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect a covid-19 outbreak in the Carrier Strike Group 21 on future port visits.

James Heappey:

The Carrier Strike Group 21 is carefully monitored and embarked personnel undergo regular routine testing for Covid-19. We maintain open and transparent dialogue with our Allies and partners on our plans for port visits, which remain under review in line with operational and other requirements.

■ RAF Menwith Hill

Alex Sobel: [\[32502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many radomes at NSA/NRO Menwith Hill are used for the Space-based Infra-Red Sytem; what proportion of those radomes are fully operation; and when did those radomes first become operational.

James Heappey:

There are three radomes at RAF Menwith Hill that form part of the US space-based infra-red System (SBIRS). These radomes are a fully operational part of the US Defence Support Program Missile Warning facilities.

The system achieved operational status during 2011.

■ Sea King Helicopters

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Sea King AEW Mk 2 (a) entered and (b) left operational service.

Jeremy Quin:

The Sea King AEW Mk2 entered operational service in 1982 and was withdrawn in 2003.

■ Type 32 Frigates

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the initial operating capability for the Type 32 Frigate; and how will it differ in capability terms from the Type 31 Frigate.

Jeremy Quin:

The roles and capabilities for the Type 32 Frigate will be decided following the concept phase, which is in its early stages. Therefore, it is too early to compare capabilities with the Type 31 Frigate.

■ Type 45 Destroyers

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the six Type 45 Destroyers; and which of those ships are (a) operationally available, (b) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit and (c) temporarily unavailable due to propulsion problems.

Jeremy Quin:

HMS DEFENDER is currently deployed as part of the Carrier Strike Group (CSG21) while HMS DIAMOND has experienced some technical issues and has detached from CSG21 for maintenance, inspection and defect rectification.

HMS DARING and HMS DUNCAN are currently undergoing planned deep maintenance.

HMS DAUNTLESS, the first of the Type 45 Destroyers to undergo a Power Improvement Project upgrade, is expected to return to sea for trials this year.

HMS DRAGON is undergoing a period of planned maintenance in advance of further operational commitments.

■ Type 83 Destroyers

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the initial operating capability for the Type 83 Destroyer.

Jeremy Quin:

The Type 83 Destroyer will replace the Type 45 Destroyers when they go out of service in the late 2030s. It is anticipated that the concept phase for the Type 83 Destroyers will begin in the next few years.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:****[29043]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 159303, what jurisdictions are included in the non-GB category of statistics on industry gross gambling yield that are collected by the Gambling Commission.

Mr John Whittingdale:

All operators who supply gambling to customers in Great Britain must be licensed by the Gambling Commission. Its jurisdiction also extends to online operators who supply gambling to customers outside Great Britain, if the equipment with which they do so is located in this country, and gross gambling yield from these activities is recorded as non-GB GGY. That category also includes GGY which any GC-licensed operator has derived from supplying gambling to customers in other jurisdictions which either allow it to operate there by virtue of its GB licence, or do not have specific legal requirements relating to online gambling. The Commission does not collect granular data on the jurisdictions from which this GGY is derived.

■ **Broadband: Rural Areas****Justin Madders:****[30370]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 21254 on broadband: rural areas, what the contracted investment ratios are for each superfast contract across the country.

Matt Warman:

The public investment percentages for each superfast contract are set out in the attached [table](#). All elements of public funding not provided by BDUK are classed as Local Body funding, who will in turn have agreements in place with their respective funding partners. The public investment ratios can change through the life of a contract through contract changes or as a result of any underspends.

■ **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage****Mr Gregory Campbell:****[32295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to make a decision on whether the UK will ratify the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Caroline Dinéage:

As with any international treaty, UK ratification of UNESCO Conventions should be considered fully, taking into account value for money to the UK taxpayer and the interests of both the Devolved Administrations and our Overseas Territories. When this process has been completed, Ministers will take a decision on the merits of ratification.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Re-employment

Andy McDonald: [\[33235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, what steps his Department has taken to (a) investigate the use of fire and rehire tactics by its executive non-departmental public bodies, (b) communicate the Government's position on fire and rehire tactics to those bodies and (c) discourage the use of such tactics by those bodies.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government has been very clear that threatening fire and rehire as a negotiating tactic is completely unacceptable. We always expect employers to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership working with trade unions, where relevant, constructively. We are confident that all non-departmental public bodies are aware of the Government's position on this matter.

We work constructively with each non-departmental public body we have responsibility for and this includes when it comes to workforce management matters, however each is ultimately responsible for the management of their staff.

■ Football: Takeovers

Chi Onwurah: [\[32390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Premier League's decision-making processes on takeovers of football clubs on the level of direct foreign investment in British sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

Acquisitions of sporting assets in the UK by foreign investors are a matter for the sports businesses themselves.

It has always been for the Premier League alone to make assessments of potential acquisitions of football clubs in its League, under its Owners' and Directors' Test.

■ Internet: Fees and Charges

Sir Greg Knight: [\[32287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that broadband internet access is affordable for people in receipt of low incomes and benefits; what steps he is taking to encourage the roll out of an affordable social tariff, including allowing consumers to switch providers more easily; and if he will make a statement.

Matt Warman:

In recent months, we have been working closely with industry to increase the level of affordable provision in the market for low income households. As a result of our engagement with industry, a range of broadband social tariff packages are now available to support those on low incomes or who receive certain income-based

benefits. Earlier this month, BT launched a Home Essentials package which will provide fibre and voice services to those on Universal Credit starting at £15 per month. Virgin, Hyperoptic and other providers offer similar packages to assist households on low incomes. Between them, these products are available to 99% of households across the country.

The Government continues to encourage more fixed-line providers to introduce a social tariff and we will continue to monitor the provision in the market. We will keep the House informed of developments in this area.

In December 2020, the Government strengthened Ofcom's consumer protection rules, to ensure that consumers can access the right information to make informed decisions about new services, have stronger contract rights, and switch providers more easily. Ofcom also published its Vulnerability Guide in July 2020, setting out how the sector should support vulnerable households struggling to pay their bills.

■ Internet: Racial Discrimination

Chi Onwurah:

[\[33224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to make all racially discriminatory user-generated content illegal content in the draft Online Harms Bill.

Caroline Dinenage:

To ensure the criminal law is fit for purpose to deal with online harms, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport sponsored the Law Commission to review the criminal law relating to harmful online communications. The Law Commission has consulted on proposed reforms and will publish their final report this summer. We will carefully consider using the online safety legislation to bring the Law Commission's final recommendations into law, where it is necessary and appropriate to do so.

In addition, the Law Commission is undertaking a separate review sponsored by the Home Office, which is considering the adequacy and parity of protection offered by the law relating to hate crime. The Law Commission has consulted on their proposals and aims to publish a final report later this year.

The Online Safety Bill will ensure that racially discriminatory content that is illegal offline, is illegal online. Under the Online Safety Bill, services in scope will need to minimise and remove illegal content. Major platforms will also need to address legal but harmful content for adults. Priority categories of legal but harmful content for adults will be set out in secondary legislation and are likely to include online racist abuse.

Chris Elmore:

[\[33294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether racism that falls short of the standard of a racial hatred offence will be covered by the Online Safety Bill as a priority harm.

Caroline Dinenage:

Racism online is completely unacceptable and has no place in an open and tolerant society. All companies whose services are likely to be used by children will have to protect them from racist content that falls short of the criminal threshold. Companies providing high-risk, high-reach services, such as the main social media services will also need to address legal content of this type that is harmful to adults. Racist abuse falls within the definition of harmful content that companies must address.

The government will set out priority harms for both children and adults in secondary legislation following consultation with Ofcom. Racist abuse that does not meet the threshold of a criminal offence will likely be a priority harm.

Internet: Sales**Chi Onwurah:**[\[33914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to engage with the complexities of supply chains to support product (a) security and (b) longevity through the upcoming Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill.

Matt Warman:

The government has engaged extensively with cyber security subject matter experts and industry to ensure that the cyber security measures in the Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill take into account the complexities of connected product supply chains. The Bill will ensure that organisations throughout the supply chain play a role in preventing insecure products from being made available in the UK, through enforceable minimum security requirements.

New security requirements will ensure consumers are made aware at point of sale about how long devices like smart televisions, phones and speakers, will receive security updates. By requiring transparency on the longevity of support, we will reform the security culture of the supply chain for consumer connected products.

Social Media: Subversion**Lisa Nandy:**[\[33216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress she has been made on establishing a protocol with social media companies to ensure that they take covert hostile state use of their platforms seriously as recommended by the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia published on 21 July 2020.

Caroline Dinenage:

It is, and always will be, an absolute priority to protect the UK against foreign interference. That is why the Government has robust systems in place that bring together government, civil society and private sector organisations to monitor and respond to interference in whatever form it takes.

During times of heightened vulnerability such as elections or the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government stands up Counter Disinformation Unit. The Unit provides

a comprehensive picture of the extent, scope and reach of mis- and disinformation, and works with social media platforms to ensure appropriate action is taken to address it, in line with their terms and conditions.

We engage regularly with social media companies and welcome the positive steps many of them have taken particularly in response to misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines. Platforms have updated terms of service and made technical changes to their products, but they need to do more. We continue to put pressure on them to respond quickly and effectively to the threat posed by false information and online manipulation.

The Government is developing and seeking input to inform an ambitious set of legislative proposals to counter these threats and strengthen our ability to deter, withstand and respond to such activity. The Home Office's upcoming Counter State Threats legislation will provide the security services and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to tackle the evolving threat from hostile activity by states and actors.

We have also published the draft Online Safety Bill, which will bring in a legal duty of care and give companies clear legal responsibilities to improve user safety. The new laws will have robust and proportionate measures to deal with disinformation that could cause significant physical or psychological harm to an individual, such as anti-vaccination content and falsehoods about COVID-19.

EDUCATION

■ Adoption Support Fund

Bill Esterson:

[\[33209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the budget is for the Adoption Support Fund for the financial year 2021-22; and how much and what proportion of that budget has been spent as of 14 July 2021.

Vicky Ford:

The Adoption Support Fund budget, spend and proportion spent as at 14 July 2021, is set out below.

2021/22 BUDGET	SPEND	PROPORTION SPENT
£46m	£31,203,545	67%

■ Apprentices: Finance

Kate Green:

[\[32387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much and what proportion of funds raised by the apprenticeship levy remain unspent for financial year 2020-21.

Gillian Keegan:

The funds in apprenticeship service accounts are available for levy-paying employers to use for 24 months before they begin to expire on a rolling, month-by-month basis. Employers began to pay the apprenticeship levy in April 2017 and unused levy funds began to expire in May 2019.

In the 2020-21 financial year, £2,631 million was paid into levy-paying employer's apprenticeship service accounts. This includes the 10% government top up to funds entering employer accounts.

In the 2020-21 financial year, £1,314 million of levy funds expired from employer's apprenticeship service account. Employers have 24 months from the point funds enter their account in which to spend it, so the expiry of levy funds in 2020-21 financial year relates to the funds which entered employer accounts in 2018-19 financial year.

We do not anticipate that all employers who pay the levy will use all the funds available to them, but they are able to if they wish. As well as funding new apprenticeships in levy-paying employers, income from the levy is used to fund new apprenticeships in employers that do not pay the levy, as well as existing apprentices that started in previous years.

The funds available to levy-paying employers through their apprenticeship service accounts are not the same as the Department for Education's annual apprenticeships budget. The annual apprenticeship budget is set by Her Majesty's Treasury, and although closely linked, is distinct from the total levy income collected by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

The levy is an important part of our reforms to apprenticeships which are vital for driving our economic recovery. It supports employers of all sizes to invest in high-quality apprenticeship training. In 2021-22, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England will remain around £2.5 billion – double that spent in 2010-11 in cash terms.

■ Children: Quarantine**Andrew Rosindell:****[28984]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of continuing covid-19 isolation requirements on primary school-aged children.

Nick Gibb:

The education of children and young people has been significantly disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department has considered a broad evidence base of assessments and a summary of the latest guidance can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000025/Evidence_Summary_-_July_2021.pdf.

The Department also continues to collect and publish data on attendance. In primary schools, COVID-19 related absence was 9.8% on 8 July, up from 7.4% on 1 July and 4.5% on 24 June: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

From Step 4 of the roadmap, it will no longer be necessary to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles') both inside and outside of school, as well as the need to reduce mixing in nurseries. Schools will also not routinely be required to undertake contact tracing for children. Instead, pupils who test positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. This will be limited to very close contacts. Unless they test positive, children and those who are double vaccinated will not be required to isolate from 16 August if they are identified as a close contact. Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for COVID-19.

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

■ Department for Education: Information

Dr Matthew Offord:

[29015]

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

Nick Gibb:

The Department sets out its relationship with each of its arm's length bodies (ALBs) through a Framework Document. Managing Public Money sets out 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, e.g. 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". The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money>.

A non-departmental public body is required on an annual basis to submit to their sponsoring department 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 accounts for each non-departmental public body is consolidated into the sponsoring Department's annual report and accounts.

The Department has a two-pronged approach to assure information from departmental group bodies are included in the Department's consolidated annual report and accounts. We review information against our own expectations of performance as well as external audits completed by the National Audit Office or other competent auditors. Regulatory bodies which are non-ministerial departments are not included in the Department's consolidated accounts and are not included in this process.

In addition, the Department's audit and risk committee works with audit and risk committees of other departmental bodies, including regulatory bodies, to provide oversight of risk, assurance and the annual report and accounts.

■ Department of Education: Energy

Ruth Jones: [25148]

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

Nick Gibb:

Details of the Department's energy usage for financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20 are available in the consolidated annual report and accounts publications, which are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dfe-annual-reports>.

The annual report for financial year 2020/21 will be published later in the year, which will include details on the cost of energy for that period.

■ Disability: Sports and Exercise

Rachael Maskell: [30382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that children with disabilities can participate in appropriate physical activity at school.

Nick Gibb:

I refer the hon. Member for York Central to the answer I gave on 22 June 2021 to Question [15198](#).

■ Education: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [29088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on pupils' education of the increase in covid-19 cases causing pupils and staff to self-isolate.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's priority is for schools to deliver face to face, high quality education to all pupils and we recognise that children's education has been significantly disrupted as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Evidence shows that lost education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, and mental and physical health. More information is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000025/Evidence_Summary_-_July_2021.pdf.

Attendance data from England for the 2021 summer term shows that as COVID-19 prevalence has increased overall across the population, absence due to COVID-19 has increased rapidly in schools: at 8.5% (639,000 pupils) in state-funded schools on 1 July compared to 1.2% (90,000 pupils) on 10 June. The majority of this absence is because of isolation due to potential contact with a case of COVID-19 inside the school.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced that when Step 4 of the roadmap goes ahead the Government will relax the majority of COVID-19 restrictions, including the measures that the Department recommends for schools. From Step 4, schools will not routinely be required to undertake contact tracing for pupils and staff. Instead, those who test positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts. This will be limited to very close contacts so the numbers who need to self-isolate will be substantially reduced.

From 16 August 2021, unless they test positive, children under the age of 18 years old and staff who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are contacted by NHS Test and Trace as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. Instead, they will be advised to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. The Department encourages all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so.

Self-isolation continues for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 due to the risk of them passing on the virus. Schools should continue to support staff and pupils who need to self-isolate to work or learn from home and maintain their capabilities to deliver high quality remote education.

■ Education: Gender

Mark Jenkinson: [R] [29914]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to close the learning gap between boys and girls.

Nick Gibb:

I refer my hon. Friend, the Member for Workington, to the answer I gave on 21 June 2021 to Question [10325](#).

■ Educational Institutions: Repairs and Maintenance

Stuart Anderson: [29910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what financial assistance is available to support schools and colleges with the cost of essential maintenance work.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has allocated £11.3 billion in capital funding since 2015 to improve the condition of the school estate, including £1.8 billion committed in this financial

year. Allocations are informed by consistent data on the condition of the school estate.

Schools, and those responsible for school buildings, access condition funding through different routes depending on their size and type. Local authorities, large multi-academy trusts and large voluntary-aided school bodies, receive an annual formulaic school condition allocation to invest in the schools for which they are responsible.

Smaller multi-academy trusts, stand-alone academies, voluntary-aided schools not in large voluntary-aided school bodies and sixth form colleges are able to bid to the Condition Improvement Fund each year. All schools also receive funding to spend on their own capital priorities through an annual devolved formula capital allocation. Capital funding beyond the 2021/22 financial year will be determined at the Spending Review.

In addition, the Department delivers major rebuilding and refurbishment programmes centrally. My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced a new, 10 year School Rebuilding Programme last June, which will replace school buildings in poor condition with modern, energy-efficient designs. The Department has announced the first 50 schools to benefit from this, as part of a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade. We expect to confirm a further 50 projects this year and plan to consult on the approach to prioritising future projects later in 2021.

■ Higher Education: Antisemitism

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[32299]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the outcome was of the strategic guidance letter he issued to the Office of Students to identify higher education providers which have yet to adopt an internationally recognised definition of anti-semitism.

Michelle Donelan:

There is no place in our society, including within higher education (HE), for antisemitism. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition is an important tool in tackling antisemitism. Adopting the widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to the sector in October 2020, calling upon leaders to adopt the IHRA definition. He repeated this message in May, reinforcing the government's expectation that providers adopt the IHRA definition, stressing the even greater importance of doing so in light of increased number of antisemitic incidents recorded (as a result of the conflict in the Middle East). We are aware of over 100 HE providers which have now adopted the IHRA definition. This includes over 80 universities.

In his February 2021 strategic guidance letter, the Secretary of State also asked the Office for Students (OfS) to undertake a scoping exercise, to identify providers which are reluctant to adopt the definition. He asked them to consider introducing mandatory reporting of antisemitic incident numbers by providers, with the aim of

ensuring a robust evidence base, which the OfS can then use to effectively regulate in this area. I meet regularly with the OfS, and they have assured me they are progressing work in response to Secretary of State's request, including in relation to a scoping exercise to identify higher education providers which have yet to adopt the IHRA definition.

The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers, but the government will continue to urge them to adopt the definition and ensure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

Adoption of the IHRA definition is only a first step, and while the government considers that adoption of the definition is crucial, it is not enough on its own. That is why I will continue to work with the sector to ensure it better understands antisemitism and does more to end it.

■ Higher Education: Freedom of Expression

Lilian Greenwood:

[33208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the data held by the Office for Students on the number of external speakers and events occurring across higher education institutions including the number of rejected speakers for the (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21 academic years .

Michelle Donelan:

The Department for Education does not hold information regarding external speakers and events occurring across higher education institutions including the number of rejected speakers. Guidance on how to request information held by the Office for Students directly can be found on the following website:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/contact/how-to-request-information-from-us/>.

■ Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Peter Kyle:

[33289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children took part in the Holiday Activities and Food programme in the 2021 Easter holidays in (a) total and (b) each local authority in England.

Vicky Ford:

The department 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, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities.

Ordinarily we require HAF provision to be face to face. However, we offered greater flexibility during the Easter holiday which led to every local authority delivering provision. Survey information from local authorities suggests hundreds of thousands of children benefited from attending holiday activities and food clubs across England.

We do not hold robust data on the number of children that benefited by area for Easter. All local authorities will be delivering provision across the summer. An independent evaluation of the HAF programme over the summer will take place.

■ **Mental Health: Curriculum**

Florence Eshalomi:

[32564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that awareness of the specific symptoms of complex mental health conditions is included in the national curriculum.

Nick Gibb:

Relationships Education is compulsory for all primary school pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is compulsory for all secondary school pupils, and Health Education is compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools.

Mental wellbeing is a key topic in Health Education and there is a recognition that mental wellbeing and physical health are linked. Pupils are taught about mental wellbeing and physical health to give them the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. Pupils are taught to recognise early signs of mental wellbeing concerns and common types of mental ill health, such as anxiety and depression, and, where issues arise, seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

Promotion of good mental wellbeing through the teaching of Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) is key to the recovery of schools, and the socialisation of pupils once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The statutory RSHE guidance on mental wellbeing is therefore a key priority within the Department's package of support. The training material, covering mental wellbeing, is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>. This is alongside other teacher training modules, which aim to help teachers identify the core knowledge pupils may be taught as part of RSHE, and to share this through peer training. These have been developed with subject matter experts and teachers, and are available to view here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health#train-teachers-on-relationships-sex-and-health-education>.

■ **Physical Education**

Rachael Maskell:

[30381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his Department's policy is on improving children's health and wellbeing through physical education and school sport.

Nick Gibb:

I refer the hon. Member for York Central to the answer I gave on 22 June 2021 to Question [15196](#).

■ Physical Education: Finance

Rachael Maskell: [\[30379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether funding for physical education and sport in schools will be kept at the current level in the 2021-22 academic year.

Rachael Maskell: [\[30380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the role of physical education and school sport in the covid-19 recovery plan for education.

Nick Gibb:

I refer the hon. Member for York Central to the answer I gave on 25 June 2021 to Question [18487](#).

■ Pupils: Long Covid

Stephen Morgan: [\[32501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to (a) mitigate the risk to children attending school of developing long-covid as restrictions are eased and the use of school bubbles ends and (b) provide additional educational support for children who have reduced school attendance as a result of contracting long-covid.

Nick Gibb:

From Step 4, it will no longer be necessary to keep children and young people in consistent groups ('bubbles'). As well as enabling flexibility in curriculum delivery, this means that assemblies can resume, and schools no longer need to make alternative arrangements to avoid mixing at lunch.

High and rising vaccine rates and strong vaccine efficacy, alongside the restrictions in place, have reduced the scale of the COVID-19 outbreak significantly since the start of 2021. In making this decision, the Government has balanced education and health considerations, weighing the impact of these measures on teaching, wellbeing and the functioning of schools, colleges and out of school settings against the COVID-19 risks in a context that has now fundamentally changed due to the success of the vaccination rollout.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise guidance for schools, colleges and out of school settings from Step 4. Our aim is to balance the risks associated with COVID-19 whilst moving to a 'steady state', that minimises both the burden of implementing control measures on staff and parents and the impact those measures have on young peoples' educational experience. The Department will continue to keep these measures under review in partnership with health experts and informed by the latest scientific evidence and advice.

The Government recognises that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education. The Government is

committed to helping pupils make up education lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly the most disadvantaged.

Since June 2020 the Department has announced more than £3 billion to support education recovery for children aged 2 to 19 in nurseries, schools and colleges. This will have a material impact in addressing lost teaching and closing gaps that have emerged. Recovery programmes have been designed to allow early years, school and college leaders the flexibility to support those pupils most in need.

The Government is committed to an ambitious, long-term education recovery plan, and the next stage will include a review of time spent in school and college and the impact this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of the review will be set out later in the year to inform the Spending Review. We will also be continuing to monitor how effectively children and young people are catching up.

■ Pupils: Personal Records

Mark Jenkinson:

[R] [\[29912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that information on a pupil's (a) family status and (b) known issues at home are routinely transferred from primary to secondary school.

Nick Gibb:

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) is statutory guidance that all schools and colleges must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Following Government consultation, this guidance has recently been strengthened to provide schools and colleges with even more detailed advice. Details are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>.

KCSIE sets out that all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely. It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Records should include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome. The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for the maintenance and transfer of child protection files.

KCSIE is clear that where children leave a school or college, including in-year transfers, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure that their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within five days for an in-year transfer or within the first five days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider whether it would be appropriate to

share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving, to help them put in place the right support to safeguard the child.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[29847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the level of risk to teaching and support staff of the rise in the rate of covid-19 infection among school-aged children.

Nick Gibb:

All schools, colleges and nurseries have implemented a range of protective measures as set out in the Department's published operational guidance. This is endorsed by Public Health England (PHE) and is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance>.

In relaxing the majority of COVID-19 restrictions, from Step 4 of the roadmap, the Government has balanced education and health considerations, weighing the effect of these measures on teaching, pupils' education and wellbeing, and the functioning of schools, colleges and nurseries against the risk of COVID-19.

By Monday 19 July, all those aged over 50, and the clinically extremely vulnerable, will have been offered their second vaccine dose, and all adults in England are eligible to book the COVID-19 vaccine. This level of protection means that an increasing proportion of the education workforce is vaccinated.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and PHE to revise our guidance for schools, colleges, and nurseries from Step 4. The revised guidance is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999689/Schools_guidance_Step_4_update_FINAL.pdf.

All schools, colleges and nurseries should have outbreak management plans, which outline how they would operate if there was an outbreak in their setting or local area. The Government may also offer local areas of particular concern an enhanced response package to help limit increases in transmission.

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:

[30377]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has issued to teachers and headteachers on the rules on self-isolating in response to an alert from the covid-19 app during school term time.

Nick Gibb:

It is possible that whilst in their nursery, school or college, pupils or staff could receive a notification via the NHS COVID-19 app that they have been in close contact with a confirmed case and should self-isolate. Close contacts are likely to have taken place

at least 1-2 days previously. The app uses the minimum amount of personal data possible, which means it will not know if that contact took place in a nursery, school or college.

The Department recommends that schools advise all of their pupils, in particular those who are under 18, to inform a member of staff if they receive a notification during the day that they had been in contact with a positive case. The notification will advise them that if they are under the age of 18, they should show the message to a trusted adult and self-isolate. The staff member should then follow the school's agreed process for handling individuals identified as a close contact, including making appropriate arrangements for the pupil to leave the school at the earliest opportunity to begin self-isolation.

If a staff member receives this notification, they should also follow the usual process of informing an appropriate person at the school before self-isolating. Schools will want to consider what action they would need to take if a number of staff members were informed at the same time that they had been in close contact with a positive case, to ensure continuity of education or childcare.

■ Schools: Ventilation

Mary Kelly Foy:

[32517]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure that schools in (a) County Durham and (b) across England are adequately ventilated to limit the spread of covid-19 ahead of the 2021-22 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's guidance states that, when a school or college is in operation, it is important to ensure that it is well ventilated and that a comfortable teaching environment is maintained. This can be achieved 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. This guidance applies to all schools in England.

The Department continues to review the ventilation requirements set out in its guidance, including considering whether monitoring carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels would be appropriate, and is 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.

The guidance for schools can be found here:

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

■ Teachers: Contact Tracing

Rachael Maskell:

[29846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has published on the use of the NHS App for teachers and headteachers; and whether teachers are required to switch off that App while at work.

Nick Gibb:

The NHS COVID-19 app complements, rather than replaces, existing contact tracing processes and can be downloaded by anyone aged 16 or over.

From Step 4 of the roadmap, close contacts will be identified directly by NHS Test and Trace. Nurseries, schools and colleges will no longer be expected undertake routine contact tracing. The NHS COVID-19 app will continue to play an important role in contact tracing, by increasing its speed, reach and precision. It is able to quickly identify and notify users if they come into contact with somebody who later tests positive for COVID-19.

The app and its use are advisory, and it is up to an individual's discretion if and how they use the app. The Department recommends that people follow its advice to help break chains of transmission and to protect others from COVID-19.

From 16 August, in line with fully vaccinated adults, under-18s identified as close contacts will not need to self-isolate and instead will be advised to take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. The NHS COVID-19 app will be updated to reflect this new policy in England.

The Department will update its guidance shortly on how the NHS COVID-19 app should be used in nurseries, schools and colleges.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[29104]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the number of universities which will not fully reopen for in person learning in September 2022; and what steps his Department is taking to support students at those universities.

Michelle Donelan:

As autonomous institutions, it is for higher education (HE) providers to determine their own provision, including their approach to teaching and learning, taking account of any government guidance. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, some providers have accelerated their digital teaching and learning plans and some will retain an element of blending learning. We know that the COVID-19 outbreak has enabled many providers to identify new and innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and students will continue to benefit from these alongside in person provision. We expect all universities to act in the interest of students and provide them with a full experience and in accordance with Office for Students (OfS) guidance:

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/guidance-for-providers-about-student-and-consumer-protection-during-the-pandemic/>.

However, providers should not be planning to restrict teaching based on COVID-19 restrictions. On 6 July, we published guidance for HE providers, setting out plans from Step 4 of the government's roadmap. This includes that there will no longer be restrictions on the approach to teaching and learning in HE providers as a result of COVID-19. There will be no requirement for social distancing or other measures within in-person teaching. Providers will therefore be able to shape their courses without restrictions to face-to-face provision. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, also wrote to education leaders on 8 July, setting out plans as we move towards Step 4, including the government's expectation that HE providers offer students a full, enriching and enjoyable experience while staying as safe as possible. The letter and details of the relevant guidance are available here: <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2021/07/08/a-letter-from-the-education-secretary-to-education-leaders/>.

We regularly engage with the HE sector, and this includes ensuring they are aware of the guidance and their obligations. However, as they are autonomous institutions, we do not routinely monitor their individual plans.

The OfS, the HE regulator in England, has made it clear that all HE providers must continue to comply with registration conditions relating to quality and standards. This means ensuring that courses provide a high-quality academic experience, that students are supported and achieve good outcomes, and that standards are protected, regardless of whether a provider is delivering its courses through in-person teaching, remote online learning or a combination of both.

We have also asked universities to be clear and open about what teaching and learning approaches they plan to use so that students can make informed choices.

There is a process in place if students have concerns. They should approach their HE provider in the first instance. We expect student complaints and appeals processes to be operated flexibly, accessibly and sympathetically by providers to resolve these concerns. Students who go to university in England or Wales and who are not satisfied with their provider's final response can approach the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education who will consider their complaint.

Caroline Lucas:

[33195]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will issue guidance on covid-19 safety measures for recent 18 year olds who are (a) due to go to University in autumn 2021 and (b) all other recent 18 year olds; what discussions he has had with (i) Directors of Public Health and (ii) relevant higher education and health stakeholders on provision of covid-19 vaccinations at universities; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

On 14 July 2021, we updated the higher education (HE) operational guidance for the sector on how HE settings can manage the risks of transmission and outbreaks as students return to campus. This is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-reopening-buildings-and-campuses>.

This includes advice on testing prior to arrival at university and measures on ventilation and outbreak management.

We routinely engage stakeholders in our plans including via the HE Task Force, involving representatives from across government and the HE sector, which meets to explore the challenges currently facing the sector as it continues to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We also regularly engage with the Department of Health and Social Care, and we are working with them to ensure students have easy access to vaccinations at university if needed. We expect universities to work closely with their directors of health, especially for the development of outbreak management plans.

The COVID-19 vaccination is now being offered to everyone aged 18 and over, and we strongly encourage all students to take up the opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible, to protect themselves and those around them.

Students should register with a GP to be actively invited for a vaccination, though they can easily request to book a COVID-19 vaccine as an unregistered patient. More information on accessing vaccines can be found on the NHS published student frequently asked questions. HE providers should encourage students to consult with this advice, which are available here: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/06/C1317-COVID-19-vaccination-FAQs-students-in-Higher-Education-Institutions-.pdf>.

Students and staff should continue to test twice a week, either using home test kits or at an on-site facility throughout the summer break where settings remain open. Testing will pause in settings that are closed.

Students should expect to test before they travel back to university, by ordering a free test online or collection from their local pharmacy. On arrival at university, students should take two lateral flow device tests – either using home test kits or at an on-site testing facility – 3 to 4 days apart. This is to reduce the risk of transmission following the movement of students across the country. Final decisions about testing on return and ongoing regular asymptomatic testing in the autumn term will take into account public health advice. The position will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Experiments

Kenny MacAskil:

[33341]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the strategies of (a) his Department and (b) the Health and Safety Executive to increase the number of commercial service providers or research laboratories skilled in New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) data interpretation to deliver the Government's commitment to reduce and replace animal testing for UK REACH.

Kenny MacAskil:[\[33342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of (a) his Department's and (b) the Health and Safety Executive's progress in connecting their toxicologists with specialist providers of New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) and professionals who can interpret and apply the results of NAMs to inform decision making on the safety of chemicals and products.

Rebecca Pow:

UK REACH sets out what information is needed to satisfy each hazard endpoint. This includes specifying in some, but not all cases, what studies are required, including non-animal methods where they are available. New test methods will be included through amendments to the Test Methods Regulation after development and validation through the OECD. The responsibility then lies on registrants to commission any studies they need to fulfil their UK REACH information requirements, following Good Laboratory Practice.

The responsibility to reduce and replace animal testing with alternative methods, including New Approach Methodologies (NAMs), lies with industry (within the confines of the appropriate legislation). We would anticipate that commercial service providers will develop and expand their services accordingly, as and when demand for these methods increases. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has an active role with a number of organisations to advise, influence and support those looking to develop and apply these alternative methods. Where animal studies are unavoidable the Home Office is responsible for licensing testing houses and individual procedures.

HSE regulatory scientists, including toxicologists, are actively involved in monitoring and influencing the development of NAMs at both the domestic and international level which involves discussions and engagement with external experts in this field. HSE has recently appointed several independent experts who are familiar with NAMs to its UK REACH Independent Scientific Expert Pool to provide independent expert advice on the safety and regulation of chemicals and support its scientific opinions.

■ Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency: Boats**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[28100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, from each country and location in that country each boat in the service of the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency was procured from.

Victoria Prentis:

The Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency does not own any vessels.

■ Animals: Exports**Dan Jarvis:**[\[32396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing financial support to British businesses

that are required to contract a veterinary surgeon as part of exporting goods to Northern Ireland.

Victoria Prentis:

The Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS) was established following an assessment of the need to provide financial support to businesses that are required to contract a veterinary surgeon as part of exporting goods to Northern Ireland. The scheme, now in place until 2023, has already supported more than 140 businesses, covering the cost of more than 11,400 certificates and 1,300 inspection hours.

The Government has increased the number of Official Veterinarians (OVs) holding the relevant qualification to certify exports of products of animal origin, including meat products, in Great Britain from approximately 600 in February 2019 to more than 1900 to date. On 1 October 2020, the Government launched a new funded training scheme to enhance OV capacity further. In parallel, the Government launched a scheme to train Certification Support Officers (CSOs). CSOs can handle several preliminary and administrative tasks to prepare consignments for certification. This reduces the burden on OVs and Local Authority Certifying Officers.

■ **Beaches: North East**

Grahame Morris:

[\[32356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to increase the number of blue flag award beaches on the North East coast of England.

Rebecca Pow:

Blue Flag is an international award of the Foundation for Environmental Education for beaches and marinas which meet a range of criteria. Blue Flag is independent of government and in England is administered by Keep Britain Tidy. There are four criteria for a Blue Flag:

- Water quality - beaches must be classified as 'Excellent'
- Environmental education and information
- Environmental management
- Safety and services

In 2019, 72% of bathing waters in England were classified as 'Excellent' - the highest water quality standard. The Government has made clear that we will keep working to improve our environment and make sure it is protected for future generations. The 25 Year Environmental Plan sets out our commitment to continue to improve the cleanliness of our waters.

■ **Birds of Prey: Trade**

Drew Hendry: [\[32430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of allowing the usage of simplified procedures as applicable under the Cites Resolutions for the trade in captive bred raptors.

Victoria Prentis:

Following our departure from the EU we have begun a review of our domestic CITES legislation and procedures which implement our obligations under CITES. As part of this review, which is at an early stage, we have been seeking views from industry groups and other interested organisations, including those involved in the trade of captive-bred raptors.

■ **Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science: Boats**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science was procured from.

Victoria Prentis:

The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science owns one vessel, the RV Cefas Endeavour, which was constructed by and purchased from Ferguson Shipbuilders Ltd in Glasgow, Scotland.

■ **Chemicals: Regulation**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[33339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what weight his Department plans to give to advice from the Office for Environmental Protection given under Clause 29(3) of the Environment Bill; and whether that advice will be (a) requested and (b) published (i) in the event that any changes to the REACH Regulation are under consideration by his Department and (ii) in advance of any statutory change being laid.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government intends to fully consider any advice provided by the OEP. The OEP will build up comprehensive expertise and therefore a Minister may regularly ask it for advice. Clause 29(1) of the Environment Bill states that the Minister can ask the OEP to provide advice on proposed changes to environmental law, including any relevant amendments to the UK REACH Regulation. The Environment Bill states that the OEP must provide advice at the request of a Minister. The OEP may also provide advice on its own initiative to any proposed changes to environmental law as defined in clause 45. To maintain transparency and independence, the OEP must publish its advice as stated in clause 29(5). If a Minister required the OEP to provide advice, the OEP must also publish the request, along with any matters it was required to consider.

The regulation-making powers and associated duties contained in Schedule 20 to the Environment Bill are also subject to parliamentary scrutiny through the affirmative resolution procedure and potentially to judicial review.

Kenny MacAskill:

[33340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who will have responsibility for ensuring that duties created by clause 133 and schedule 20 on the amendment of the REACH regulation in the Environment Bill are enforced; and what methods will be used to assess compliance.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government intends to fully consider any advice provided by the OEP. The OEP will build up comprehensive expertise and therefore a Minister may regularly ask it for advice. Clause 29(1) of the Environment Bill states that the Minister can ask the OEP to provide advice on proposed changes to environmental law, including any relevant amendments to the UK REACH Regulation. The Environment Bill states that the OEP must provide advice at the request of a Minister. The OEP may also provide advice on its own initiative to any proposed changes to environmental law as defined in clause 45. To maintain transparency and independence, the OEP must publish its advice as stated in clause 29(5). If a Minister required the OEP to provide advice, the OEP must also publish the request, along with any matters it was required to consider.

The regulation-making powers and associated duties contained in Schedule 20 to the Environment Bill are also subject to parliamentary scrutiny through the affirmative resolution procedure and potentially to judicial review.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Electric Vehicles

Kerry McCarthy:

[28990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what proportion of the vehicles used by his Department for Government business are electric vehicles.

Victoria Prentis:

Across Defra there are 753 electric/plug in hybrid cars of which 367 are fully electric. This represents 17.1% of the car fleet (4,414 total cars). Fully electric is 8.3%.

Organisations included are:

- Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
- Animal and Plant Health Agency
- Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
- Defra
- Environment Agency
- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England

- Rural Payments Agency
- Sea Fish Industry Authority

■ Dogs: Animal Breeding

Paul Girvan:

[30411]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what information his Department holds on the number of illegal puppy farms have been closed down in the last five years, by jurisdiction.

Victoria Prentis:

Local authorities are responsible for enforcing the licence requirements for animal related activities such as pet selling or dog breeding. They therefore hold details of the enforcement activity being undertaken in their area, including information on action they have taken in relation to illegal breeding activity.

This Government takes the issue of the low-welfare and illegal supply of puppies very seriously. The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 require anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs and/or who breeds three or more litters in a twelve-month period to have a valid licence from their local authority. Licencees must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue, refuse or revoke licences.

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

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

Additionally, the Government has a manifesto commitment to crack down on puppy smuggling and one of our key reforms in the Action Plan on Animal Welfare is to end this abhorrent, cruel practice and low-welfare pet imports. Through the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill currently before Parliament, we will introduce new powers to tackle the unethical trade of puppy smuggling by reducing the number of pets (dogs, cats and ferrets) that can travel under pet travel rules. The Bill will also include powers for the Government to bring in further restrictions on the movement of pets on welfare grounds, for example by increasing the minimum age of imported puppies and restricting the import of pregnant dogs and dogs with mutilations such as cropped ears and tails.

We continue to maintain a close working relationship with the animal welfare sector, enforcement agencies and Governments across the four nations regarding the regulation of dog breeding and pet sales. This will allow us to explore a more

consistent approach to addressing any cross-border issues associated with illegal or low-welfare supply.

■ Domestic Waste: Kirklees

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[33119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much household waste (a) in kilograms has been produced per person, (b) has been sent to landfill in tonnes and (c) has been recycled in tonnes in Kirklees in each of the last 11 years.

Rebecca Pow:

Figures for Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council are calculated from data held in the WasteDataFlow web portal and are shown below. From 2015/16 disposal and treatment data was reported under a new question structure and figures for earlier years may contain inconsistencies. The tonnage of waste sent for energy recovery has also been shown in the table to add context to the figures.

KIRKLEES MBC

	Collected household waste per person (kg) (Ex BVPI 84a)	Household waste recycled (tonnes)	Household waste landfilled (tonnes)	Household waste sent for energy recovery (tonnes)
2009-10	434.3	54,168	17,188	101,981
2010-11	420.9	57,757	7,783	103,256
2011-12	405.3	56,550	8,175	100,765
2012-13	383.5	53,055	8,500	99,374
2013-14	398.1	52,530	11,067	103,382
2014-15	400.0	47,378	15,677	104,637
2015-16	399.9	49,678	19,860	101,848
2016-17	382.8	50,549	9,842	106,069
2017-18	366.8	43,709	4,411	112,867
2018-19	360.2	38,443	12,758	106,516
2019-20	366.0	43,024	4,855	110,948

Household waste sent for energy recovery (EfW) does not include waste sent for non EfW incineration.

■ Environment Agency: Boats

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[28097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, from which country and location in that country each boat in the service of Environment Agency was procured from.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency owns five vessels which were built in Pembroke, South Wales.

■ Environment Agency: Staff

Grahame Morris: [\[32357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many people have been employed by the Environment Agency to cover the North East of England, in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The table below provides the Environment Agency staff numbers in the North East Area for the end of the last five years. The headcount is the total number of people employed, not all of whom work full-time. The Full Time Equivalent is the number of full-time posts that the headcount equates to.

YEAR END	FULL TIME EQUIVALENT	HEADCOUNT
2021	294.82	307
2020	308.6	325
2019	290.38	308
2018	288.14	307
2017	289.7	310

■ Floods: Kirklees

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[33120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many homes in Kirklees were damaged by flooding in each of the last 11 years.

Rebecca Pow:

The numbers in the table below are derived from the number of homes that fall within the Environment Agency's Recorded Flood Outline which is reviewed following each major flood. This data set records homes affected by flooding, rather than damaged

by flooding, and includes homes where the flooding was restricted to gardens as well as those that flooded internally. This is the best available information held by the Environment Agency.

	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES AFFECTED BY FLUVIAL FLOODING (RIVERS)	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES AFFECTED BY OTHER SOURCES OF FLOODING (CAN BE ASSUMED TO BE FROM SURFACE WATER)
2010	0	0
2011	0	0
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	0	0
2015	203	0
2016	0	0
2017	0	0
2018	0	0
2019	1	1
2020	12	0

There may be additional homes that flooded during smaller flood events that the Environment Agency is not aware of, particularly where the flooding is due to surface water. The Local Authority may hold more information about these events.

■ Marine Management Organisation: Boats

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[28093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which (a) country and (b) location in that country each boat in the service of Marine Management Organisation was procured from.

Victoria Prentis:

The Marine Management Organisation currently charts two vessels under a framework agreement with Atlantic Services, a UK company based in Aberdeen.

■ Marine Protected Areas

Caroline Lucas:

[33198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of fully or highly protected Marine Protected Areas for (a) the ecological health of inshore waters and (b) the livelihoods of local fishing communities.

Rebecca Pow:

On 8 June 2021, the Government published its response to the Benyon Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). The Government accepted the central recommendation that we should take forward pilot sites and we will designate these next year. The purpose of HPMAs is biodiversity recovery and by setting aside areas of sea with high levels of protection, HPMAs will allow nature to recover to a more natural state, allowing the ecosystem to thrive in the absence of damaging activities. The Benyon Review Panel reviewed clear evidence and heard strong support for the ecological benefits that HPMAs can deliver.

The Government will identify pilot HPMAs with ecological value, including areas with potential to recover. In early July, Defra, with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee and Natural England, published the ecological criteria to be used in HPMa identification and opened the process for third parties to suggest potential HPMa pilot sites until the end of August. Defra will then use social and economic principles to minimise the impacts on sea users, including fishing communities. Defra will evaluate socio-economic concerns, including fisheries displacement, before designating HPMAs.

■ Marine Protected Areas: Fishing Vessels

Caroline Lucas:

[33197]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the activity of (a) supertrawlers, (b) bottom trawlers and (c) fly shooting in UK Marine Protected Areas with the Government's aim to protect 30 per cent of UK oceans by 2030.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are a devolved competency and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities assess on a site by site basis which fishing activities could prevent them from achieving their conservation objectives and determine what management is required to meet the site conservation objectives.

'Supertrawlers' generally target pelagic species of fish within the water column and are unlikely to interact with the seabed habitats, such as reef and sediment habitats, for which most MPAs are designated. Both bottom trawlers and fly-shooters interact with the seabed and are therefore likely to impact seabed habitats. The compatibility

of these activities will depend on the features protected in each site. If the site assessments conclude that this type of fishing poses a risk to the conservation objectives of a MPA, the relevant regulator would implement management measures.

Management measures will be introduced on a site by site basis to ensure that measures can be tailored to meet the conservation objectives of each site, without unnecessarily restricting fishing activity. We believe using byelaws, rather than fishing vessel licences, to manage fishing in MPAs is the best approach to further site conservation objectives. All existing MPAs in our offshore waters will be protected from fishing activities which could prevent them from achieving their conservation objectives through a three-year byelaw programme being undertaken by the MMO.

Caroline Lucas:

[33199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's plans to introduce management measures in 40 English offshore Marine Protected Areas over the next three years, if he will make it his policy for those plans to include site-wide bans on (a) bottom trawlers, (b) supertrawlers and (c) fly-shooting.

Caroline Lucas:

[33200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's new powers in the Fisheries Act 2020, if he will make it his policy to restrict the fishing licences of (a) supertrawlers, (b) bottom trawlers and (c) fly-shooters so that they cannot operate in offshore UK Marine Protected Areas.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are a devolved competency and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities assess on a site by site basis which fishing activities could prevent them from achieving their conservation objectives and determine what management is required to meet the site conservation objectives.

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Management measures will be introduced on a site by site basis to ensure that measures can be tailored to meet the conservation objectives of each site, without unnecessarily restricting fishing activity. We believe using byelaws, rather than fishing vessel licences, to manage fishing in MPAs is the best approach to further site conservation objectives. All existing MPAs in our offshore waters will be protected

from fishing activities which could prevent them from achieving their conservation objectives through a three-year byelaw programme being undertaken by the MMO.

■ **Office for Environmental Protection: Finance**

Caroline Lucas: [\[29772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the ring-fenced budget for the Office for Environmental Protection has been reduced from five to three years; when that decision was made; and for what reason that decision was not communicated to Parliament.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to establishing the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) as soon as possible after Royal Assent with sufficient funding to fulfil its statutory advice, scrutiny, and enforcement functions. The intention, subject to finalising parliamentary passage, is to provide the OEP with a five year indicative budget, with a ringfenced budget for each spending review period. Defra has agreed this approach with HM Treasury to give the OEP the greatest possible certainty over its finances for the coming years. The OEP will then be required to report annually on whether it has sufficient funding to carry out its functions, and we will share this information with Parliament. Defra have discussed this approach with the OEP who welcome this commitment.

■ **Pet Travel Scheme**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[30320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress has been made on negotiations with the EU on the EU Pet Travel Scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has been formally 'listed' as a 'Part 2' third country for the purposes of the EU pet travel regulations, which means that new rules apply to pet movements from Great Britain to the EU and Northern Ireland (NI). The pet health and documentary requirements for such pet travel are set out under the EU Pet Travel Regulations.

Defra recognises the undue impact that these changes are having on pet owners and assistance dog users and we are seeking agreement from the European Commission on awarding GB Part 1 third country listed status and recognition of GB's tapeworm-free status, which the EU recognises in both the Republic of Ireland and in NI.

We see no valid animal health reason for these to not be granted and we have one of the most rigorous pet-checking regimes in Europe to protect our biosecurity. We have submitted a detailed technical case setting this out and are continuing to engage with the EU on a workable solution.

We welcome the European Commission's recent indication of flexibilities in relation to movements from GB to Northern Ireland and we are developing proposals for how to use those flexibilities which we will discuss with the Commission in due course.

■ Plastics: Recycling

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[30327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the proposed annual reduction of plastic waste that may result from the introduction of a deposit return scheme for plastic bottles.

Rebecca Pow:

An impact assessment was published alongside our second consultation on introducing a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our research in the assessment suggested that for an All-in DRS (which includes all sizes of drinks containers up to 3l) with an 85% return rate of in-scope containers, there would be an annual reduction of 34,493 tonnes of plastic waste in 2024 increasing to 58,007 tonnes by 2033.

Our recent consultation set out options for the scope of DRS including size of drinks containers that could be included. The amount of reduction in plastic waste will of course vary depending on the precise scope of a DRS and potential return rates, which will be reflected in our government response and final impact assessment.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[30328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of including other single-use materials in the planned deposit return scheme for plastic bottles.

Rebecca Pow:

We have recently closed a second consultation on introducing a deposit return scheme for drinks containers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and are analysing the responses to the consultation, with a view to publishing a government response in due course. The government response will include a final decision on the scope and materials to be included in the deposit return scheme. An impact assessment for the introduction of the scheme will also be published.

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

■ Plastics: Waste Disposal

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[30326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to Trashed: How the UK is still dumping plastic waste on the rest of the world, published by Greenpeace on the 17 May 2021, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the UK's plastic footprint.

Rebecca Pow:

We acknowledge the concerns raised by Greenpeace in its report and agree that there is a need to take action on plastic pollution. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042. In December 2018, we published the Resources and Waste Strategy, which sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy and keep resources in the system for as long as possible. We know more needs to be done, and for the most problematic plastics we are going faster - which is why we have committed to work towards all plastic packaging on the market being recyclable, reusable, or compostable by 2025.

The UK Government also has a manifesto commitment to ban exports of plastic waste to non-OECD countries. Defra has commissioned research to have a better understanding of plastic waste recycling capacity in the UK and OECD member countries, and this research will be key to the development of policy options to implement the manifesto commitment. We currently plan to consult before the end of 2022 on options to deliver the proposed ban.

On 24 March 2021, we launched a second consultation regarding our specific proposals to reform the current packaging producer responsibility scheme and on introducing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. We want producers to take greater responsibility for the packaging they place on the market. To do this we will make them pay the full net costs of collecting and managing packaging when it is no longer used and becomes waste. This will encourage businesses to think carefully about how much packaging they use and design. It will also encourage businesses to use packaging that is easily recyclable and encourage greater use of reusable and refillable packaging. Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging will see producers' fees varied ('modulated') to account for certain criteria, including recyclability. Producers who use easily-recyclable packaging will pay less than those who use hard-to-recycle, or unrecyclable, packaging. Producer fees will also be used to cover the costs of national consumer information campaigns on recycling packaging waste.

On 24 March 2021, we launched a consultation on our proposals for a deposit return scheme for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The introduction of a deposit return scheme is aimed at increasing the recycling and reprocessing of materials and reducing the incidence of littering. A deposit return scheme for drinks containers will see a refundable deposit added to the price of a drink, which people can reclaim when they return their empty drinks containers to a specified return point. We know that well-run deposit return schemes in other countries can collect over 90% of the drinks containers placed on the market, which can be then sent for recycling.

On 7 May 2021, we launched a consultation on our proposals for consistency in household and business recycling in England. We want to make recycling easier and ensure that there is a comprehensive, consistent service across England. This will

help to reduce confusion with recycling, ensure that there is more recycled material in the products we buy, and that the UK recycling industry grows.

These consultations have now closed and we are currently analysing the responses.

We have made significant progress on reducing other single-use plastic products. In October 2020, we introduced measures to restrict the supply of plastic straws, plastic drink stirrers, and plastic-stemmed cotton buds. The single-use carrier bag charge, which has led to a 95% reduction in the use of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarkets, has been increased to 10p and extended to all retailers to encourage customers to bring their own bags to carry shopping and reduce the volumes of single-use plastic being used. We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and materials to take a systematic approach to reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastic products, including problematic packaging materials. However, we must think carefully about introducing bans and other policy solutions to avoid unintended consequences. Impact assessments for future bans on single-use plastics will continue to assess the potential for substitution to single-use items made of other materials, to ensure that any ban really is a sustainable approach.

The Government has put together a package of over £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. £38 million was set aside through the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund, the last funding competition of which opened in June 2020. The Resource Action Fund included £10 million specifically to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter. The Government has also announced £60 million of funding through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150 million investment from industry, towards the development of smart, sustainable plastic packaging (SSPP), which will aim to make the UK a world leader in sustainable packaging for consumer products. Two SSPP funding opportunities have been open for bids in 2021: the SSPP Demonstrator Round 2 and the SSPP business-led research and development competition.

To note, waste and environmental policy is a devolved area and therefore devolved administrations are taking their own approach.

■ **Sewage: Pollution Control**

Grahame Morris:

[32355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward proposals to prohibit water companies from paying shareholder dividends until the number of combined sewer overflows incidents are reduced and bathing waters in their locality meet blue flag water quality standards.

Rebecca Pow:

Between 2020 and 2025, water companies will invest £3.1 billion in storm overflow improvements to reduce sewage discharges to our waters. This includes £1.9bn investment on the Thames Tideway Tunnel super sewer, as well as £1.2bn of other

investment throughout England. £144m of this is new, additional investment as a result of a call to action from the Storm Overflows Taskforce.

Reducing sewage discharges and tackling their harm is one of our top priorities and I recognise there is more to be done. On 8 June 2021 the Government tabled amendments to the Environment Bill to introduce measures on storm overflows.

Bathing water quality can be affected by a number of pollution sources, including wastewater and run-off from agriculture. One of the four criteria for a Blue Flag is that beach water quality must be classified as Excellent. In 2019, 72% of bathing waters in England were classified as 'Excellent'.

Decisions on dividends for water company shareholders are made by water company boards. Company boards carry out these decisions within the framework of regulatory price controls, licence conditions and company law. Ofwat is responsible for economic regulation of the water companies. Among Ofwat's statutory duties is a duty to ensure that companies carry out their functions and are able to finance them, and that water companies protect the interests of consumers. Where companies fail to meet their obligations, Ofwat has enforcement powers. To secure compliance and change behaviour they can obtain legally binding undertakings and impose enforcement orders. For the most serious contraventions they can impose financial penalties on companies.

■ Southern Water

Stephen Morgan:

[33315]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) quality, (b) accuracy and (c) timeliness of the data the Environment Agency receives from Southern Water on statutory pollution notifications in (a) Langstone Harbour and (b) other areas for which that Southern Water is responsible; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) requires Southern Water Services Limited to report all pollution incidents caused by any of their assets in a timely and accurate manner, whether or not the asset benefits from an Environmental Permit.

Incidents are assessed for their potential impact on the environment. The EA reviews the circumstances and any evidence available for incidents that have the potential to cause significant impact. The EA will assess compliance with any statutory or non-statutory reporting requirements on an individual basis. Where the quality of Southern Water's initial report is insufficient for an accurate assessment of environmental impact to be made, it will liaise with the company to obtain full details. Breaches of Environmental Permit conditions relating to reporting of incidents are dealt with in accordance with the EA's Enforcement and Sanction Policy.

The EA records and tracks data pertaining to these incidents, including the timeliness of reporting, which forms the basis of regular performance meetings with the

company. Data is also published annually in the Environmental Performance Assessment of water companies.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[33316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what representations he has received from the Environment Agency in relation to its latest report on the environmental performance of Southern Water for 2020; and will he make a statement.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[33317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to (a) support and (b) improve the environmental performance of Southern Water; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government works closely with the regulators including the Environment Agency and Ofwat to support their work to monitor Southern Water's performance and to hold them to account to deliver improvements for their customers and the environment.

The EPA report which spans the last 12 months makes for extremely disappointing reading. Even the industry-leading water companies have more work to do, especially on the use of storm overflows. The worse performing companies like Southern are still failing to live up to their responsibilities to regulators, their customers and the environment. Water companies have a legal duty to avoid pollution to our rivers and other waterways.

Although it has improved on last year's one star rating, Southern Water remains one of the worst performing companies. Southern has a package of undertakings to deliver, following enforcement action in 2018. The package includes steps to improve investment and performance at its wastewater treatment works and to increase transparency for customers about its environmental performance.

I met with Southern Water's management team earlier this year to discuss their environmental performance. Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, also recently met with Southern Water's Chair, and the Secretary of State will be meeting with them to discuss their 2020 EPA results.

■ Supermarkets: Delivery Services

Daisy Cooper:

[\[30418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the temporary relaxation for night time supermarket deliveries in built up areas is planned to end.

Victoria Prentis:

The temporary relaxation of planning enforcement related to the delivery of food and other essential goods to retailers is due to end at the introduction of Step 4 of the roadmap, now confirmed as Monday 19 July. However, this temporary relaxation of

planning enforcement has been an important measure to ensure availability of food supplies during the period of Covid restrictions.

■ Water Supply

Grahame Morris:

[\[32358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to end the private monopoly in water through introducing consumer choice.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government currently has no plans to introduce competition for household customers.

The Government considers that the private model, supported by a strong independent regulatory system, has generated investment and improved performance, by setting prices, protecting consumers and providing a stable framework for companies and investors.

The Government opened the water retail market for non-household customers in April 2017, giving businesses, charities and public sector organisations choice over their water retailer. The market is still in its infancy. We therefore do not believe that this is the right time to introduce a competitive market for households.

Grahame Morris:

[\[32359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward legislation to (a) end the private monopoly in water and (b) bring water into public ownership.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has no plans to bring water into public ownership.

Since privatisation, the private water sector model has unlocked more than £150 billion of investment. This is equivalent to around £5 billion annually in investment and has delivered a range of benefits to customers and the environment.

The Government considers that the private model, supported by strong economic regulation, generates investment, protects consumers, and provides a stable framework for companies and investors. Ofwat, the independent regulator, protects the interests of consumers by controlling prices, making sure water companies carry out their statutory functions and are financially resilient, as well as holding them to account on overall performance and the delivery of essential services.

Holding a monopoly licence to provide these services is a privilege and the Government and regulators have high expectations of the corporate and financial behaviours of owners and investors.

Fully supported by the Government, Ofwat introduced reforms to financial and corporate practices delivered through the 2019 price review, which require water companies to:

- share any benefits of higher levels of debt with customers;
- increase financial resilience; and
- be transparent about how executive performance pay and dividends relate to services for customers.

These reforms strengthen the private model and provide better outcomes for customers.

■ Water: Standards

Grahame Morris:

[33203]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the European Environment Agency's assessment entitled State of bathing water 2020, what assessment he has made of the reasons for which UK bathing water quality regularly lags behind that of other European countries.

Rebecca Pow:

Bathing water quality for the UK was reported to Europe for the last time in 2020 even though no classification was produced in England and Scotland due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 European Environment Agency (EEA) league table ranked the UK last because this missed all of the normally 'Excellent' English and Scottish bathing waters that were not classified.

The most recent classification, from 2019, showed that in England 98% of bathing waters met at least the minimum standard of the Bathing Water Directive and the percentage of 'Good' and 'Excellent' bathing waters was 93%, with 72% in the highest 'Excellent' category.

The UK's ranking is usually better, but it traditionally still appears in the lower rankings of the league table for a number of reasons. The EEA figures ranking countries by compliance against Directive standards takes no account of the geographical challenge faced by northern European countries versus those in the south.

Bathing waters in southern Europe benefit from the natural disinfection effect of bright sunlight and infrequent runoff from rainfall, so the task of ensuring compliance is much easier for some countries than for the UK with a northerly latitude, frequent rainfall and a high population density.

The EEA ranking of countries also doesn't take account of the different standards applicable to fresh and coastal waters. Coastal bathing waters are subject to standards that are twice as stringent as those for freshwater bathing waters. As an island nation, nearly all of our bathing waters are on the coast and subject to the more stringent standards. This is in contrast to many countries in mainland Europe who have many more freshwater bathing waters; subsequently, this has an effect on the UK's ranking versus other countries'.

If English bathing waters are compared to other equivalent northern European coastal bathing waters, our position is broadly comparable, despite the arguably

larger challenges from high population density, high rainfall totals and often turbid waters. That being said, this Government is committed to delivering clean and plentiful water, as set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan, and will shortly be setting ambitious targets for water quality under the Environment Bill framework to drive further action in this area.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Bahrain: Human Rights

Wayne David:

[\[32290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assurances he has sought from the Government of Bahrain on the strengthening of (a) the Bahraini Ministry of Interior Ombudsman and (b) other human rights oversight institutions in that country in response to the provision of support to Bahrain through the Gulf Strategy Fund.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO's International Programme (IP), and within it the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF), is a vital tool in promoting positive change and reforms across the world, including in the Gulf. Our programmes help our partners to continue their human rights reform, address key climate change and green growth opportunities and challenges, tackle illicit finance, improve marine conservation, promote economic diversification, promote diversity and inclusion including on LGBTQ+ rights, and develop their institutions.

All cooperation through the International Programme, including the Gulf Strategy Fund, is subject to rigorous risk assessments to ensure all work meets our human rights obligations and our values. The Government does not shy away from raising legitimate human rights concerns, and encourage other states to respect international law.

We now publish an annual summary of the GSF's work on gov.uk. We will not publish further information where doing so presents risks to our staff, programme suppliers and beneficiaries, or which may impact our relationships with our international partners, and therefore our ability to influence their reform efforts. We will provide updates on an annual basis.

■ Belarus: Financial Services

Catherine West:

[\[32567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to take steps to prevent the sale of Belarusian state bonds on the London Stock Exchange that may finance repressive activities by the governing regime of that nation.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government unequivocally condemns the Lukashenko regime's campaign of repression against the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Belarus and is taking measures to stop the regime from making money in the UK. We have implemented over 100 sanctions designations against individuals and entities responsible for the violation of human rights and the suppression of democracy in Belarus, including senior ranking officials and BNK(UK) Ltd, an exporter of Belarusian oil products. This will hit the Lukashenko regime where it hurts by disrupting a key revenue stream and sends the clear message that they will be held to account for their oppression. The UK is developing plans for further measures targeting specific sectors of the Belarusian economy.

■ CDC: Finance**Navendu Mishra:**[\[32536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, (a) how much of CDC Group's £12.1 million commitment to the African Infrastructure Investment Fund III has been disbursed and (b) to what projects.

James Duddridge:

CDC's 2020 commitment to African Infrastructure Investment Fund III follows an earlier commitment in 2017 and brings CDC's total commitment to the fund to \$65.63 million. CDC does not disclose disbursement information for individual investments as this is commercially sensitive.

CDC makes available information on the underlying investments made by funds into which it has invested on its website: <https://www.cdcgroup.com/en/our-impact/fund/african-infrastructure-investment-fund-iii/>

Navendu Mishra:[\[32537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, (a) how much of CDC Group's £40.5 million commitment to the AfricInvest Fund IV has been disbursed and (b) to which projects those funds have been allocated.

James Duddridge:

CDC does not disclose disbursement information for individual investments as this is commercially sensitive.

CDC makes available information on the underlying investments made by funds into which it has invested on its website: <https://www.cdcgroup.com/en/our-impact/fund/africinvest-iv/>

Navendu Mishra:[\[32538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, (a) how much of CDC Group's £81 million commitment to the Helios Investor IV fund has been disbursed and (b) to which projects those funds have been allocated.

James Duddridge:

CDC does not disclose disbursement information for individual investments as this is commercially sensitive.

CDC makes available information on the underlying investments made by funds into which it has invested on its website: <https://www.cdcgroup.com/en/our-impact/fund/helios-investors-iv/>

■ CDC: Fossil Fuels**Preet Kaur Gill:****[33297]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the amount of CDC Group's £79.5 million funding to Standard Chartered Risk Sharing Facility that will support trade finance for fossil fuel projects.

James Duddridge:

CDC's 2020 investment commitment to Standard Chartered formed part of our Covid-19 response targeting the immediate financing needs of businesses during the pandemic. CDC's broader partnership with Standard Chartered aims to boost the availability of trade finance in some of Africa and South Asia's poorest countries. This will help to generate up to \$1 billion of additional trade, supporting job creation, boosting exports and enabling regional economic growth.

CDC sets parameters, including exclusions, for the use of its funds and has not made sector estimates for the use of funds for this investment. In line with CDC's objective to reach net zero in 2050 and support countries' net zero trajectories, CDC no longer support trades in coal and crude oil. To accelerate the transition, CDC is exploring innovative solutions to support more green activities.

Preet Kaur Gill:**[33298]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps CDC Group has taken to help ensure that its investments in financial institutions are not used to fund fossil fuel related projects.

James Duddridge:

In July 2020, CDC launched its new Climate Strategy. Subsequently, in December 2020, CDC launched its Fossil Fuel Policy and Gas Guidance Tool, which is fully aligned with the UK Government's fossil fuel policy.

CDC has published its approach including to Financial Institutions here: <https://www.cdcgroup.com/en/news-insight/news/announcing-our-new-fossil-fuel-policy-and-guidance-on-natural-gas-power-plants/>

Preet Kaur Gill:**[33299]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he has made an assessment of the proportion of CDC Group's 2020 commitments to (a) ABSA Bank, (b) BMCE Bank of Africa and (c) Trade Development Bank that potentially support fossil fuel projects.

James Duddridge:

In July 2020, CDC launched its new Climate Strategy. Subsequently, in December 2020, CDC launched its Fossil Fuel Policy and Gas Guidance Tool, which is fully aligned with the UK Government's fossil fuel policy. The policy excludes investment in the vast majority of fossil fuel types with very limited exclusions.

CDC sets parameters, including exclusions, for the use of its funds and has not made sector estimates for the use of funds for these investments.

■ CDC: Indorama Eleme Fertilizer & Chemicals**Matthew Pennycook:**[\[32466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the purpose is of CDC Group's 2020 commitment of £20.3 million in funding to Indorama Eleme Fertilizer & Chemicals Limited.

James Duddridge:

CDC Group's 2020 commitment to Indorama Eleme Fertilizer & Chemicals Limited is for the construction of a feed conditioning unit installed as part of Indorama's fertiliser plant. This unit will save 70,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year, recovering CO2 that would otherwise be vented.

Since 2013 CDC's investment in Indorama has helped Nigeria meet its domestic needs for urea fertiliser as well as shifting the country to be a net exporter. This is a critical part of tackling food insecurity in Nigeria. More information on CDC's investment into Indorama is available on its website -

<https://www.cdcgroup.com/en/our-impact/investment/indorama-eleme-fertilizer-chemicals-limited/>

■ China: Religious Freedom**Feryal Clark:**[\[32539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Chinese counterpart on protecting the religious freedoms and freedom of belief of (a) Falun Gong practitioners, (b) Uyghur Muslims, (c) Christians and (d) all minority religious groups in China; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

We remain deeply concerned about the persecution of Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and others on the grounds of their religion or belief in China. The freedom to practise, change or share one's faith or belief without discrimination or violent opposition is a human right that all people should enjoy. The Foreign Secretary has personally raised our serious concerns about the human rights situation in China with his Chinese counterpart, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on a number of occasions, most recently on 27 May. Furthermore, on 22 June, a global UK diplomatic effort helped deliver the support of over 40 countries for a statement on the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang at the UN Human Rights

Council, calling on China to grant unfettered access to the region for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

■ **Conflict Resolution: Females**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[33290]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the (a) funding and (b) budget breakdown is for the Government's support of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

James Cleverly:

There is no specific budget for our work on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). This work is mainstreamed into wider activity supporting UK National Action Plan strategic objectives and is funded from several sources. For example, the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund requires all portfolios to fund WPS projects and activities by targeting and by integrating WPS and gender equality into all programmes.

■ **Coronavirus: International Cooperation**

Chris Law:

[31435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of inequitable global access to covid-19 (a) vaccines and (b) other medical tools on the UK's response to covid-19.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has been clear since the outset of the pandemic of the importance of equitable, global access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests and has played a leading role in these global efforts. The UK stands side by side with our international friends and partners during this deeply challenging time to tackle COVID-19, providing over £1.3 billion of aid to the international response. The UK was one of the earliest and largest donors to the COVAX Facility, committing £548 million to COVAX's Advance Market Commitment which, through match funding, leveraged \$1 billion from other donors in 2020. Our early funding has been key to helping COVAX secure deals with manufacturers to supply up to 1.8 billion doses of safe and effective vaccines for up to 92 low- and middle-income countries by early 2022. The Prime Minister also announced at the G7 that the UK will donate 100 million doses within the next year, 80% of which will go to COVAX to further support countries in need. We continue to work closely with the G7 and international partners on expanding and accelerating global access, including efforts to mobilise international financing, increase vaccine supply and support in-country delivery, including community mobilisation and efforts to build vaccine confidence, particularly in low-income countries.

The UK is among the largest donors to the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, contributing £813 million. This funds many international organisations working as ACT-Accelerator partners for rapid development and equitable access to COVID-19 medical tools, such as diagnostics, treatments and oxygen supplies,

including the World Health Organisation, the Global Fund, Unitaid, the Wellcome Trust and the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics.

Chris Law:

[\[31440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent progress his Department has made on its consultations with representatives of (a) the pharmaceutical industry and (b) relevant institutions to catalyse (i) engagement with and (ii) participation in the World Health Organization's COVID Technology Access Pool.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has engaged extensively with all interested parties on the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) since the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its concept paper in October 2020. We continue to have ongoing, constructive discussions with the WHO as well as industry and relevant institutions on the initiative. Joining C-TAP is a decision for industry to take and we will continue to act as an interface between the WHO and relevant stakeholders, and share lessons learnt from UK licensing models for voluntary sharing of intellectual property.

The UK has supported efforts to boost vaccine manufacturing through voluntary licensing and technology transfer partnerships, working with partners including through the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator Vaccine Manufacturing Working Group and the COVAX Supply Chain and Manufacturing Task Force. Our contribution to the development of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine is well known and is already ensuring more than half a billion doses of vaccine are available across the world at cost. We encourage others to follow this lead and are working to facilitate more partnerships like this.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[31432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the UK's contribution to the COVAX programme.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to supporting global access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and has played a leading role in driving international support for the COVAX Facility as an effective multilateral mechanism to deliver this. The UK was one of the earliest and largest donors to COVAX, committing £548 million to COVAX's Advance Market Commitment which, through match funding, leveraged \$1 billion from other donors in 2020. Our early funding has been key to helping COVAX secure deals with manufacturers to supply up to 1.8 billion doses of safe and effective vaccines for up to 92 low- and middle-income countries by early 2022. The Prime Minister also announced at the G7 that the UK will donate 100 million doses within the next year, 80% of which will go to COVAX to further support countries in need.

Chris Law:[\[31434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the UK's efforts in ensuring accessibility and availability of covid-19 vaccines across the globe; and what steps he is taking to increase access to those vaccines in low-income countries.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to supporting global access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines and has played a leading role in driving international support for the COVAX Facility as an effective multilateral mechanism to deliver this. The UK was one of the earliest and largest donors to COVAX, committing £548 million to COVAX's Advance Market Commitment which, through match funding, leveraged \$1 billion from other donors in 2020. Our early funding has been key to helping COVAX secure deals with manufacturers to supply up to 1.8 billion doses of safe and effective vaccines for up to 92 low- and middle-income countries by early 2022. The UK's investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has been a key contribution to the global vaccination effort and we are proud that the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine forms a significant part of the COVAX portfolio in support of these efforts.

The Prime Minister also announced at the G7 that the UK will donate 100 million doses within the next year, 80% of which will go to COVAX to further support countries in need. We continue to work closely with the G7 and international partners on expanding and accelerating global access, including efforts to mobilise international financing, increase vaccine supply and support in-country delivery, including community mobilisation and efforts to build vaccine confidence, particularly in low-income countries.

Chris Law:[\[31436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine have been distributed to low-income countries; and how that figure compares to the number of doses distributed by that company globally.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is proud to be playing a leading role in the global effort to develop and distribute COVID-19 vaccines and our investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has been a key contribution to this effort. Through voluntary licensing and manufacturing partnerships across the world, more than half a billion doses of the vaccine have so far been distributed worldwide at non-profit prices, with two-thirds of these going to lower- and middle- income countries. This includes a significant portion of COVAX's supply, which has so far shipped over 109 million COVID-19 vaccines to 135 participants worldwide. We encourage others to follow this lead and are working to facilitate more partnerships like this.

Chris Law:

[31437]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK's donation of covid-19 vaccine doses to the COVAX programme as announced on 11 June 2021, when he plans to announce details of (a) exact volumes of doses given to date and (b) the timescale for future doses being given.

Wendy Morton:

Our G7 Presidency in June championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics and confirmed the UK will share 100 million doses within the next year, 30 million of those by the end of 2021. 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.

Chris Law:

[31439]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the expiry dates of (a) domestic surplus covid-19 vaccines and (b) future vaccine donations to the COVAX programme; and what steps he is taking to mitigate potential wastage.

Wendy Morton:

Our G7 Presidency in June championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics and confirmed the UK will share 100 million doses within the next year, 30 million of those by the end of 2021 with 5 million doses shared by the end of September, beginning in the coming weeks. Expiry of vaccines and the need to ensure no wastage of vaccines takes place remains a significant element in our planning of when and where the UK will share/deploy doses both domestically and with international partners. No vaccines will be shared without an agreement there is time for recipients to distribute and deploy vaccines before expiry.

Decisions on which vaccines will be shared and when will also be based on the continued reliability of supply chains, regulatory restrictions and advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Chris Law:

[31442]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of covid-19 vaccine doses available to low- and middle-income countries and humanitarian contexts through COVAX relative to requirement, including from the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine; and what steps he plans to take to tackle any shortfall.

Wendy Morton:

The UK was one of the earliest and largest donors to COVAX, committing £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment. Our early funding helped COVAX secure deals with manufacturers to supply safe and effective vaccines for up to 92 low- and middle-income countries. COVAX has so far helped deliver over 107 million doses to over 135 participants. It aims to provide doses equivalent to up to 30% population in low- and middle-income countries by early 2022. The UK's

investment in the research and development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine has been a key contribution to the global vaccination effort and we are proud that the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine forms a significant part of the COVAX portfolio in support of these efforts.

The UK is proud that our G7 Presidency secured agreement from leaders to support vaccinating the world in 2022 and to share and finance an additional 1 billion doses over the next year to accelerate vaccine roll-out. This includes a commitment from the UK to share 100 million doses, 80% of which will go to COVAX to support countries in need, with 5 million doses to be shared by the end of September beginning in the coming weeks. We continue to work closely with the G7 and international partners on expanding global access, including efforts to mobilise international financing, increase vaccine supply and support in-country delivery, including community mobilisation and efforts to build vaccine confidence.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Climate Change

Catherine West:

[32565]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many people employed by his Department are (a) responsible for and (b) engaged in developing climate change policies for his Department.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: Following the merger of FCDO, we have created a new Climate & Environment Directorate (CED). The Director and all staff are engaged in various aspects of COP26 and climate change policy, galvanising increased global action to tackle the climate crisis and protect nature. The Directorate and our Heads of Mission are supported in their climate work by our overseas network of Climate, Energy and Environment Attachés. They are additionally supported by senior COP26 Regional Ambassadors. The information on numbers is not held centrally.

The Foreign Secretary provided information to the FAC on this issue on 18 June 2021, in the Government's response (<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmfaaff/440/44002.htm>) to the FAC's report on "A Climate for Ambition: diplomatic preparations for COP26". More information on our work and priorities for the FCDO can be found in our upcoming Annual report, which will be published shortly.

■ Global Partnership for Education

Yasmin Qureshi:

[33192]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government is planning to set up a challenge fund with match funding for making progress towards the \$5 billion Global Partnership for Education replenishment target.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is leading the way in the run-up to the Global Education Summit. At the G7 Leaders' Summit, the Prime Minister announced the UK pledge of £430 million, an uplift of 15% on the last financing period and our largest ever contribution to GPE. This is also the largest bilateral pledge announced so far and with our co-host, President Kenyatta, we are urging other nations to step up their pledges to GPE.

This significant pledge meant we were able to secure commitment from G7 partners of at least \$2.7 billion to GPE ahead of the GES. At the Summit, we hope to secure up to \$4 billion, which is 80 per cent of GPE's \$5 billion 5-year target, and would be the single biggest ever boost to children's education opportunities around the world.

■ Hong Kong: Security**Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[32548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of Hong Kong's National Security Law on the freedoms and rights of people in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the situation in Hong Kong and the erosion of rights and freedoms and the high degree of autonomy enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. It is crystal clear that the powers under the National Security Law are being used as a tool to curtail freedoms and punish dissent, rather than keep public order.

■ Husain Moosa and Mohammed Ramadhan**Wayne David:**[\[32291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had recent discussions with the Government of Bahrain on immediate release of Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa from detention in that country.

James Cleverly:

We continue to monitor and raise the cases of Husain Moosa, Mohammed Ramadhan and others, as necessary, with the Bahraini Government.

■ Lebanon: Sanctions**Wayne David:**[\[32292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on the introduction of sanctions against political leaders in Lebanon.

James Cleverly:

We do not speculate about possible future sanctions designations. The UK, the EU, and others in the International Support Group for Lebanon have long been clear that Lebanon's political leaders must implement the reforms to which they have

committed. This is the only way to sustainably address the socioeconomic and political crisis the country faces.

■ **LGBT People**

Crispin Blunt:

[33101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2021 to Question 21124 on LGBT People, if he will publish the details of the targeted international LGBT rights programmes funded by his Department.

Wendy Morton:

The UK government is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBT+ people. Our overseas missions prioritise engagement with local human rights defenders and we have consistently committed funding to targeted international LGBT+ rights programmes. In 2020/21 the UK committed £5.47 million to targeted international LGBT+ rights programmes. For more information on some of our programmes, see the FCDO's 2020 Annual Human Rights Report:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/999607/Human_Rights_and_Democracy_the_2020_Foreign_Commonwealth_Development_Office_report.pdf

■ **Malta: Serum Institute of India**

Anna McMorris:

[32480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Maltese counterparts on lifting restrictions on UK citizens vaccinated with AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccines manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

Wendy Morton:

All AstraZeneca vaccines given in the UK are the same product and appear on the NHS COVID Pass as Vaxzevria. The European Medicines Agency, as well as our own medicines regulator, has authorised this vaccine and travel should not be affected. We have confirmed with the Maltese authorities that all vaccines delivered in the UK, regardless of type, batch or location of manufacture, are sufficient for entry into Malta.

■ **Myanmar: Diplomatic Service**

Stephen Kinnock:

[31423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government has accredited the Burmese Ambassador to the UK appointed by the military dictatorship in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We do not discuss the details of accreditation requests in specific cases.

■ Nigeria: CDC

Matthew Pennycook: [\[32463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much of CDC Group's £95.6 million funding commitment to Globeleq will support (a) gas-power projects and (b) other fossil fuel projects.

James Duddridge:

CDC's 2020 investment commitment to Globeleq was provided to support the financing and development of its pipeline of African power projects. The final funding arrangements for individual projects are not yet finalised.

Matthew Pennycook: [\[32464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much of CDC Group's 2020 funding commitment to Globeleq will be allocated to the Temane gas-fired power station in Mozambique.

James Duddridge:

CDC's 2020 investment commitment to Globeleq was provided to support the financing and development of its pipeline of African power projects. The final funding arrangements for individual projects are not yet finalised.

Matthew Pennycook: [\[32465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much of CDC Group's 2020 funding commitment to Globeleq will be allocated to the Qua Iboe gas-fired power station in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

CDC's 2020 investment commitment to Globeleq was provided to support the financing and development of its pipeline of African power projects. The final funding arrangements for individual projects are not yet finalised.

■ Palestinians: West Bank

Judith Cummins: [\[32417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on ending demolitions of Palestinian homes in the West Bank.

James Cleverly:

In all but the most exceptional of circumstances demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions with the Government of Israel, most recently on 12 July. The Foreign Secretary did so during his visit to the region on 26 May.

■ Prisoners: Torture**Tulip Siddiq:** [32458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27268 on Prisoners: Torture, how many and what proportion of torture allegations received by his Department from British citizens alleging torture by overseas authorities were then raised by his Department with the detaining authorities for the (a) 119 new torture cases reported by British nationals to overseas to consular staff in 2019 and (b) 91 new torture cases reported by British nationals to overseas to consular staff in 2020.

Tulip Siddiq: [32459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27268 on Prisoners: Torture, how many open torture cases of British citizens his Department has as at 30 June 2021.

Tulip Siddiq: [32462]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27270 on Prisoners: Torture, what information his Department holds on whether there have been any prosecutions of overseas officials by overseas authorities in their court systems for the torture of any British citizens imprisoned overseas as a result of his Department's intervention since its new torture reporting system was introduced in 2011; and how many such prosecutions occurred in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO records all information about allegations of torture and mistreatment reported to us by British nationals, and the action taken in response to those allegations, within individual case files. The FCDO collates statistics on the number of cases, but these statistics do not include the proportion of allegations raised with the local authorities, nor whether allegations that were raised by the FCDO resulted in overseas prosecutions of overseas officials. Our statistics do not differentiate whether allegations would constitute torture, or whether they would constitute other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (mistreatment). Our Human Rights and Democracy report for 2020 reported that we reviewed a total of 124 open cases of torture and mistreatment in December 2020. This report is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2020>. Data on new cases of torture and mistreatment is available each month here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/foreign-commonwealth-development-office-consular-data-2021>. The number of open torture and mistreatment cases reviewed in 2021 will be included in the 2021 Human Rights and Democracy report.

Tulip Siddiq: [32460]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27268 on Prisoners: Torture, what the criteria were for the selection of his Department's sample for review of 124 open cases in

December 2019; what the criteria are for each of his Departments such periodic reviews; and for what reason all open cases are not so reviewed on an annual basis.

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[32461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27268 on Prisoners: Torture, and the reference in that Answer to his Department's Human Rights and Democracy Reports for 2019 and 2020 which included reference to its sample for review of 124 open cases (a) what the terms of reference for that review was, (b) who conducted review, (c) whether that review involved consultation with the victims, their families or any other external party, (d) what the key findings and recommendations were of each of those open case reviews, (e) whether those reviews or summaries of the findings of those reviews are published by his Department and (f) what changes his Department has made to its working practices as a result of those reviews.

Nigel Adams:

In December 2019, the FCDO reviewed all of the 124 cases of torture and mistreatment which were open at that time. Annual reviews of all open torture and mistreatment cases include stakeholders from across the FCDO. These reviews provide feedback to staff managing cases, and identify broader themes and trends in reported torture and mistreatment cases. The reviews and summaries of the findings of those reviews contain sensitive personal data and are not published by the FCDO. The FCDO is committed to identifying what we do well and what we could do better in relation to supporting British nationals who have reported torture and mistreatment. We aim to provide effective assistance to victims of torture or mistreatment based on their individual circumstances and local conditions.

■ **Russia: Cybercrime**

Lisa Nandy:

[\[32377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress the Government has made in working with its international allies to develop a common approach to the attribution of malicious cyber activity by (a) Russia and (b) other countries as recommended by the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia published on 21 July 2020.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has been at the forefront of demonstrating that there are meaningful consequences to malicious cyber activity. We co-ordinate closely with a wide range of international partners. We share our analysis of the threat and our experience in responding in order to increase the capabilities and commitment of countries around the world to respond and deter malicious cyber activity. We have a network of cyber attachés across the world who work with international partners to raise awareness and build capacity to defend against cyberattacks including coordinating on our approaches to attributing malicious cyber activity.

Hostile actors must understand that irresponsible behaviour in cyberspace will carry costs. The UK has been at the forefront of demonstrating these consequences coordinating the use of existing tools and working to put in place new tools such as EU and UK cyber sanctions regimes. In 2020 the UK, working in solidarity with the EU, imposed cyber sanctions on 12 entities and individuals from China, Russia and DPRK. Since 2017, working in solidarity with a growing coalition of international partners we have attributed a number of malicious cyber incidents to Russia, China, DPRK and Iran including attacks including NotPetya, WannaCry, Sandworm, APT28, APT10 and the Solarwinds compromise.

■ Sierra Leone: Ebola

Jeremy Hunt: [\[33183\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference the UK's response to the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone in 2014, how many (a) NHS and (b) armed forces personnel took part in tackling the outbreak; and what (i) equipment and (ii) funding did the UK Government provide to tackle that outbreak.

Jeremy Hunt: [\[33184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what information his Department holds on (a) a timeline of the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and (b) how long it took to get that outbreak under control.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government mounted a comprehensive response to the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone, which involved ten departments and four arms' length bodies. More than 1,500 British military personnel, 150 NHS volunteers, 425 Public Health England staff and 250 DFID surge staff worked alongside staff at our High Commission in Freetown and in the UK.

The UK Government also provided 1,500 isolation and treatment beds at six Ebola treatment centres and 70 community care centres across the country. Support also included diagnostic laboratories, safe and dignified burials, assistance for households under quarantine, infection prevention and control, social mobilisation and community engagement. The Government committed more than £400 million to ending the Ebola outbreak throughout the crisis period. Sierra Leone was finally declared Ebola free on 17 March 2016.

■ South Africa: Violence

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[32337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help protect the lives and business interests of UK citizens in South Africa in response to the recent outbreak of violence in that country following the incarceration of former President Zuma for contempt of court.

James Duddridge:

The UK is concerned by the outbreak of violence and looting in South Africa in recent days, which has sadly resulted in injuries, loss of life, and substantial damage to buildings and businesses. As a long-standing friend of South Africa, our High Commission in South Africa raises issues of concern with the South African authorities where necessary, in particular where UK nationals are involved. We encourage British Nationals to check our Travel Advice pages, which we are regularly updating. The UK welcomes the South African government's efforts to restore stability and President Ramaphosa's emphasis on the importance of the rule of law. We will continue to work with South Africa as it deals with this violence and its efforts to address current social and economic challenges.

TRIPS Agreement: Coronavirus**Chris Law:**[\[31443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has with (a) relevant stakeholders and (b) Cabinet colleagues on the communication by the EU to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council of the World Trade Organization proposing a declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health in the circumstances of a pandemic.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is currently assessing the proposal submitted by the European Union to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Department for International Trade leads on this issue for the UK.

Chris Law:[\[31444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has had discussions with his US counterpart on the proposed waiver of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights at the World Trade Organization; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government is currently assessing the proposal submitted by the European Union to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Council at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Department for International Trade leads on this issue for the UK.

Yemen: Torture**Kenny MacAskill:**[\[32522\]](#)

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

James Cleverly:

The UK condemns all alleged human rights violations in Yemen and urges the parties to the conflict to exercise restraint and uphold their responsibilities under relevant international law.

We regularly raise the importance of complying with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) with the Saudi Arabian Government and other members of the Coalition, including requesting investigations into alleged incidents of concern. The Foreign Secretary raised IHL with Saudi National Security Advisor al-Aiban during his visit to Saudi Arabia on 7 June.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:****[24968]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 outbreak, whether he has plans to review the long-term infection prevention and control measures required by Intensive Care Units; what assessment his Department has made of the steps required to minimise the risk of hospital acquired infections; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

There are no specific plans to review the long-term infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in intensive care units (ITU). However, we have committed to publish a National Infection Prevention Manual for England that will contain guidelines for IPC best practice across healthcare settings. All National Health Service providers will be expected to deliver care to the standards outlined in this guidance.

The United Kingdom IPC COVID-19 cell monitors and reviews emerging evidence and data and guidance on effective IPC. To support NHS trusts to assess compliance with COVID-19 guidelines in all clinical areas, including ITU, NHS England has a number of resources which are available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/infection-prevention-and-control-supporting-documentation/>

■ Ambulance Services: West Midlands**Mark Pritchard:****[31369]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice his Department has given on introducing stab proof vests for West Midlands Ambulance Service crews.

Edward Argar:

West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is piloting stab proof vests involving 22 volunteers at the Willenhall Hub, who will be regularly surveyed to understand the challenges and benefits of using this extra protection. The Trust expects the pilot to start in September.

■ **Bio Products Laboratory**

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[29743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department carried out a risk assessment of the sale of Bio Products Laboratory Limited by Bain Capital in 2016.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: Bain Capital carried out its own due diligence with respect to the sale. The Department was fully informed and supportive of the sale following its own corporate due diligence process on the purchaser.

■ **Business and Public Sector: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[29092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what forecast he has made of the effect of increases in covid-19 infection rates on staffing levels in (a) education, (b) policing, (c) business, (d) social care and (e) NHS settings.

Jo Churchill:

The Joint Biosecurity Centre has not made this forecast. The CONTAIN Framework sets out the well-established local, regional and national arrangements for public health and emergency planning that continue to be used as the basis of this enhanced response.

■ **Cancer: Consultants**

Grahame Morris:

[\[33204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of unfilled vacancies for clinical oncology consultants in the NHS.

Helen Whately:

The Department has not made such an estimate.

■ **Cancer: Health Services**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[27358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS backlogs in cancer care are tackled consistently under recovery plans being implemented at a local level; if he will take steps to ensure that there is consistency in the provision of NHS cancer care throughout England; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Planning Guidance 2021/2022 outlines the cancer recovery priorities and the key actions to encourage patients to come forward and ensure capacity is in place to treat them. Local systems, drawing on advice and analysis from their Cancer Alliance, will ensure that there is sufficient diagnostic and treatment capacity in place to meet cancer needs.

Cancer Alliances bring together clinical and managerial leaders from different hospital trusts and other health and social care organisations, to transform the diagnosis, treatment, and care for cancer patients in their local area. These partnerships enable care to be more effectively planned across local cancer pathways, to ensure consistency.

■ Cancer: Waiting Lists

Peter Dowd:

[\[27178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS 2021-22 priorities and operational planning guidance, published on 25 March 2021, whether the NHS is on schedule to tackle the backlog of cancer diagnosis, care and treatment by the end of March 2022.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and Improvement are committed to clearing the cancer backlog of patients waiting over 62 days from referral to first treatment by March 2022. Progress has been made, with 2.68 million urgent referrals and over 664,000 people treated for cancer between March 2020 and May 2021. In May 2021 general practitioner urgent referrals for suspected cancer were 8.3% higher than the May 2019 baseline. Cancer referrals have reached over 10,500 referrals per day in April and nearly 11,000 in May.

■ Childbirth

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[31471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve the chances of survival for babies born prematurely.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Maternity Safety Ambition includes a target to reduce the pre-term birth rate from 8% to 6% by 2025. 'Saving Babies Lives Version Two: A care bundle for reducing perinatal mortality' includes an element to reduce the number of pre-term births and optimise care when pre-term delivery cannot be prevented. This includes greater intervention on prediction, prevention and preparation for mothers and babies at risk of pre-term birth. The development of specialist pre-term birth clinics across England to care for women with heightened risk of pre-term birth, is also outlined in the care bundle. The establishment of pre-term birth clinics has been widely promoted across all local maternity systems, provider trusts and clinical networks.

■ Clinical Trials

Alex Norris:

[\[32498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to consult on the use of powers to improve the regulatory environment for clinical trials granted by the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 provides targeted delegated powers which enable us to update the regulatory regime for clinical trials. Work is ongoing to develop legislative proposals to design a regulatory environment for clinical trials which will support the development of innovative medicines. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency intend to consult on proposals later this year.

■ Colour Vision Deficiency: Males**Mr Gregory Campbell:****[27030]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the rates of colour vision deficiency among men.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: In the majority of cases, colour vision deficiency is caused by a hereditary genetic fault. Due to the pattern of inheritance, the condition most commonly appears in males, with females being carriers rather than expressing the condition, resulting in much higher rates among men. Colour vision deficiency acquired later in life may improve with treatment for the underlying cause. Sight tests are recommended every two years, although some people will be advised to attend more frequently due to increased risk factors.

However, occasionally colour vision deficiency may develop later in life as a result of other factors such as a side effect of certain medications and underlying health conditions, such as glaucoma and diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy can lead to problems with vision, including colour vision deficiency. The National Health Service diabetes prevention programme identifies those at high risk of developing diabetes and refers them for tailored, personalised education. Diabetic retinopathy screening is also offered to anyone over the age of 12 years old who has diabetes.

■ Coronavirus: Children**Paul Blomfield:****[30345]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of covid-19 reported cases have been in people under 18 years old each week for the last 16 weeks.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: This data is not available in the format requested.

■ Coronavirus: Contracts**Neale Hanvey:****[32530]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Care of 7 July 2021, Official Report, column 920, if he will specify the key tests that are required to be met in relation to emergency contracting procedures.

Edward Argar:

'Procurement Policy Note 01/20: Responding to COVID-19' guidance on public procurement regulations is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0120-responding-to-covid-19>

Authorities are allowed to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The Department must demonstrate on a case by case basis that it is satisfied the tests set out in the guidance permitting use of the negotiated procedure without prior publication have been met. The Regulations state that the Department should ensure there are genuine reasons for extreme urgency; the events that have led to the need for extreme urgency were unforeseeable; it is impossible to comply with the usual timescales in the Public Contract Regulations; and the situation is not attributable to the contracting authority.

■ Coronavirus: Mental Health**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[33295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution of 6 July 2021, Official Report, columns 758-59, what his timescale is for publishing the long-term, sustainable plan to deal with mental health challenges; and if he will set out the key components of that plan.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are considering plans on mental health and bring forward next steps in due course.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Philip Davies:****[15202]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been left disabled as a result of a covid-19 vaccination.

Philip Davies:**[21172]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people who have developed a disability as a result of receiving the covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

It is not possible at present to quantify the number of people left disabled as a result of a COVID-19 vaccination. Disability has a wide-ranging definition, including the length of time for which a condition persists. It should be noted that a report of an adverse drug reaction does not mean that it was caused by the drug or vaccine. Clinical decisions on whether a vaccine has caused a disability are considered on a case by case basis and will include consideration as to whether there may have been other factors involved, such as other pre-existing conditions. Any functionality

outcomes for such patients evolve over time and depend on multiple factors such as type of adverse event that occurred, patient's age and underlying conditions.

Navendu Mishra:

[27363]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to have discussions with representatives of Novavax on the release of antibody test results to unblinded participants in the Novavax covid-19 vaccine trial.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have no current plans to do so. Individuals who participate in trials should speak to their trial contact on such matters as the release of test results. The Department will ensure that trial participants are not disadvantaged in terms of any future domestic vaccine certification, if introduced, compared to anyone else who has had their vaccines under the standard National Health Service programme.

Alicia Kearns:

[31560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including children considered clinically extremely vulnerable in the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government keeps the evidence on vaccination, under careful review, including whether clinically vulnerable children and young people should be offered a COVID-19 vaccination. At this stage, no decisions on the routine vaccination of children and young people. Following the approval of a vaccine for use in those aged 12 to 15 years old, we will be carefully reviewing the relative risks and benefits alongside expert advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.

Ruth Edwards:

[31561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of advising that immunocompromised people receive a third dose of a covid-19 vaccine instead of the proposed booster vaccines planned for autumn 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Any third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine would be administered as part of a booster vaccination programme. 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/jcvi-interim-advice-potential-covid-19-booster-vaccine-programme-winter-2021-to-2022>

The JCVI advises a two staged approach, with individuals in stage one offered a booster and flu vaccine, as soon as possible from September. and Individuals in stage two should be offered a booster vaccine as soon as practicable after stage one, with equal emphasis on deployment of the flu vaccine where eligible. Adults aged 16

years old and over who are immunosuppressed would be offered a booster vaccine dose in stage one. Final decisions on the timing, scope and cohort eligibility of any COVID-19 vaccine booster programme and the vaccines that will be deployed, will be confirmed once the JCVI has provided their final advice.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[32274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the European Medicines Agency on assessment and approval of AstraZeneca covid-19 batches 4120Z001, 4120Z002, 4120Z003.

Nadhim Zahawi:

No specific discussions have taken place. We are not aware of any advice from the European Medicines Agency on the assessment or approval of specific vaccine batches used in the United Kingdom.

Neil Coyle:

[32412]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have died with covid-19 after receiving (a) one and (b) two doses of a covid-19 vaccine since the covid-19 outbreak began.

Nadhim Zahawi:

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 COVID-19 vaccine and will publish this data in due course.

PHE's technical briefing 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>

Daisy Cooper:

[32520]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether British citizens who received their covid-19 vaccinations overseas will be able to register their vaccine status on the NHS app when returning to the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Work is ongoing to determine which non-United Kingdom vaccines could be recognised in this country. Once confirmed, NHSX will work to add the appropriate data into the database to provide access to an NHS Covid Pass for those eligible.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[33293]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reducing the period between first and second doses of the covid-19 vaccine from 8 weeks to 4 weeks.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Currently, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommends an interval of eight weeks between doses of all the available COVID-19 vaccines. On 14 May, in response to the increasing rates of infection of the Delta variant, the Government amended the interval of second doses for the most vulnerable cohorts who were offered a vaccine in phase one of the programme, from 12 weeks to eight weeks. The eight week interval was applied to all eligible cohorts from 6 July.

Current evidence shows that a longer dose interval produces a better immune response and as such, the JCVI has advised against reducing the dose interval further in order to maximise the effectiveness of the vaccination programme.

Dental Services: Ventilation**Rachael Maskell:**[\[24256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of providing NHS dentists with grants to improve ventilation in NHS dental surgeries.

Jo Churchill:

We are exploring a range of interventions, including ventilation, which could increase National Health Service dental capacity.

Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**Bill Esterson:**[\[21201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 13929 tabled by the hon. Member for Sefton Central on 10 June 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 13 July to Question 13929.

Electronic Cigarettes and Tobacco**Mr David Jones:**[\[17699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to improve public access to information about (a) e-cigarettes and (b) reduced-harm alternatives to combustible tobacco.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 June 2021]: The National Health Service website provides public information on the harms of smoking and advice to help people quit smoking, including information on using e-cigarettes. In addition, central stop smoking campaigns such as Stoptober have supported the use of e-cigarettes as a tool to help smokers quit.

To support our Smokefree 2030 ambition, the upcoming Tobacco Control Plan will set out a range of measures which will help smokers to quit, including through the use of less harmful products such as e-cigarettes.

■ Health and Care Bill

Caroline Lucas: [\[33196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to publish early drafts of regulations relating to the Health and Care Bill ahead of the Committee Stage of that Bill.

Edward Argar:

The Department is currently developing regulations which will support the implementation of the Health and Care Bill. The Department will continue to work with the National Health Service and stakeholders on the regulations, which will be shared with hon. Members in due course.

■ Hyperactivity: Health Services

Stephen Morgan: [\[28301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage NHS Trusts to follow NICE guidelines on referral and treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) have a legal duty to have due regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines and are responsible for working with other local commissioners and organisations, including National Health Service trusts to make decisions about how best to meet the needs of their local populations. This includes NICE guideline 'Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management' which aims to improve the diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and the quality of care and support that people receive.

■ Kidney Cancer

Alex Norris: [\[7914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of increases in incidence of kidney cancer on the demand for urology cancer nurse specialists.

Jo Churchill:

Specialist clinical nursing workforce working in kidney cancer is a post registration qualification and it is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure they have the staff available to provide clinical services.

The Spending Review 2020 provides £260 million to continue to grow our National Health Service workforce and support commitments made in the NHS Long Term

Plan, including continuing to take forward the Cancer Workforce Plan Phase One commitment to expand education and training to increase the number of Clinical Nurse Specialists and develop common and consistent competencies, including for urological cancers.

Full details on funding allocations towards NHS workforce budgets, including Health Education England, in 2021-22 will be published in due course.

■ Life Expectancy

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[20429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government has taken to address discrepancies between life expectancy in different wards of birth.

Jo Churchill:

The Government will publish a white paper later this year, setting out bold new policy interventions to improve living standards in all parts of the country.

The new Office for Health Promotion support collaboration across Government on the wider determinants of health. We will reinforce the role of local authorities as champions of health in their communities and enhance the National Health Service's public health responsibilities on prevention.

■ Long Covid

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[33292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether SAGE modelling on projected long covid-19 case numbers will be published before step 4 of the roadmap on 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

To date, there has not been any modelling by the Scientific Advisory Group on Emergencies on projected Long COVID case numbers.

From September 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement will publish activity data on referral, assessments and waiting times for post-COVID-19 assessment clinics.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron:

[\[25733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 12 April 2021, and follow-up correspondence of 14 May and 14 June 2021, from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay on the Epilepsy Society Safe Mum Safe Baby Campaign, reference JB32183.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 6 July 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 15 July 2021.

Mr John Baron:

[\[32289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 16 April, 13 May and 17 June 2021 regarding his constituent, with reference JB32222.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 14 July 2021.

■ **Mental Health Services and Obesity: Children and Young People**

Peter Kyle:

[\[29097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of (a) the number of referrals received by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and (b) childhood obesity rates in each London borough.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

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

Attachments:

1. Table [FORMATTED TABLE FOR MINISTERIAL CLEARANCE PQ29097.docx]

■ **Mental Health Services: Care Leavers**

Stella Creasy:

[\[32379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide ring-fenced funding for mental health services targeted at care leavers as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The funding and provision of health services, including mental health services, are the responsibility of local clinical commissioning groups as they have the flexibility to allocate funding according to local need. We do not currently have any plans to ringfence funding for mental health services targeted at care leavers.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to the development of a comprehensive mental health offer for children and young people, including care leavers. We are working to ensure that by 2023-24 an extra 345,000 children and young people will be able to access support via National Health Service-funded mental health services and school or college based mental health support teams.

■ **Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[32561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to reduce the length of time that children and young people have to wait between referral to NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the beginning of treatment.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We remain committed to the ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan to invest at least an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health services by 2023/24. This will provide at least an additional 345,000 children and young people with timely access to National Health Service-funded mental health support by 2023/24. The proposals set out in the Green Paper on transforming children and young people's mental health provision include the piloting of a four-week access and waiting time for children and young people's mental health services.

In addition, on 5 March, the Department announced an additional £79 million for mental health support for children and young people in 2021/22. This will allow approximately 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services, 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services and a faster increase in the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges over the next financial year.

■ Mental Health Services: Prisons**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[30337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled The future of prison mental health care in England, published by Centre for Mental Health on 25 June 2021, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of that report.

Ms Lyn Brown:[\[30338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report entitled The future of prison mental health care in England, published by Centre for Mental Health on 25 June 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing recommendations (a) three, (b) four, (c) five, (d) six, and (e) seven of that report.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

There are no plans to carry out any formal assessment. However, the report made a number of recommendations which are being taken into account as appropriate though existing aligned programmes of work being undertaken by the Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

■ Miscarriage**Dr Lisa Cameron:**[\[31446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to ensure that dedicated maternity wards in the NHS are available for mothers who have experienced a miscarriage.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have no plans to do so.

We expect National Health Service trusts to have due regard to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's Quality Standard 'Ectopic pregnancy and miscarriage', which sets out that women with a suspected miscarriage should be referred to an early pregnancy assessment service for diagnosis and management based on an initial clinical assessment.

■ Neurology

Simon Hoare: [\[32455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding from the Elective Recovery Fund has been allocated to neurology elective care in England since that fund's creation.

Simon Hoare: [\[32456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding from the Elective Recovery Fund has been allocated to neurology elective care in England broken down by NHS region.

Edward Argar:

Information on how much of the £1 billion Elective Recovery Fund has been allocated to each National Health Service region and elective service in England is not held centrally, as it will not be distributed through set allocations. As set out in NHS Planning Guidance for 2021-22, systems are asked to deliver activity levels above set thresholds in order to access this additional funding.

■ NHS: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[28259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of NHS staff who are self-isolating; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that level of self-isolation on the delivery of primary and secondary care services.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the information in the format requested and no official assessment has been made.

■ NHS: Software

Mr Steve Baker: [\[R\] \[31383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he will set out plans on the closure of NHS Test and Trace; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: The full range of responsibilities delivered by NHS Test and Trace are being transferred into the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKSHA). As NHS Test and Trace transfers into UKHSA, we are planning against a range of scenarios for the trajectory of the pandemic and assessing the

appropriate test, trace and self-isolation response. We anticipate testing, tracing and self-isolation requirements to reduce as prevalence reduces. The UKHSA will be fully functional by 1 October.

■ Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Florence Eshalomi:

[32562]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will produce a cross-departmental strategy on (a) societal misconceptions, (b) lack of awareness in schools, (c) medical misdiagnosis and (d) waiting times for treatment of obsessive compulsive disorder.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have no current plans for a cross-Government strategy specifically on obsessive compulsive disorder.

■ Pregnancy: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[32510]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is collecting data on the number of pregnant women and new mothers being vaccinated against covid-19.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are not collecting this information in the format requested.

Weekly vaccination statistics are published by NHS England and NHS Improvement including by age, sex, ethnicity, population subgroup and National Health Service organisational footprint. The level of data published by NHS England is regularly reviewed. The weekly vaccination data is available at the following link:

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

■ Prescriptions: ICT

Peter Dowd:

[32421]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress the NHS is making on the rollout of electronic prescribing medications systems.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The National Health Service is on course to eliminate paper prescribing in hospitals and achieve the NHS Long Term Plan commitment to introduce digital prescribing by 2024. Since 2018, we have invested £78 million with 216 NHS trusts having received a share of this fund. The proportion of trusts with an electronic prescriptions and medicines administration system is estimated to have risen from 19% in 2018 to more than 80% to date.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Kate Green: [\[30354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the pilot testing programme to help identify and limit the spread of covid-19 within schools without the use of bubbles will be (a) available and (b) made public.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: The pilot testing programme is being reviewed in light of recent changes to self-isolation policy and for the data from pilots and clinical trials to be assessed and validated.

Kate Green: [\[30355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many schools have withdrawn from the pilot programme to identify and limit the spread of covid-19 within schools without the use of bubbles; and for what reasons those schools have withdrawn from the programme.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: This information is not currently available as the results of the pilot are still being validated.

■ Skin Diseases

Sir Christopher Chope: [\[21141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many new skin conditions have been diagnosed by the NHS in England in the last twelve months; and how many of those skin conditions were attributable in whole or in part to the wearing of masks and other face coverings.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: This data is not collected centrally.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Mr Steve Baker: [\[R\] \[28176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) Joint Biosecurity Centre's risk assessment data for the entire covid-19 traffic light list and (b) risk assessment status of all countries and destinations on those green, amber and red lists.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Decisions to place countries on the 'red', 'amber' or 'green' lists are taken by Ministers informed by evidence, including the Joint Biosecurity Centre's (JBC) risk assessments alongside other wider public health factors. We are unable to provide the advice, evidence and methodology which informs these decisions as it relates to the on-going development of Government

policy. However, further information on the data informing international travel risk assessments is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-informing-international-travel-risk-assessments>

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[1182]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people arriving in the UK for the purpose of seeing a relative before they pass away are not prevented from doing so as a result of response times within his Department's Exemptions team.

Jo Churchill:

The Managed Quarantine Service manages exceptions to leave managed quarantine requests on a case by case basis. Each request is dealt with individually and normally within 72 hours. Evidence is required, such as confirmation from the hospital visits are allowed and urgent cases are dealt with immediately.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[25719]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 17 June 2021 to Question 13841 and 24 June 2021 to Question 18559 on travel: coronavirus, if he will place a copy in the Library of the summary of key data used by the Joint Biosecurity Centre to inform the latest round of assessments being referred to shown in the tables of those answers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 July 2021]: The Joint Biosecurity Centre, part of NHS Test and Trace, continues to publish a summary of key data and advice that supports Ministers' decisions, last updated on 4 June at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-informing-international-travel-risk-assessments>

As this information is available at GOV.UK and is continually updated, we have no plans to place in the Library.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[25725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July 2021 to Question 21143 on travel: coronavirus, for what reason Sardinia is not regarded as a separate territory and destination from Italy.

Jo Churchill:

The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) currently reviews over 250 countries and territories to inform Ministers upon current international travel policies. The JBC does not routinely separate all islands from their mainland territories. However, various islands/island groups are closely monitored regarding wider public health issues within regions including virus prevalence.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Catherine West:** [\[23280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports of women being sexually harassed while staying at covid-19 quarantine hotels.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[24292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of allegations that people quarantining in hotels under covid-19 travel restrictions have been sexually harassed by security guards; and what steps his Department is taking to support investigations into those allegations.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: Allegations of sexual assault are taken extremely seriously. We regularly meet with security companies to ensure all staff adhere to the highest professional standards. It is a requirement that our contracted security staff have passed the Security Industry Accreditation process. If staff fall below these standards, we demand an immediate investigation by the company, including with the police, resulting in the suspension of individuals where appropriate.

Imran Hussain: [\[6317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been granted exemption from managed covid-19 quarantine hotels on medical grounds since such facilities were opened.

Imran Hussain: [\[6319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have applied for exemption from managed covid-19 quarantine hotel on medical grounds since such facilities were opened.

Jo Churchill:

Since February 2021 around 60 people have been granted exemptions from COVID-19 managed quarantine facilities on medical grounds. We do not have data on how many people have applied for exemption from COVID-19 managed quarantine facilities on medical grounds.

■ Universities: Coronavirus**Caroline Lucas:** [\[33194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on what steps higher education institutions should take in preventing the spread of covid-19 infections from 16 August 2021, when the self-isolation rules change, for students recently turned 18 who have (a) had close contact with someone who has tested positive for covid-19 and (b) not yet had two doses of a covid-19 vaccine; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

There have been no specific discussions. However, consideration was given to those recently turned 18 years old who will not have been fully vaccinated. We will provide further information shortly.

The Government has recently updated its guidance for higher education providers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections, which is available at the following link:

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

HOME OFFICE**■ Biometric Residence Permits**

Peter Kyle: [33286]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the efficiency of her Department's manufacture and distribution of Biometric Residence Permits.

Peter Kyle: [33287]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of Biometric Residence Permits are despatched to applicants within seven to 10 days of them receiving a decision letter.

Peter Kyle: [33288]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has put in place to ensure Biometric Residence Permits are distributed to applications without any delays.

Kevin Foster:

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) advises applicants they can expect delivery of their Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) within 10 working days of receiving their decision notification.

BRPs are produced on behalf of UKVI by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). DVLA has a service level agreement to complete 90% of production requests within one working day and the remaining 10% within two working days. For quarter one of financial year 2021/22 they achieved 85.1% (218,527) within 24 hours and 100% (256,730) within 48 hours.

FedEx took over the BRP delivery contract from DX in February 2020, after a bedding in period formal reporting started in July 2020. Between 1 July 2020 and 31 March 2021 FedEx attempted to deliver 99.2% of BRPs within 48 hours of collection from DVLA, against a target to attempt delivery within 48 hours of collection for 99% of BRP packages.

Therefore, first delivery will have been attempted within 10 working days of decision notification for all BRPs successfully produced by DVLA.

Between March and mid-December 2020, as a social distancing measure due to the coronavirus pandemic, UKVI agreed to allow FedEx to post all BRP packages which resulted in higher first time delivery success rates of 92.73% between August and December 2020, but higher volumes of mis-posts and losses. We therefore re-introduced the contractual requirement to knock on every door, check identity, capture the name of the recipient and take a photograph of the front door within FedEx's tracking system. Once all social distancing restrictions have eased, signatures will also be required for every delivery. As a result, between January and May 2021 FedEx achieved 84.34% first time delivery success rate.

Where it is possible to do so FedEx will leave a 'Sorry we missed you' card detailing how the customer can re-arrange delivery. Where UKVI has been able to share customer contact details with FedEx it will also email or SMS message the customer with a delivery failure message explaining how to re-arrange delivery.

UKVI meets with FedEx at least twice a week, to discuss measures to improve first time delivery success rates.

■ **British Nationality: Fees and Charges**

Ruth Jones:

[30415]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the affordability of the process to secure UK citizenship.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office keeps fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensures they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament, as set out in Section 68 (9) of the Immigration Act 2014 which can be viewed via the following link: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>

A Supreme Court hearing on Child Registration fees took place on 23 and 24 June. We await the final judgment and the ongoing section 55 review before publishing results.

■ **Computer Misuse Act 1990**

Lisa Nandy:

[32375]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent progress she has made on her review of the effectiveness of the Computer Misuse Act 1990; and when she expects that review to be completed.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Secretary launched the review of the Computer Misuse Act 1990 on 11 May, announcing a public Call for Information to seek the views of stakeholders on how the Act, and law enforcement powers to investigate the offences in the Act, can be enhanced. The Call for Information has now closed, and the Home Office is reviewing the proposals made.

We will provide an update to Parliament in due course.

■ Counter-terrorism

Lisa Nandy:

[\[33215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she has taken to progress closer working between MI5 and police regional Counter- Terrorism Units on countering Hostile State Activity, as recommended by the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia published on 21 July 2020.

Kevin Foster:

The Government agrees with the Intelligence and Security Committee on the benefits of close working arrangements between law enforcement and the security and intelligence services.

As noted in the Government's response to the ISC's report, MI5 has already developed closer working with Police and Home Office partners in tackling the threat posed by State Threats, including working together closely on a number of State Threats cases. The Salisbury response and investigations in 2018 were led by Counter Terrorism Policing, drawing on its expertise in investigating matters which pertain to national security. The Agencies continue to collaborate closely and productively with Police on all relevant State Threats cases.

■ Fraud: Russia

Lisa Nandy:

[\[33214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress she has been made on ensuring that the Serious and Organised Crime Group (a) is provided with the necessary resources for and (b) is giving sufficient priority to disrupting the threat posed by illicit Russian financial activity as recommended by the Intelligence and Security Committee's report on Russia published on 21 July 2020.

Kevin Foster:

Money obtained through corruption or criminality, including that linked to Russia, is not welcome in the UK.

The government, with the Home Office as a core partner, is continuing to bring all the capabilities of UK law enforcement to bear where there is any evidence of malign intent, serious and organised crime or illicit financial activity.

■ Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre: Staff

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[33331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy that at least 60 per cent of staff in direct contact with women detainees will also be women at the new Hassockfield immigration removal centre in line with her Department's acceptance of that recommendation in the HM Inspectorate of Prisons' Yarl's Wood Service Improvement Plan, published on 12 August 2015.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[33332]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the statement in her Department's Detention Services Order 06/2016: Women in the detention estate report, published in June 2016, that women detainees are entitled to ask to be examined by a female nurse or doctor, what her policy is on the proportion of healthcare staff at the new Hassockfield immigration removal centre that will be women.

Chris Philp:

The safety, health and welfare of individuals in immigration detention are considered with the upmost importance. The new Hassockfield (to be known as Derwentside) immigration removal centre (IRC) will be operated in line with Detention Centre Rules 2001, published operating standards for IRCs and Detention Services Orders; a framework which ensures the safety and security of those detained in our care.

The workforce requirements for the new Hassockfield IRC will reflect the lessons learned from detaining women at Yarl's Wood IRC and will include a ratio of female to male custodial staff that is appropriate for the specific needs of women in detention. It is our aim that around 60% of uniformed staff will be women.

Healthcare in IRCs in England is commissioned by NHS England, and the healthcare services at Hassockfield IRC will be provided by NHS England & NHS Improvement commissioned service providers and delivered in line with the national service specifications for healthcare services in IRCs. The healthcare provider will ensure that services within the IRC are delivered to meet the healthcare needs of women. As set out in Detention Services Order 06/2016 'Women in the detention estate' women will be offered the option to choose to see a female healthcare professional wherever possible.

■ Hate Crime: Sentencing

Dr Rupa Huq:

[32457]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the maximum sentence for people convicted of racist hate crime.

Victoria Atkins:

The legal framework for hate crimes already ensures there are increased penalties for offenders when compared to non-hate crimes. This includes higher possible sentences for a range of offences such as assault, harassment and criminal damage when they include racial hostility.

We have asked the Law Commission to review hate crime legislation and consider how the law can be made more effective. It will report recommendations this year and we will respond when it is complete.

■ Home Office: Re-employment

Imran Hussain:

[33243]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, on the Government's policy on the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic, what steps their Department has taken to (a) investigate and (b) discourage the use of fire and rehire negotiation tactics by their Department's executive non-departmental public bodies; and what steps they have taken to communicate the Government's policy on those practices to those bodies.

Kevin Foster:

The Government has been clear it expects employers to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership, working with trade unions, where relevant, constructively. This applies to Home Office sponsored NDPBs as much as to any other employer.

Home Office sponsored NDPBs that employ civil servants must set their terms and conditions of employment in accordance with the rules of the Civil Service Management Code. Bodies covered by the Code are expected to communicate novel and contentious workforce proposals to the Cabinet Office as made clear by paragraph 4.

■ Immigration

David Simmonds:

[24389]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish legislative proposals to support the New Plan for Immigration.

Chris Philp:

The Secretary of State introduced the Nationality and Borders Bill in Parliament on 6 July 2021. The bill will give effect to many of the legislative proposals set out in the New Plan for Immigration. The policy statement on the New Plan for Immigration was published on 24/3/21 which outlines the proposals [New Plan for Immigration - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/new-plan-for-immigration).

■ Immigration Controls

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[33129]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he plans to review the Universal Permission to Travel requirements as a result of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Kevin Foster:

The Common Travel Area facilitates the free movement of people between the United Kingdom, Crown Dependencies, and Ireland.

As now, the UK will not operate routine immigration controls on journeys from within the Common Travel Area, with no immigration controls whatsoever on the Republic of

Ireland-Northern Ireland land border given the Common Travel Area Arrangements and Ireland not being part of the EU's Schengen Border Free Area.

However, as now, individuals arriving in the UK from will need to continue to enter in line with the UK's immigration framework including the Universal Permission to Travel requirement (except British and Irish citizens) when it is introduced.

■ Immigration: Veterans

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[32298]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many non-UK veterans who have served for four years or more and been discharged from the Armed Forces have settled in the UK in the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

We do not publish the specific data relating to how many non-UK veterans have settled in the UK. To capture numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

We do, however, publish statistics relating to individuals granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK as part of published Migration Statistics and this can be located at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release

■ Internet and Telephone Services: Fraud

Chi Onwurah:

[32388]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to (a) reduce online and phone scams and (b) improve the ease of reporting them.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is deeply concerned by the growth in scale and complexity of online and phone scams. We are actively working with industry, regulators, law enforcement and consumer groups to crack down on these crimes and to protect victims.

Ofcom have adopted new rules relating to Call Line Identification (CLI), which means phone numbers used to perpetrate scams will be identified, filtered out and prevented from reaching the recipient.

As well as this, the Government has also now extended the Online Safety Bill to include fraudulent user-generated content. The draft bill can be found here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill.

We will publish a fraud action plan to further strengthen how we combat fraud after the 2021 Spending Review.

Reporting incidents of fraud helps us stop fraudsters and protect other people from becoming victims. We continue to ask the public to report fraud to the police through Action Fraud by phone on 0300 123 2040 or through their website:

http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud. Suspicious text messages can be

reported to **7726**(which is free of charge) and suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Michael Fabricant:

[33109]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond substantively to the email from the hon. Member for Lichfield of 15 January 2021 and the follow-up email of 11 June 2021 on Educational oversight inspections of private further education colleges.

Kevin Foster:

My officials have been in discussion directly with the relevant organisations and other Government departments in relation to the issue of Educational Oversight (EO) provision for further education colleges raised in the email from the hon. Member for Lichfield.

■ **Migrant Workers: Coronavirus**

Sarah Olney:

[32474]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect the rights of migrant workers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has put in place a range of measures to support migrants affected by the Covid-19 outbreak and these provisions have been reviewed regularly.

We continue to publish information on Gov.uk at www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-immigration-and-borders.

■ **Offensive Weapons**

Sarah Jones:

[32478]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many weapons have been handed in under the surrender scheme as part of the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 by (a) type of weapon and (b) the amount paid out in compensation.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government ran the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 surrender and compensation scheme from 10 December 2020 to 9 March 2021 to allow members of the public to surrender to the police those weapons covered by the scheme and to claim compensation from the Home Office. The weapons concerned were specific knives, offensive weapons, rapid firing rifles and bump stocks, as specified in the Act. The total number of weapons surrendered by weapon type and by the amount of compensation paid is set out in the tables below.

Following the successful completion of the scheme, the Government commenced the provisions in the Offensive Weapons Act relating to the possession of these weapons on 14 July .

FIREARMS

WEAPON TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER SURRENDERED	TOTAL COMPENSATION PAID
Lever release rifles	1,000	£2,783,859.46
MARS rifles	133	£262,470.25
Bump stock	1	£0

FIREARMS ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT

	TOTAL NUMBER SURRENDERED	TOTAL COMPENSATION PAID
Ancillary equipment	32,348	£781,766.40

OFFENSIVE WEAPONS

WEAPON TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER SURRENDERED	TOTAL COMPENSATION PAID
Flick knife	719	£16,852.50
Gravity knife	53	£2,916.85
Zombie knife	224	£2,299.82
Cyclone knife	9	£173.74
Curved sword	255	£13,536.33
Baton	2,991	£30,377.09
Stealth knife	17	£51
Disguised knife	41	£205
Knuckle Duster	959	£2,290.06
Swordstick	27	£3,227.91
Handclaw	3	£27
Belt buckle knife	8	£40
Push dagger	865	£1,781
Hollow kubotan	23	£98
Footclaw	1	£7
Shuriken	94	£405

WEAPON TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER SURRENDERED	TOTAL COMPENSATION PAID
Balisong	68	£1,538
Telescopic truncheon	8,504	£170,110
Blowpipe	61	£854
Kusari gama	4	£105
Kusari	38	£380
Kyoketsu shoge	1	£20

Source: the information has been drawn from the Offensive Weapons Act surrender and compensation scheme casework tool using the *Claimed Weapons by Coding* (numbers of weapons) and *Weapons by Coding* (compensation values) reports.

■ **Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill**

Ian Byrne:

[\[32541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of the 12 July 2021 to Question 28365 on the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, when her Department plans to publish the equality impact assessment relating to Part 4 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Kit Malthouse:

We aim to publish an equality impact assessment covering the Home Office measures in the Bill before Lords Second Reading.

■ **Security Guards: Coronavirus**

Claire Hanna:

[\[33370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to reduce the renewal cost for SIA license holders that have been affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Victoria Atkins:

There are no current plans to reduce the fee for SIA licence applications. The application fee is set on the basis of full recovery of the costs incurred by the SIA for processing and issuing the licence, and for associated costs such as inspections and enforcement activity.

The fee is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that cost recovery is achieved over the three year licence cycle, without generating an overall surplus at the end of cycle. Reviews are undertaken in line with the principles of the HM Treasury guidance, Managing Public Money, with a business case submitted to Treasury to approve any prospective fee change. The last fee reduction took effect from 1st April 2020 and reduced the fee from £210 to £190.

■ Twitter: Racial Discrimination

Michael Fabricant:

[32282]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will (a) commission an investigation through her Department's agencies into the proportion of the racist tweets directed at three England football players following the UEFA Euro 2020 final that originated in the UK and (b) publish a report following that investigation.

Kit Malthouse:

Racist abuse is utterly unacceptable whether it takes place online or offline. Individuals who commit racist offences should face the full force of the law and we already have robust legislation in place to deal with online hate crime.

While companies have taken some positive steps, more needs to be done to tackle online harms, including hate crime. The upcoming Online Safety regulatory framework will put in place measures to tackle illegal and legal but harmful abuse, including racist abuse. If major platforms do not meet their own standards to keep people safe and address abuse quickly and effectively, they could face enforcement action. There is no reason for companies to wait until the regime is fully running to take action against this abhorrent abuse, and we will continue to press them to do so.

The police are reviewing offending material and will work with the relevant social media companies to identify account holders and progress their investigations.

■ Visas: EU Countries

Alan Brown:

[30375]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 20201 to Question 25865 on Overseas Visitors: EEA Nationals, what the reciprocal arrangements are for UK citizens travelling to the EU; and if he will make a statement.

Kevin Foster:

The EU has legislated to allow British Citizens visa-free travel in the Schengen area for short-stays, such as for tourism, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This is the standard length of stay the EU offers to nationals of eligible third countries, in line with existing EU legislation.

The EU's Schengen Borders Code governs the rules for entry and exit in the Schengen area.

The arrangements outlined in the Answer of 8 July 20201 to Question 25865 apply to those arriving in the UK under the Visitor Route regardless of their nationality. The only difference between visa and non-visa nationals being where the assessment against the rules takes place.

The generosity of these arrangements reflects the UK Government's desire to welcome visitors who are key to Scotland's hospitality and cultural sector, students taking short courses and those wishing to make visits of up to 6 months in length to see relatives here in the UK.

■ Windrush Generation: Compensation

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[30325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to expedite compensation for those people affected by the Windrush scandal.

Priti Patel:

Since April 2019 the Scheme has offered or paid more than £32.4 million in compensation to members of the Windrush generation. On 24 June the Home Office published the latest set of data on the Scheme which covers the period to the end of May 2021. During the month of May, the Home Office paid out £3.9 million in compensation and more than £24.4 million in compensation has been paid across 732 claims.

In December we overhauled the Scheme and the changes have had an immediate effect on the speed and value of offers of compensation. Since the end of December, we have paid more than seven times the total amount paid previously.

However, we recognise we still have more to do to speed up the processing of claims and are committed to reducing the time between submission and decision significantly over the coming months. To do this we are, amongst other things, recruiting more case workers, directing resources to where they are needed most to maximise final decision output and refining our processes so cases progress as quickly as possible. We are also improving the evidence gathering process, for instance by revising our data sharing agreements with other government departments.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Rosie Cooper:

[\[902865\]](#)

What progress (a) has been and (b) is being made on proposals to replace Lancashire County Council with three new unitary authorities.

Luke Hall:

The Government is not currently considering any proposals for unitary authorities in Lancashire, nor has it issued any invitations for such proposals.

Stuart Anderson:

[\[902867\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to increase the supply of affordable new homes.

Andrew Lewer:

[\[902870\]](#)

What steps he is taking to increase the supply of new homes.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government cares deeply about building more homes. Since 2010, we have delivered over 1.8 million new homes, including 542,400 new affordable homes, so homes are there where people need them.

We are investing in supply, with over £12 billion in affordable housing over five years, the largest investment in a decade, and £7.1 billion in the National Home Building Fund, to unlock up to 860,000 homes over the lifetime of the projects, including much-needed new homes on brownfield land.

As set out in the Planning for the Future White Paper, the Government will speed up the planning system, enabling us to build homes more quickly.

Stephen Timms:[\[902868\]](#)

What estimate he has made of the number of multi-storey residential buildings with dangerous cladding or other fire defects that (a) will miss the deadline and (b) are not eligible for the Building Safety Fund.

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[902873\]](#)

What estimate he has made of the number of buildings with dangerous cladding or other fire defects that (a) will miss the deadline and (b) are ineligible for the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

All eligible applications currently made to the Building Safety Fund will proceed, and we are working with applicants to ensure work gets underway as soon as possible.

For any buildings that may have missed the original registration deadline we will be reopening for registrations in the Autumn.

This will ensure we meet our commitment to fully fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres and over in England.

Martin Vickers:[\[902871\]](#)

What plans he has to ensure that local communities are fully consulted on planning matters.

Christopher Pincher:

Our reforms will ensure that there is more engagement and more local democracy. By replacing lengthy documents with easily accessible digital tools and map-based local plans, people will be able to visualise local plans and participate more fully in the planning system.

Communities will still be able to comment on planning applications. We also want neighbourhood plans to remain a key part of the planning system, with more in northern and urban areas.

Alex Cunningham:[\[902875\]](#)

What steps he is taking to help ensure that homelessness levels do not increase as a result of the end of the covid-19 evictions moratorium.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government has put in place an unprecedented package of support for renters during the pandemic. As national restrictions continue to ease, it is appropriate that these emergency measures also lift but we are doing so gradually.

The pause on bailiff enforcement has ended; however, measures to protect renters and prevent homelessness are still in place.

Significant financial support remains, and the vast majority of renters are up to date with their rent.

We are also providing local authorities with £310 million through the Homelessness Prevention Grant, an uplift of £47 million on the previous years' funding, which can be used to prevent homelessness or to provide temporary accommodation to ensure families have a roof over their head.

Christine Jardine:[\[902878\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the (a) Secretary of State for Scotland and (b) Scottish Government on the allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Luke Hall:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a core part of our Levelling Up agenda and I regularly speak to my ministerial colleagues about the fund. My officials regularly engage their counterparts in the devolved administrations to discuss any updates, concerns or queries.

The UK Government will continue to engage the devolved administrations and local partners as we develop the fund's investment framework and in advance of its publication.

I am pleased to be working more directly with local partners and communities across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, who are best placed to understand the needs of their local areas and more closely aligned to the local economic geographies to deliver quickly on the ground.

Mr Virendra Sharma:[\[902887\]](#)

When his Department plans to publish transparency data on the (a) meetings and (b) relevant interests of its Departmental board.

Eddie Hughes:

Information on Board meetings and relevant interests of the Board will be published in the Department Annual Report and Accounts as standard, which will be available on the government website in the coming weeks. The interests of Ministers sat on the Board is readily available on the parliament website.

Alan Brown:[\[902897\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the (a) Levelling Up Fund and (b) UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Luke Hall:

Both the Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund are core parts of our Levelling Up agenda and I regularly speak to my ministerial colleagues about both funds. These discussions will inform our Levelling Up white paper, and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Framework, which we plan to publish later this year.

■ Community Ownership Fund

Holly Lynch: [\[30398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on what date organisations will be able to make applications to the Community Ownership Fund.

Eddie Hughes:

The Community Ownership Fund bidding prospectus, assessment guidance notes and application form was published on 15 July. Eligible community organisations will be able to submit their application by 30 July.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [\[30390\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how is he resourcing local public health teams to manage the rise of covid-19 infection.

Rachael Maskell: [\[30391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how is he resourcing local environmental health teams to ensure that all biosecure steps are being taken to protect people from contracting covid-19.

Luke Hall:

The Government has allocated over £12 billion directly to councils since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, over £6 billion of which is unringfenced in recognition that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet additional pressures in their local area.

The funding allocated also includes the Contain Outbreak Management Fund which was provided for use in test, trace and contain activity in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus in local areas. By the end of 2020/21, the Government had provided local authorities with over £1.7 billion from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, with a further £400 million allocated for 2021/22.

My Department has also convened the Regulatory Services Task and Finish Group to help us understand the pressures facing regulatory services teams in local government, including environmental health teams, and to propose short and long-term options to support the sector.

■ Empty Property: Non-domestic Rates

Rachael Maskell:

[\[31468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring forward legislative proposals to prevent the owners of empty property units actively taking steps to avoid payment of business rates, including by making the property uninhabitable.

Luke Hall:

The Government is currently carrying out a Fundamental Review of Business Rates which is looking at ways in which the current system can be improved. As set out in the Review's Call for Evidence published in July 2020, this includes looking at whether changes to Empty Property Relief could help tackle avoidance. The fundamental review of business rates will conclude by the autumn.

■ Landlords: Licensing

Steve Reed:

[\[32407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department will make a decision on the renewal of the Liverpool Council Selective Licensing application submitted in February 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

We have received Liverpool City Council's application for a selective licensing scheme. Each application is assessed on its merits against the statutory criteria. We will update on the outcome of the application in due course.

■ Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

Steve Reed:

[\[32408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the reported shortfall in council budgets following the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Hall:

The Government has committing a total of over £12 billion in England to support local authorities in tackling the impacts of Covid-19. Over £6 billion of this is un-ringfenced in recognition that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major pressures in their local area.

In addition to this the Government made available an increase in Core Spending Power in England from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms. This recognised the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain current service levels.

We have continued to work with local government as the pandemic has progressed, including through specially tailored financial monitoring. Our latest figures show that local authorities spent a total of £6.9 billion in responding to the pandemic in 2020-21, against funding provided of over £9 billion.

As the local government finance system continues to move into a more stable position, we will assess the demands faced by councils and the resources available to meet them in the context of the upcoming Spending Review.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Public Consultation**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[32416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to improve the engagement rate with consultations run by his Department.

Eddie Hughes:

The Department is committed to seeking and listening to people's views. Consultations are an important part of how we do this. Thousands of people have responded to our consultations in the past year, including more than 44,000 responses to the Planning for the Future consultation.

Like other Departments that have invested in making it easier for citizens to play a part in policy-making, such as the Ministry of Justice, from January 2021 we began using the Citizen Space platform for consultation activities. Citizen Space makes public participation easier and simpler for respondents. We are also publishing our responses online and Citizen Space will make this even easier. People expect excellent digital services from government. Using Citizen Space is helping us to ensure this is true of participating in consultations.

■ **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Re-employment**

Imran Hussain:

[\[33245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, on the Government's policy on the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic, what steps their Department has taken to (a) investigate and (b) discourage the use of fire and rehire negotiation tactics by their Department's executive non-departmental public bodies; and what steps they have taken to communicate the Government's policy on those practices to those bodies.

Eddie Hughes:

Non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) are not part of the department and operate at arms-length from Ministers. We work constructively with our NDPBs and this includes issues of workforce management but it is ultimately the responsibility of each NDPB to manage their staff. Whilst we have not communicated on this issue with all our NDPBs, the Government has been very clear that threatening fire and rehire as a negotiating tactic is completely unacceptable. We always expect employers to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership working with trade unions, where relevant, constructively. We are confident that all non-departmental public bodies are aware of the Government's position on this matter.

■ Planning: Public Consultation

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[28383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local residents are consulted on planning decisions in their community.

Christopher Pincher:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Local planning authorities are required to undertake a formal period of public consultation of no fewer than 21 days on a planning application prior to its determination. Effective consultation allows local planning authorities to identify and consider all relevant planning issues associated with a proposed development. Consultees, particularly those living near to the site in question, may offer particular views or detailed information relevant to the consideration of an application. Where relevant considerations are raised by local residents, these must be taken into account by the local authority as the decision taker in the first instance.

The planning reforms set out in the Planning for the Future White paper will make it simpler, quicker and more accessible for local people to engage with the planning system. The best way to bring forward new, significant development is by improving community engagement and input at an earlier stage in the planning process. At the plan making stage, people will have the opportunity to comment on local plans and deciding where proposed development should go.

By making the plan-making system focus on the big issues that really matter (what to build where, what must not be built on at all) and making all the processes and assessments easy to understand and engage with, we are giving local people a hugely improved and much greater opportunity to shape the future of their communities. Couple that with digitalisation and we really are bringing people into planning rather than leaving them outside, bewildered by the opaque rules and technical language of the current system.

For planning applications that fall outside the remit of the local plan, or vary from it, there will be a continuing role for the existing planning application process and the public engagement that comes with it, which will be enhanced by new digital tools. Full planning applications will still be required in the usual way in these cases.

■ Rents: Arrears

Stephen Morgan:

[\[33318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will bring forward policy proposals to support tenants with rent arrears whose income was reduced as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Eddie Hughes:

The UK Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support during the pandemic, which is available to tenants.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit are in place until the end of September helping renters to continue paying their rent. Local housing allowance rates have been maintained at their increased level in cash terms in 2021/22, meaning claimants renting in the private rented sector continue to benefit from the significant increase in the local housing allowance rates applied in April 2020.

For those who require additional support, Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available. For 2021-22 the Government has made £140 million available in DHP funding, building on the £180 million provided last year.

Renters also continue to benefit from longer notice periods, giving them more time to make alternative arrangements. As of 1 June, until at least 30 September, notice periods must be at least 4 months except in the most egregious cases. Bailiffs have been asked not to carry out an eviction if anyone living in the property has Covid-19 symptoms or is self-isolating.

■ Social Services: Finance

Steve Reed:

[\[32406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the proportion of local authority spending that will be spent on adult and children's social care in (a) 2025 and (b) 2030.

Luke Hall:

Decisions on local authority funding and on social care funding beyond 2021-22 will be taken at the planned Spending Review later this year.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Agricultural Products: Northern Ireland

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[32296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what estimate her Department has made of the increase in trade in agri-food exports from Northern Ireland to Japan by 2024 under the terms of the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Greg Hands:

The Government's published impact assessment shows that every region and nation of the UK is estimated to benefit from the UK-Japan agreement compared to a situation where the UK does not have an agreement with Japan. In 2020 Northern Ireland's agri-food exports to Japan were worth £8.6 million, an increase of 33% from 2019 levels.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Chris Law:

[\[31441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps her Department has taken to help ensure that legal protection for intellectual property and patents does not determine the ability of people around the world to gain urgent access to a safe, timely and effective covid-19 vaccine.

Greg Hands:

Whilst the UK has not seen evidence that Intellectual Property is a barrier to the production or supply of COVID-19 goods, including vaccines, the Government will continue to engage constructively in debates at the World Trade Organisation Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Council and other international institutions to promote affordable and equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines for all.

The UK will continue to push ahead with pragmatic action, including voluntary licensing and technology transfer agreements for vaccines, support for COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, and solutions for production bottlenecks and supply chain issues.

■ **Furs: Overseas Trade**

Ian Mearns:

[\[30343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Chatham House speech which set out the vision for values-driven free trade on 29 October 2020, what steps she has taken to promote higher animal welfare standards with regard to the UK trade in animal fur; and what negotiating position her Department proposes to take with regard to trade agreements with countries that export animal fur to the UK.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government shares the British public's high regard for animal welfare. There are restrictions on some skin and fur products, which cannot be legally imported into the United Kingdom. These include fur from cats and dogs, seal skins and products from commercial hunts. Legislation has prohibited farming of animals for their fur since 2000 in England and Wales, and 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

We will not compromise on our high environmental protection, animal welfare and food standards in our trade negotiations. All products imported into the United Kingdom will, as now, have to comply with our import requirements, including the above bans.

■ **Government Procurement Agreement: Shipbuilding**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[33133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government's accession to the WTO's Agreement on Government Procurement includes an exemption to UK shipbuilding.

Greg Hands:

The procurement of ships, boats and floating structures is covered under Annex 4 of the UK's schedules of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Government Procurement. This is provided no other exceptions apply.

Meat: New Zealand

Emily Thornberry: [\[33178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether New Zealand is permitted, under the terms of the Northern Ireland protocol and the decisions taken by the joint committee, to export (a) sheepmeat and (b) beef to Northern Ireland under the UK's New Zealand-specific WTO tariff rate quota commitments.

Emily Thornberry: [\[33179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether (a) sheepmeat and (b) beef products destined for Northern Ireland from New Zealand under New Zealand-specific UK WTO tariff rate quota commitments are considered to be at risk under the terms of the Northern Ireland protocol and the decisions taken by the joint committee.

Greg Hands:

On 16 December 2020, the European Union unilaterally introduced Regulation 2020/2170 on the application of Union tariff rate quotas and other import quotas. If strictly applied, the Regulation would mean that importing goods subject to any EU tariff rate quotas or other import quotas directly into Northern Ireland would be unable to access either EU or UK quotas, and would need to pay the EU tariff. This would leave Northern Ireland importers in a uniquely disadvantaged position compared to their counterparts in Great Britain and the EU.

The UK has underlined to the Commission that this is a matter requiring urgent consideration as part of addressing issues with the operation of the Protocol. HM Government must find a new balance in the way the Protocol operates to ensure that goods flow as freely as possible into Northern Ireland and we are considering our next steps to achieve this.

Trade Agreements: Australia

Lee Anderson: [\[31540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment her Department has made of the potential benefits of the trade deal with Australia for the East Midlands.

Greg Hands:

Nearly 1,200 East Midlands business exported goods to Australia last year. East Midlands business exported goods worth more than £200m to Australia in 2020. The world-famous East Midlands shoemaking industry, the region's manufacturers and high-quality food exporters could all be big winners from an Australia free trade deal. The deal will cut tariffs on key UK exports, while removing red tape and aligning regulations would make exporting easier for East Midland industries such as

machinery and chemicals, which exported £130m worth of goods to Australia last year.

■ Trade Agreements: Western Europe

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[31470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of the Free Trade Agreement between the UK and Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland agreed on 8 July 2021 for businesses in (a) Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) West Yorkshire.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

This free trade agreement – the most advanced Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein have ever signed – is tailored for the British economy. It contains gold standard provisions in digital trade, mobile roaming, and business travel, will reduce tariffs, and offers new duty-free quotas on exports of high-quality British food and farm products.

In 2020, there were 1,015 and 329 businesses in Yorkshire and Humber that exported goods to Norway and Iceland respectively. This deal is designed to make it easier for even more businesses in Morley and Outwood, West Yorkshire and across the United Kingdom to export to Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein, saving them time and money.

■ Trade Negotiations: Polluter Pays Principle

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what polluter pays clauses have been inserted into each of the new trade deals.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

We are committed to a high level of protection of the environment in all new trade agreements, including provisions to support HM Government's ambition on climate change.

In our trade agreements with the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA), we agreed the principle of preventative action, as well as the principle that the polluter should pay for damage caused to the environment. The precise details of ongoing negotiations are a matter for formal negotiations.

■ Tradeshow Access Programme

Bill Esterson:

[\[32367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what economic impact assessment her Department has carried out on the decision to discontinue the Tradeshow Access Programme.

Bill Esterson:

[\[32368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the effect on UK competitiveness of the decision to discontinue the Tradeshow Access Programme.

Graham Stuart:

We have not carried out a direct economic analysis of the decision to discontinue the Trade Access Programme. However, we are working closely with HM Treasury on alternative future arrangements for supporting businesses to participate in tradeshows as part of our plan to support exports to help drive economic growth around the whole of the UK.

Bill Esterson:

[\[32369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for her policies of the finding by Export Partners UK that for every £1 invested by the Government in the Tradeshow Access Programme, £40 is generated in taxable revenue.

Graham Stuart:

We welcome engagement from key industry players, including these findings from Export Partners UK. We will work to understand the benefits of this intervention and use it to help design future arrangements for our export support services.

Bill Esterson:

[\[32370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many successful grants were made via the Tradeshow Access Programme since it was launched in 2009.

Graham Stuart:

More than 42,000 successful grants have been provided to UK businesses through the Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) between April 2009 and March 2021.

JUSTICE

■ Accidents: Compensation

Anna McMorris:

[\[32479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward proposals to broaden the scope of claimants entitled to a bereavement award under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976.

Chris Philp:

The Government considered the case for reform when responding to a report by the Joint Committee on Human Rights in February 2020.

The Government believes that the existing system involving a fixed level of award and clear eligibility criteria represents a reasonable, proportionate and practical approach, and the Government does not currently have any plans for wider

consultation on the bereavement damages regime or the Fatal Accidents Act more generally.

■ **Marriage: Humanism**

Fleur Anderson: [\[30421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the (a) HM Advocate General for Scotland and (b) Attorney General on the merits of the introduction of humanists marriages across the UK.

Fleur Anderson: [\[30422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the Government's policy is on the recognition of humanist marriages in (a) England and Wales and (b) Scotland.

Fleur Anderson: [\[30423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent representations the Government has received on the merits of recognising humanist marriages in England and Wales.

Fleur Anderson: [\[30424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Government has recently met with representatives from Humanist organisations to discuss the merits of legally recognising humanist marriages.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for marriage law in England and Wales. Marriage law in Scotland and Northern Ireland is a devolved matter.

The Government has received a number of representations about making separate provision for humanist marriage in England and Wales. As we have made clear, a Law Commission report due later this year is expected to present options for wholesale reform to the law governing marriage ceremonies, which the Government will consider carefully. Options being explored by the Law Commission include offering couples greater flexibility to form their own ceremonies, allowing the ceremony to take place in a much broader range of locations and to provide a framework that could allow non-religious belief organisations (such as Humanists) and/or independent celebrants to conduct legally binding weddings.

The Government will decide on provision for non-religious belief marriage in light of the Law Commission's recommendations.

I met with representatives of Humanists UK on 15 December 2020 and my noble friend Lord Wolfson has committed to a further meeting later this year. In the meantime, officials in the Ministry of Justice will continue to engage with representatives from Humanists UK.

■ Marriage: Reviews

Craig Whittaker:

[\[32352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether the Law Commission is reviewing non-religious belief marriage as part of their review of marriage; and if he will use the powers that are available to him to legalise non-religious marriage ceremonies to help clear the backlog created by the covid-19 outbreak without waiting for that review to report.

Alex Chalk:

The Law Commission report due later this year is expected to present options for wholesale reform to the law governing marriage ceremonies, which the Government will consider carefully. Options being explored by the Law Commission include offering couples greater flexibility to form their own ceremonies, allowing the ceremony to take place in a much broader range of locations and to provide a framework that could allow non-religious belief organisations (such as Humanists) and/or independent celebrants to conduct legally binding weddings.

The Government will decide on provision for non-religious belief marriage in the light of the Law Commission's recommendations and it is right for us to await these recommendations.

Delivery of registration services falls to local authorities who continue to manage the demand for civil marriage within their respective geographical areas during recovery from the pandemic.

■ Ministry of Justice: Re-employment

Imran Hussain:

[\[33246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, on the Government's policy on the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic, what steps their Department has taken to (a) investigate and (b) discourage the use of fire and rehire negotiation tactics by their Department's executive non-departmental public bodies; and what steps they have taken to communicate the Government's policy on those practices to those bodies.

Chris Philp:

The use of 'fire and rehire negotiation tactics' is not an approach that my Department deploys.

The Government has been very clear that threatening fire and rehire as a negotiating tactic is completely unacceptable. We always expect employers to treat employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership working with trade unions, where relevant, constructively. We are confident that all non-departmental public bodies are aware of the Government's position on this matter.

We work constructively with each non-departmental public body we have responsibility for and this includes when it comes to workforce management matters, however each is ultimately responsible for the management of their staff.

■ **Prisoners: Drugs**

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[30331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Dame Carol Black's Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery, published on 8 July 2021, when he plans to announce a decision in respect of the efficacy of the health and justice partnership co-ordinator role in the probation service.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[30332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Dame Carol Black's Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery, published on 8 July 2021, what discussions he is having with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on improving the consistency and level of resourcing for Jobcentre Plus staff to enable prisoners to start the benefit claim process before release.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[30333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Dame Carol Black's Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery, published on 8 July 2021, if he will implement recommendation 18 in that report.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[30334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Dame Carol Black's Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery, published on 8 July 2021, what steps he will take to meet recommendation 17 in that report.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[30335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Dame Carol Black's Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery, published on 8 July 2021, if he will implement recommendation 15 in that report.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[30336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Dame Carol Black's Review of drugs part two: prevention, treatment, and recovery, published on 8 July 2021, what steps he will take to implement recommendation 16 in that report.

Alex Chalk:

Combating illegal drug misuse is a top priority for this Government. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is working closely with key departments across government to tackle the misuse of drugs, including reducing drug supply and demand and improving treatment and recovery for offenders with substance misuse needs. We welcome Part 2 of Dame Carol Black's Independent Review of Drugs and the Government will shortly be publishing an initial response to the report, including on those recommendations made to the MoJ.

There are a number of areas where work is ongoing to address drug misuse in the criminal justice system. In January 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) received **£80m additional funding for drug treatment in 2021/22**. This will be used to enhance drug treatment and the numbers of treatment places available, including places for those leaving prison, to reduce drug-related crime.

This funding will support us to increase the use of Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) or Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR) under the **Community Sentence Treatment Requirement (CSTR) programme**; officials from Public Health England (PHE) are working to recruit criminal justice **substance misuse practitioners** to individual local authorities, with implementation plans being monitored on a quarterly basis.

The MoJ, Her Majesty Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), DHSC and NHSE/I are also working to **promote and support the use of existing CSTRs** in every area and to maximize the use of these additional funds provided for substance misuse services dedicated to the criminal justice system.

Activities are also underway to ensure the Probation Service align their services with the recently announced treatment funding to support criminal justice pathways. For example, HMPPS has introduced **Health and Justice Coordinators** across five areas in England and Wales, with a further five to be introduced next year, to test how these roles can enhance the connection between mental health and substance misuse commissioners and providers with the aim of improving continuity of care for those leaving prison. The Health and Justice Coordinator role will be evaluated as part of the wider Accelerator Prison Pilot, which will be subject to both impact and process evaluations.

This work is supported by **HMPPS' National Drug Strategy**, which was published in 2019 and focuses on restricting supply, reducing demand and improving treatment. The strategy is being refreshed to address issues around continuity of drug treatment for prison leavers in the community. We are considering the workforce needs of supporting prisons out of recovery and as part of our prison reforms, including how we support access to a full range of health and social care services.

Furthermore, offenders are routinely **supported in custody to prepare for release**. Firstly, MoJ and DWP officials meet regularly at national and local level, and within the framework of the National Partnership Agreement, to plan how the departments can work together to support prisoners. This includes support with benefit claims in the crucial period leading to release and through the gate. Secondly, as part of the Government's Covid-19 response, DWP established a bespoke phone service to help prison leavers make a Universal Credit (UC) claim on or after the day of release whilst restrictions prevented Prison Work Coaches providing the usual support with this. This service has now been adopted permanently by DWP to assist prison leavers to make a claim for UC quickly on release, where they are unable to make a claim online.

■ Prisons: Mental Health Services

Ms Lyn Brown:

[30330]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the report entitled The future of prison mental health care in England, published by Centre for Mental Health on 25 June 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing recommendations (a) one and (b) two of that Report.

Alex Chalk:

The Government takes the mental health of people within the criminal justice system very seriously, and we welcome the Centre for Mental Health's important report which was commissioned by NHS England and Improvement. We are actively considering the findings with health and justice partners.

Extensive work is already ongoing across the Department to make our prisons safer. We are improving our mental health training offer, including a specific trauma-informed module for all new staff. To bolster current support systems, we are piloting staff support leads who will be responsible for leading on wellbeing and support services. The intention is that these leads will be supporting all prisons later this year. In order to enable appropriate diversion from custody, Drug Rehabilitation Requirements (DRRs) and Alcohol treatment requirements (ATRs) are available in all courts as part of the existing national Community Sentence Treatment Requirements (CSTR) provision. These are being strengthened through Local Authority funding, and furthermore, Primary Care Mental Health Treatment requirements (MHTRs) are being made available as part of a roll out programme.

In January, together with the Department for Health and Social Care, we published a White Paper setting out proposals for landmark reform of the Mental Health Act and responding to the findings of the Wessely Review. Among other reforms, this includes commitments to support offenders with serious mental health needs to access the care they need as quickly and early as possible. We are accepting, and intend to take forward, the vast majority of the Review's recommendations, including a commitment to end the use of prison as a place of safety under the Mental Health Act.

The Government shares the objective of ensuring that the separate provision in the Bail Act 1976 is not used to remand in custody individuals suffering from severe mental health crises. However, the power in the Bail Act goes much wider than mental health. This power covers a broad range of situations and is a last resort where the court can see no other option for protecting the individual themselves, or on occasions, the public. We have therefore committed to review this area which will enable us to develop and implement the right approach to this issue.

■ Youth Custody: Costs

Anna McMorris:

[33308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the cost was to the public purse of a child placed in youth custody (a) on remand and (b) for other reasons in (i) secure children's

homes, (ii) secure training centres and (iii) young offenders' institutes in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Alex Chalk:

The average cost per place per year for a child placed in youth custody is:

£271,000 at a Secure Children's Home

£201,000 at a Secure Training Centre

£119,000 at a Young Offender Institution

There is no difference in average cost if the child is placed on remand or for other reasons. These costs are inclusive of education services.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Re-employment

Imran Hussain:

[\[33247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 27 April 2021, Official Report, column 86WH, on the Government's policy on the inappropriate use by some employers of fire and rehire as a negotiation tactic, what steps their Department has taken to (a) investigate and (b) discourage the use of fire and rehire negotiation tactics by their Department's executive non-departmental public bodies; and what steps they have taken to communicate the Government's policy on those practices to those bodies.

Mr Robin Walker:

My Department has a number of small NDPBs who are mostly resourced by Civil Servants on secondment from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and follow NICS policies and guidelines. There has not been any inappropriate use of "fire and rehire" as secondment arrangements are regularly reviewed and staff return to their NICS department at the end of their secondments. The Northern Ireland Office is not the employer and is therefore not in a position to "fire and rehire" as part of any negotiations. For the very small number of instances where NDPBs are not resourced by NICS staff, the employees are not employed as civil servants but the NDPB follows NICS terms and conditions.

TRANSPORT

■ A12

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[31374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to upgrade the A12 between London and Ipswich.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[31375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans for road improvements to the A12 between London and Ipswich.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[31376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has plans to widen the A12 between London and Ipswich to three lanes.

Rachel Maclean:

The current Road Investment Strategy includes a scheme which will widen the A12 from two to three lanes between Junction 19 (north of Chelmsford) and Junction 25 (A120 interchange). The scheme is in preliminary design stage and statutory consultation commenced on 22 June 2021, to run for 8 weeks until 16 August 2021. This is expected to lead to a Development Consent Order application in Spring 2022.

Highways England also has separate projects this year and next to resurface and change the concrete surface on the A12 between junctions 13 (Ingatestone) to 19 and junctions 25 to 26 (Colchester). Work on resurfacing the A12 between junctions 15 to 19 is due to begin in late July 2021. These works will ensure a smoother and safer ride on the A12 and help reduce noise.

In addition, Highways England is funded to develop an upgrade of the Copdock Interchange where the A12 meets the A14 to enable smoother journeys through the junction. Its findings will help inform our investment decisions for the next Road Investment Strategy (covering the years beyond 2025).

There are no current plans for widening other sections of the A12. To inform future investment decisions, Highways England is currently refreshing its route strategies which examine the current performance and future pressures on every part of its network including the A12.

■ Aviation

Jane Stevenson:

[\[33328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of regional airports on restoring flights to long-haul destinations; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The government recognises the continued challenges faced by the aviation industry as we look towards reopening international travel further.

Ministers and officials engage regularly with the aviation industry, including with regional airports, and remain committed to working collaboratively to reopen international travel in a safe and secure way.

■ Bus Services: Driving

Alison Thewliss: [33254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the (a) adequacy of the size of and (b) challenges faced by the PCV driver workforce.

Rachel Maclean:

No formal assessment has been carried out. However, the Department engages regularly with operators through representative groups such as the Confederation for Passenger Transport and the Association of Local Bus Managers to understand the challenges that the sector is facing, including workforce related issues.

The PCV driver workforce plays a vital role in delivering essential public services and has faced a number of challenges over the pandemic. My officials have been working with the representative groups to ensure that where issues have emerged they are addressed as effectively as possible, including in areas such as testing and licensing.

■ Buses: Driving Licences

Alison Thewliss: [33252]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate delays in issuing provisional PCV licences.

Alison Thewliss: [33253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to mitigate delays in processing the medical approvals that permit PCV drivers to return to work.

Rachel Maclean:

The DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day which must be dealt with in person. Ongoing industrial action by members of the Public and Commercial Services union, along with fewer operational staff on site to allow for social distancing in line with Welsh Government requirements and an increased demand for its services has led to delays in dealing with paper applications. The DVLA has leased an additional building to accommodate more operational staff.

Currently, driving licence applications made on paper are likely to take six to ten weeks to process. There may be additional delays in processing more complex transactions, for example, if medical investigations are needed.

The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found [here](#).

The DVLA has reconfigured its accommodation to safely maximise the number of staff on site and is working hard to process applications as quickly as possible. The DVLA has accelerated the development of additional online services to reduce the number of paper applications and supported their take up through a publicity campaign. Further digital service enhancements are underway.

■ Driving Licences

Jessica Morden:

[30323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average processing time was for the renewal of driving licences where a medical consideration was made in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Jessica Morden:

[30324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the time taken for the drivers' medical action team to assess whether medical evidence is required when processing (a) new and (b) renewal applications for driving licences.

Rachel Maclean:

The average processing time to make a medical licensing decision in the last three financial years is shown in the table below.

FINANCIAL YEAR	AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME (WORKING DAYS)
2018-2019	34
2019-2020	36
2020-2021	58

To improve the length of time taken to process medical licensing applications, the DVLA has recruited additional staff. This includes increasing the number of in-house doctors it employs and temporary administrative staff. Nurse caseworkers are being utilised to deal with specific conditions. The DVLA is also working with the relevant bodies to explore ways of reducing the time taken to receive the information needed to make licensing decisions.

The DVLA has also recently trialed a simplified renewal process for some medical conditions. This has significantly reduced the turnaround times for some drivers.

Where possible the DVLA will refer specific medical conditions to its in-house doctors in the first instance, to make a licensing decision using the information held.

Justin Madders:

[30369]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 30 June 2021 to Question 21251 on driving licences, what steps are being taken to reduce the turnaround times for each of those licence types.

Rachel Maclean:

To improve the length of time taken to process medical licensing applications, the DVLA has recruited additional staff. This includes increasing the number of in-house doctors it employs and temporary administrative staff. Nurse caseworkers are being utilised to deal with specific conditions. The DVLA is also working with the relevant

bodies to explore ways of reducing the time taken to receive the information needed to make licensing decisions.

The DVLA has also recently trialed a simplified renewal process for some medical conditions. This has significantly reduced the turnaround times for some drivers.

Where possible the DVLA will refer specific medical conditions to its in-house doctors in the first instance, to make a licensing decision using the information held.

Julian Sturdy:

[32373]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to support learner drivers whose receipt of a provisional drivers licence has been affected by delays at the Driver and Vehicle License Agency.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) online services have been available throughout the pandemic and are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

To enable more customers to apply online for a provisional driving licence the DVLA has introduced changes to the service. Since 24 June, customers applying for their provisional driver's licence can upload their signature for the first time and track or update their application.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application for a driving licence. The DVLA receives around 60,000 items of mail every day which must be dealt with in person. Ongoing industrial action by members of the Public and Commercial Services union, along with fewer operational staff on site to allow for social distancing in line with Welsh Government requirements and an increased demand for its services has led to delays in dealing with paper applications. The DVLA has leased an additional building to accommodate more operational staff.

Currently, paper applications are likely to take between six and ten weeks to process. There may be additional delays in processing more complex transactions, for example, if medical investigations are needed as part of a driving licence application. The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found [here](#).

■ **East Midlands Railway and West Coast Partnership Rail Franchise: Rolling Stock**

Jim McMahon:

[31503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the delivery time for new fleets on (a) East Midlands Railway and (b) West Coast Partnership manufactured by Hitachi: and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The delivery timescales for new rolling stock are set out in the supply agreements between the operators and the manufacturers. The Department monitors delivery of

new fleets against the requirements set out in national rail contracts or franchise agreements.

■ **Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Answer of 27 April 2021 to Question 185433, what problems were identified in trials in other countries involving e-scooters trials; and what steps his Department is taking to monitor such problems in ongoing e-scooter trials.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to collect data independently of e-scooter companies on e-scooter pavement parking and pavement riding in e-scooter trials.

Rachel Maclean:

Our law treats e-scooters differently from most other countries as e-scooters are classed as 'motor vehicles' in the UK.

Requirements for e-scooter rental operators taking part in Government approved trials ensure that the total number of vehicles permitted across a defined geography is tightly controlled. In addition, all vehicles must meet a minimum set of technical safety standards and geo-fencing be used, for example, to create 'no go' and 'go slow' areas. Across the globe e-scooters have proven to be extremely popular with users and, managed responsibly, have the potential to add a green travel alternative. We are drawing on relevant experience from other countries.

All the data in the evaluation on pavement parking and riding, is being collected independent of the e-scooter operators. We are collecting independent data on pavement parking and riding through surveys and interviews directly with e-scooter users and residents living with trial areas.

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[33127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the planned timetable is for (a) collating and assessing the results of the e-scooter trial and (b) reaching a decision on the potential future use of e-scooters; if he will take steps to ensure that such an assessment includes not only an appraisal of road safety issues but also assesses the prevalence of e-scooters that have been used in the commission of criminal offences; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has in place a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme for the trials. Any future rules for e-scooters may not be exactly the same as the rules in trials, but they will be based on the evidence gathered. 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. Regarding e-scooters and

associated criminality, Ministers and officials have been in regular contact with senior police officers through the NPCC as well as the Home Office in order to understand any concerns and issues. However, I would note that policing is a matter for the Home Office. A final report on the trials will be published in spring 2022.

■ Electric Vehicles

Seema Malhotra:

[32402]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent estimate his Department has made of the level of ownership of electric vehicles in each (a) region and (b) nation of the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

The number of battery electric vehicles licensed at 31 March 2021 by region and nation are as follows:

UNITED KINGDOM	249,932
England	221,891
North East	4,009
North West	25,441
Yorkshire and The Humber	17,030
East Midlands	12,014
West Midlands	19,544
East	23,894
London	28,283
South East	56,756
South West	34,920
Wales	5,389
Scotland	17,268
Northern Ireland	2,957
Vehicle between keepers	2,400
Location unknown	27

Source: Table VEH0132B, DVLA/DfT

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/all-vehicles-veh01>

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[32329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase the availability of driving tests for heavy goods vehicle drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has put in place a number of measures to increase driving tests for heavy goods vehicle drivers.

These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays). The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners.

The aim is to increase testing capacity as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a COVID-secure service for customers and examiners.

■ Network Rail: Land

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to extend the investment period on the land disposal programme so that the capital receipt for the value of the site enables the Network Rail estate to deliver more projects which will benefit local economic and social needs.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail does not have an investment period for its land disposal programme. The Public Sector Land Programme was paused last year due to the COVID 19 pandemic, although Network Rail have continued to release land for housing.

■ Railways: Reform

Jim McMahon:

[\[31497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the level of (a) expertise in and (b) experience of rail in his Department's rail reform team.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department's rail reform team has an excellent level of experience in Rail and other industries.

■ Railways: Season Tickets

Sarah Olney:

[\[32470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many flexi-season tickets have been sold since their introduction.

Sarah Olney: [32471]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many flexi-season tickets have been sold (a) online and (b) at ticket machines since their introduction.

Sarah Olney: [32472]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many flexi-season tickets have been sold since their introduction by each rail franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Rail ticket sales data is commercially sensitive and managed by the Rail Delivery Group on behalf of train operators, the Department is therefore not able to provide this information. The RDG can be contacted at info@raildeliverygroup.com.

The Department will continue to engage with the Rail Delivery Group and train operators to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new flexible season tickets now that they have been launched across the network.

■ Railways: West Midlands

Daniel Kawczynski: [31364]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will release £11 million of funding from his Department's budget for track upgrades to the Shrewsbury to Birmingham railway line to reduce travel time between those stations from under an hour to 45 minutes.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department undertakes rigorous analysis of the potential benefits and costs of proposed schemes before making funding decisions. Midlands Connect have previously estimated that the full costs for the complete delivery of scheme improvements to be around £200m. It is developing a strategic outline business case for this project which the Department expects to receive by the end of 2021. Any decision on further development will be taken in line with the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline policy, which will include consideration of business case and affordability, in the context of the wider rail enhancements portfolio.

■ Road Traffic Offences

Dr Matthew Offord: [31379]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans to carry out the review of road traffic offences announced in 2014.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes road safety seriously and keeps the law under regular review.

■ Rolling Stock: Procurement

Jim McMahon: [31498]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27274 on Rolling Stock: Procurement, to what extent the specification for new

rolling stock (a) procured and (b) agreed by the operators of (i) Greater Anglia, (ii) TransPennine, (iii) West Midland Trains, (iv) South Western Railway and (v) c2c was determined by the requirements set out by his Department as part of the invitation to tender for the relevant franchise.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The invitation to tender for previous franchise competitions sets out the minimum requirements that bidders are to meet, and it is for bidders to provide evidence as to whether existing or new build rolling stock meets those requirements.

Jim McMahon:

[\[31499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27274 on Rolling Stock: Procurement, what assessment he has made of the effect of changes to passenger rail operating contracts since March 2020 on rolling stock leasing costs for new train fleets (a) procured and (b) agreed by his Department since February 2016.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Rolling stock leasing costs were contracted between the respective operator and owner as part of the franchising process. The department continues to monitor rolling stock related costs closely throughout the life of the contracts to ensure that they are in line with what has been agreed and that what is proposed will deliver benefits to passengers.

Jim McMahon:

[\[31500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27274 on Rolling Stock: Procurement, to what extent (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have (a) overseen and (b) agreed the rolling stock procurement processes undertaken by (i) Greater Anglia, (ii) TransPennine, (iii) West Midland Trains, (iv) South Western Railway and (v) c2c since February 2016.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Procurement of rolling stock has been undertaken by operators as part of their franchise requirements. As part of their bids, operators would have set out their approach to meet the minimum requirements in the invitation to tender. These bids will have been evaluated by officials and Ministers advised appropriately through the franchise competition process.

Jim McMahon:

[\[31501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27274 on Rolling Stock: Procurement, what specific assessment he has made of the best value bids for taxpayers of rolling stock ordered since February 2016.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Procurement of rolling stock has been undertaken by operators as part of their franchise requirements. As part of their bids, operators would have set out their evidence to demonstrate how they achieve the best value for taxpayers.

The Franchise Agreements can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/transport/rail-franchising>.

Jim McMahon:

[31502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 July 2021 to Question 27274 on Rolling Stock: Procurement, what estimate he has made of the trajectory of whole life rolling stock leasing costs on train fleets ordered since February 2016; and if he will make a statement.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In line with our published guidance on how to assess costs and benefits of government schemes and policies, DfT consider a whole life asset approach for estimating rolling stock appraisals.

The Department's value for money framework for completing assessments and communicating to decision makers can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dft-value-for-money-framework>.

■ Schools: Travel

Rachael Maskell:

[31452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to (a) improve road safety around schools and (b) support teachers, parents and students to take up active travel and walk, cycle or scoot modes of travel to school.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In Summer 2020 the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost walking and cycling in England, with a vision that half of all journeys in towns and cities are cycled or walked by 2030. This includes a £2 billion package of funding for active travel over 5 years. Over £200 million has been made available to local authorities, via the Active Travel Fund, to deliver safe and direct cycling and walking measures in their areas, many of which will enable more walking and cycling to school and improve road safety around schools.

The Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan (Gear Change) published in July 2020 included a range of commitments to boost the amount of walking and cycling to school including increasing the number of school streets and ensuring that every adult and child who wants it can be trained how to cycle safely. The Department is also providing £2.1 million this financial year to enable the charity Living Streets to continue to deliver its successful Walk to School Outreach programme in more than 1,000 primary schools across England encouraging thousands more children to walk to school.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[32519]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July to Question 27366 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, how many UK citizens have been refused entry into

European countries on account of having received AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, distributed to patients by the NHS.

Robert Courts:

As border measures in overseas countries are determined by other governments on a sovereign basis, we do not collect this data. However, we understand that this is not a widespread problem.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[32275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what advice he is issuing to recipients of AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine batches 4120Z001, 4120Z002, 4120Z003 on travel to Europe in summer 2021.

Robert Courts:

All AstraZeneca vaccines given in the UK are the same product and appear on the NHS COVID Pass as Vaxzevria. We are not aware of any advice from the European Medicines Agency or the EU not to accept these batches of vaccines. There was a temporary misunderstanding regarding travel to Malta. This has now been resolved.

■ **Westbourne Communications: Contracts**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[33310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Westbourne Communications has ever been awarded a contract by (a) his Department and (b) HS2 Ltd.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[33311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has met with representatives from Westbourne Communications.

Andrew Stephenson:

Westbourne Communications have previously been paid for works by both DfT and HS2 Ltd but that they are no longer working for either the Department or HS2 Ltd.

Our financial records do not contain details of meetings held. Details of meetings with Ministers and Special Advisers are regularly published online.

TREASURY

■ **Boats: Northern Ireland**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[33128\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to announce his decision on the use of red diesel by private pleasure craft users in Northern Ireland, particularly those who travel to and from Great Britain.

Kemi Badenoch:

The government announced details regarding the use of red diesel in Northern Ireland at Budget 2021 and Excise Notice 554 was updated on 21 May 2021. This includes guidance on private pleasure craft (PPC) that travel to and from Northern Ireland and Great Britain. Specifically, PPC can refuel with red diesel in Great Britain after 1 October 2021, then travel to Northern Ireland with the red diesel already in the fuel tank. PPC users are advised to keep receipts or other documents (such as logbooks) to show HMRC officers if required.

The Excise Notice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/excise-notice-554-fuel-used-in-private-pleasure-craft-and-for-private-pleasure-flying/excise-notice-554-fuel-used-in-private-pleasure-craft-and-for-private-pleasure-flying>

■ Borrowing: Coronavirus**Neale Hanvey:****[32529]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the (a) Scottish Government, (b) Welsh Government and (c) Northern Ireland Executive either individually or collectively have requested additional borrowing capacity for the purposes of responding to the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic and following requests from the devolved administrations for more certainty over their funding, including greater borrowing powers, the UK Government announced the unprecedented Barnett guarantee in July 2020. The guarantee initially provided £12.7bn of additional funding and was uplifted three times to reflect the changing situation – eventually reaching £16.8bn.

The guarantee provided the devolved administrations with the necessary funding certainty to decide how and when to provide support without having to wait for the UK Government to announce new funding first. It also meant that the devolved administrations benefitted from the strength of HM Treasury and the Bank of England rather than needing to borrow themselves.

Further information on the Barnett guarantee can be found on the following gov.uk page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barnett-consequential-and-the-barnett-guarantee/barnett-consequential-and-the-barnett-guarantee>

■ Cash Dispensing**Sir Greg Knight:****[32286]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure that (a) vulnerable people, (b) the elderly and (c) people living in rural areas continue to have access to cash.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that cash is important to the daily lives of millions of individuals and businesses across the UK, including those who may be in vulnerable groups, elderly or living in rural areas.

Therefore, the Government has committed to protecting access to cash for those who need it and ensuring that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

The Government made legislative changes via the Financial Services Act 2021 to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase, which will allow shops and other businesses to offer a new form of cash withdrawal service to local communities.

On 1 July, the Government published a consultation on broader legislative proposals to protect access to cash. These proposals seek to ensure that people only need to travel reasonable distances to pay in or take out cash, and that the right regulatory oversight for cash access is in place for the future. The consultation is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/access-to-cash-consultation>

■ Drinks and Food: VAT**Caroline Lucas:****[32347]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to (a) reduce beer duty, (b) lower business rates for pubs and (c) introduce a permanent lower level of VAT for (i) all food and beverages sold in pubs and (ii) the tourism sector; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury keeps all taxes under review and any changes made will be announced at the next fiscal event.

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

■ Economic Situation: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:****[31451]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to monitor the effect on local economies of the potential effect of the easing of covid-19 restrictions on the number of people required to self-isolate.

John Glen:

From 16 August, double vaccinated individuals and under 18s will no longer need to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of someone with Covid-19.

Introducing this exemption in August, when more people will be fully vaccinated, will reduce the risk of severe illness.

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses and public services across the UK. To do this, the Government has put in place an economic package of support totalling

£352 billion through the furlough and self-employed income support schemes, support for businesses through grants and loans, and business rates and VAT relief.

At the Budget, the Chancellor announced a generous extension of economic support for businesses and individuals, with many schemes continuing well beyond Step 4 of the Roadmap to accommodate even the most cautious view about the time it might have taken to exit restrictions. This continued support is helping businesses bounce back as restrictions are lifted.

The Treasury monitors the health of local economies as part of its normal activities, and will respond to challenges as necessary. The Government's economic and fiscal policy response will continue to evolve according to changing economic and health circumstances. So, we will ensure to take the right action at the right time to support individuals and businesses in every region and nation of the United Kingdom.

■ **Economic Situation: Oman**

Kenny MacAskil: [\[32523\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much HMRC has been paid through the Gulf Strategy Fund to support economic reform in Oman since April 2020.

Kenny MacAskil: [\[32524\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC has advised the Government of Oman to reduce military expenditure as part of the support for economic reform it is providing that country through the Gulf Strategy Fund.

Jesse Norman:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) International Programme (IP), and within it the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF), is a vital tool in promoting positive change and reforms across the world, including in the Gulf. The Government's programmes help its partners to continue their human rights reform, address key climate change and green growth opportunities and challenges, tackle illicit finance, improve marine conservation, promote economic diversification, promote diversity and inclusion including on LGBTQ+ rights, and develop their institutions.

All cooperation through the IP, including the GSF, is subject to rigorous risk assessments to ensure all work meets the Government's human rights obligations and values. The Government does not shy away from raising legitimate human rights concerns, and encourages other states to respect international law.

The Government now publish an annual summary of the GSF's work on gov.uk. The Government will not publish further information where doing so presents risks to its staff, programme suppliers and beneficiaries, or which may impact its relationships with international partners, and therefore its ability to influence their reform efforts.

The Government will provide updates on an annual basis.

■ Energy: Conservation

Alex Norris:

[\[32483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the economy of long-term investment in energy efficiency programmes.

Kemi Badenoch:

Maximising the economic benefits of long-term investment in energy efficiency programmes is a central component of the government's approach to decarbonising our building stock on the path to Net Zero.

The ONS estimate that already 114,400 people are employed in the energy efficiency sector and this will need to expand significantly to support our aspiration to raise the energy efficiency of all homes to EPC Band C by 2035 - where practical, cost-effective and affordable. The policies already set out in the 10 Point Plan are expected to generate £11bn in private investments in heat and building decarbonisation over the 2020s and their effect on the economy are already being felt.

Since June, we have provided £1.5bn to support low income households across the country to improve their energy efficiency while also expanding the Energy Company Obligation to £1bn per year. Together, this is estimated to support over 25,000 jobs and save households an average of £350-450 per year on their energy bills.

The upcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy will set out further detail on the Government's plans to maximise the potential economic benefits of improving energy efficiency.

■ Freezing of Assets: Myanmar

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[33132\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation has made of the total amount of frozen assets held by UK institutions belonging to officials in the Myanmar military.

John Glen:

The Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) undertakes an annual review of frozen assets in the UK, requiring all persons or institutions that hold or control frozen assets in the UK to report to OFSI. Details of assets reported to OFSI in 2020 are not yet available and will be published in OFSI's 2020-2021 Annual Review.

Details of assets reported to OFSI in 2019 were published in OFSI's 2019-2020 Annual Review. As of September 2019, £12.5 billion of frozen funds across all regimes were reported to be held by UK institutions. This figure is provided on an aggregate basis so as not to disclose the value of funds held by particular individuals.

■ Future Fund

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[33130]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much investment support had been allocated via the Future Fund to businesses in (a) London and the South East, (b) Scotland, (c) Wales and (d) Northern Ireland by 30 June 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

The British Business Bank have published final Future Fund data, including the breakdown of funding by region and is available on their website here:

<https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/final-future-fund-final-data-shows-scheme-completed-1-14bn-of-convertible-loan-agreements/>

The Future Fund used a set of standard terms with published eligibility criteria, independent of ministers. This was a clear, efficient way to make funding available as widely and as possible, irrespective of location. This means that the proportions allocated to different regions and nations of the UK have followed wider-VC funding trends that exist in the market.

As of the 30th June the final amount of investment support allocated to the following areas are:

- a) London and the South east: £798.7m
- b) Scotland: £8.3m
- c) Wales: £18.7m
- d) Northern Ireland: £11.6m

■ International Monetary System

Preet Kaur Gill:

[33300]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in which areas he is planning to use the UK's Special Drawing Rights.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[33301]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he plans to take to ensure that the UK's channelling of its Special Drawing Rights to countries in the global south does not increase the debt burdens of those countries.

John Glen:

The IMF Special Drawing Right (SDR) is an international reserve asset designed to supplement the official reserves of IMF member countries. SDRs are allocated to members, including the UK, in proportion to their IMF quota shares. HMG therefore holds SDRs as part of the UK's international reserves.

The UK strongly supports the proposed new \$650bn SDR allocation and has urged its implementation by the end of August. The UK also supports the G7's ambition to significantly magnify the impact of the allocation to reach a total global ambition of \$100bn to the countries most in need.

The UK together with other G7 members has called on the IMF to work quickly to explore a menu of options for the voluntary channelling of SDRs to further support health needs and to help enable greener, more robust recoveries in the poorest and most vulnerable countries. G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors have also committed to explore options to channel SDRs to support resilient, inclusive and sustainable recoveries. As part of this, members have committed to work to scale up the IMF's concessional lending facility, the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT).

The Government continues to support initiatives to help countries in need address their debt vulnerabilities and ensure future debt sustainability, including the G20-Paris Club Debt Service Suspension Initiative and Common Framework, alongside efforts to enhance official and private sector debt transparency.

■ Taxation

James Murray:

[\[33352\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the potential additional revenue that will accrue to the public purse as a result of the tax measures within the communique agreed between G7 Finance Ministers on 5 June 2021.

James Murray:

[\[33353\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of UK domiciled enterprises that would be affected by a global minimum corporate rate of taxation of at least 15 per cent, as agreed between G7 Finance Ministers on 5 June 2021.

James Murray:

[\[33354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of UK domiciled financial firms that would be affected by the agreement between G7 Finance Ministers on 5 June 2021 to reallocate taxing rights to at least 20 per cent of profit exceeding a 10 per cent margin for the largest and most profitable multinational enterprises.

James Murray:

[\[33355\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the agreement between G7 Finance Ministers made on 5 June 2021, what estimate he has made of the potential additional UK tax liability for firms currently subject to the Digital Services Tax (DST), in the event that the DST is replaced by a system of reallocating taxing rights to at least 20 per cent of profit exceeding a 10 per cent margin for the largest and most profitable multinational enterprises.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the hon Member to the answer that I gave on 12 July to PQ UIN 28089 .

■ Taxation: British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies**James Murray:** [\[33356\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what meetings have taken place between his Department and representatives of British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies on the ongoing international tax negotiations discussed between G7 Finance Ministers on 4 to 5 June 2021.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the hon Member to the answer that I gave on 10 June to PQ UIN 11636.

■ Tom Cooper**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[32302\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps UK Government Investments has taken to ensure that there is no conflict of interest in UKGI director Mr Tom Cooper's ownership and management of a private consulting firm TKGC Consulting.

Kemi Badenoch:

As with all external interests of its staff, UKGI discussed the disclosure of Tom Cooper's ownership and management of private consulting firm TKGC Consulting following its incorporation.

In considering the external interests of its staff, UKGI ensures it has asked for appropriate detail in determining whether a conflict of interest exists and so that it can satisfy itself that the external position or interest held by a staff or board member is appropriate and in line with its existing priorities.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[32304\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether UK Government Investment pays UKGI director Mr Thomas Cooper's salary through his firm TKGC Consulting.

John Glen:

All UKGI employees are remunerated directly and not via any external firm.

■ Wealth**Jon Trickett:** [\[32283\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made for the distribution of wealth in real terms per (a) household and (b) person among the UK population for years (i) 2019, (ii) 2020 and (iii) 2021 by quintile or decile.

Kemi Badenoch:

The most recent comprehensive data on the distribution of wealth is available for the period 2016-18, collected by the Office for National Statistics and published in its biennial 'Wealth in Great Britain' publication. Owing to the time lag in more recent data becoming available, the Treasury has not conducted analysis of the distribution of wealth by quintile or decile in the years 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The government is committed to supporting household living standards during this difficult time for the country, and has announced an unprecedented package of support – including a boost to Universal Credit, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) – helping to protect incomes, jobs, and support those most in need. Treasury analysis has shown that these interventions have supported the poorest working households most (as a proportion of income).

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Maternity Services: Enfield North

Feryal Clark:

[\[29932\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on improving maternal care for (a) women living in poverty, (b) Black women, and (c) Asian women in Enfield North constituency.

Kemi Badenoch:

I have regular discussions with the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health on improving maternal outcomes for all ethnic minority women. I have also discussed this issue with Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, England's Chief Midwifery Officer, and Dr. Gloria Rowland, who is leading NHS work to improve outcomes, progression and the well-being of ethnic minority maternity staff.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Carer's Allowance

Ed Davey:

[\[32281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who would be eligible to claim carers allowance if the hours of care requirement are reduced from 35 hours to (a) 30 hours, (b) 25 hours and (c) 20 hours.

Justin Tomlinson:

The threshold of providing at least 35 hours care a week has been in place since Carer's Allowance (CA) was first introduced in 1976, and has been maintained by successive Governments as a reasonable point at which many carers would find it difficult to combine their caring responsibilities with a full-time job.

The Government has not made any estimates of how many additional people would become entitled to CA if the number of hours of care required to be provided were reduced.

There is support for those caring for less than 35 hours a week in the benefit system - including Carer's Credits and changes to jobsearch requirements in Universal Credit which can be tailored to reflect caring responsibilities. (Carer's Credits can be

awarded to those providing care for over 20 hours a week, helping carers maintain their National Insurance records, thereby protecting their State Pensions, regardless of whether or not they are also working.)

■ Child Maintenance Service

Alyn Smith: [\[32514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2021 to Question 25157, for what reason a change in earnings for a period of two months is deemed a permanent change and a change in contact arrangements for 14 months is deemed a temporary change by the Child Maintenance Service; and what her Department's policy is on the length of time that constitutes a (a) temporary and (b) permanent change for the purposes of the Child Maintenance Service.

Guy Opperman:

There are multiple factors considered when taking into account a Paying Parent's income for a Child Maintenance assessment. The scheme is designed so that liabilities remain consistent over the year, with limited changes to the assessment allowing both parents to budget. Time frames will vary depending on what is being assessed and legislation requires that factors which affect income should be expected to last for the "foreseeable future".

The Child Maintenance Service follows guidance on when changes should be considered temporary or permanent. These decisions are discretionary and considered on a case by case basis. If a customer is unhappy with the outcome of the decision, they may appeal through a mandatory reconsideration.

■ Children: Maintenance

Rachael Maskell: [\[33261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of child support cases received by the Independent Case Examiner are awaiting a preliminary screening as of 14 July 2021.

Rachael Maskell: [\[33262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time taken was for a child support case received by the Independent Case Examiner to undergo a preliminary screening in the last calendar year.

Rachael Maskell: [\[33263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of cases received by the Independent Case Examiner are waiting to be assigned to an investigator as at 14 July 2021; and what the average time taken is before an investigator has been appointed to a case in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time equivalent investigators are employed by the Independent Case Examiner; and what the average number of cases is managed by each case worker per year.

Guy Opperman:

As of 14 July 2021 there were 14 child support cases awaiting preliminary screening, which equates to 1.3% of all current child support cases held.

Data on the average time it took to complete preliminary screening and register cases in the last calendar year is not recorded. The Independent Case Examiner (ICE) office aims to complete this preliminary screening and register the case within two working days.

The cases that reach the ICE are the most complex and usually require investigation. Complainants are kept updated about the timings involved with their case and the vast majority are satisfied with the service they receive. Of the cases held on 14 July 2021, there were 824 cases awaiting allocation to an investigator, which equates to 40% of cases held.

The average time taken from complaint acceptance date to allocation to an investigation case manager in all ICE cases is 64.6 weeks.

The ICE office currently has 44 (42.06 FTE) investigators. A further 5 investigators have recently been recruited and are due to be post in August and September. Investigators hold between 7 and 11 cases at any given time, depending on complexity.

Investigators have a case holding of between 7 and 11 cases at any given time (depending on complexity) and there is an expectation they will pass between 27 and 42 cases (again depending on complexity) through for the ICE to consider.

■ Jobcentres: Armed Forces

John Healey:

[\[33114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the oral contribution by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 15 June 2021, House of Lords, Official Report, column 1765, if she will provide the (a) locations and (b) DWP districts of the job centres that have an Armed Forces Champion supporting veterans seeking employment.

Will Quince:

For the first time there will be a dedicated armed forces role at middle management level in each of the 11 Jobcentre Plus Groups. The 11 group leads are forming a virtual network and will be responsible for building capability and sharing best practice across the network. They will also be pro-active in liaising with the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force on both recruitment and resettlement.

These Armed Forces Champions Leads will oversee 50 Armed Forces Champions across the Jobcentre Plus network (including at least one in each of the 37 Jobcentre Plus Districts), who will have specific responsibilities for supporting members of the

Armed Forces Community as part of their job. Again, for the first time, this involves a front line role personally handling some claims, supporting veterans into work and helping resolve complex cases where necessary. Their specific jobcentre location is not a factor in their ability to deliver this service as their responsibilities are district wide.

Recruitment to these roles is largely complete and the Department expects all of the roles to be filled by the end of July. All of the 11 Leads are in post and all Armed Forces Champions will be in each district by the end of July. Currently 48 have been appointed across 35 Districts, with the final two to be in post by the end of the month.

There are also many staff across the DWP network based in individual Jobcentre offices who will be the local 'expert' on Armed Forces issues, and the Department is continually working to build capability across the Jobcentre Plus network.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Stephen Flynn:

[32513]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish all data her Department holds at a (a) national, (b) regional and (c) local authority level on (i) total jobs started as a result of and (ii) jobs advertised as part of the Kickstart Scheme since that scheme began.

Mims Davies:

As of the 7th July Approximately 148,000 jobs have been made available for young people to apply for through the Kickstart Scheme and over 44,000 young people have started Kickstart jobs. There were also over 247,000 jobs approved for funding by the Scheme.

Below are tables listing the number of Kickstart jobs which have been made available and started by young people to date by geographical area of Great Britain and work sector. The figures used are correct as of the 7th July and these figures have been rounded according to departmental standards.

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.

LOCATION	JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
East Midlands	9,920	2,570
East of England	11,640	3,100
London	28,750	9,710

LOCATION	JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
North East	5,730	2,030
North West	19,140	5,570
Scotland	10,740	3,830
South East	17,240	4,780
South West	11,030	3000
Wales	8,380	2,260
West Midlands	13,880	3,390
Yorkshire and The Humber	11,530	3,280

*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals. Jobs Made Available include 1,000 non-grant funded vacancies and around 900 starts to non-grant funded jobs

SECTOR	JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
Administration	37,290	11,390
Animal Care	650	370
Beauty & Wellbeing	1,090	350
Business & Finance	5,350	1,580
Computing, Technology & Digital	11,000	4,060
Construction & Trades	4,520	1,450
Creative & Media	11,230	4,510
Delivery & Storage	4,450	1,310
Emergency & Uniform Services	290	80
Engineering & Maintenance	5,210	1,300
Environment & Land	2,760	870

SECTOR	JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	TOTAL JOBS STARTED
Government Services	550	80
Healthcare	4,480	1,060
Home Services	1,130	210
Hospitality & Food	14,280	3,060
Law & Legal	330	150
Managerial	950	250
Manufacturing	3,520	1,220
Retail & Sales	22,620	7,040
Science & Research	690	190
Social Care	3,660	690
Sports & Leisure	3,580	970
Teaching & Education	7,240	1,620
Transport	550	90
Travel & Tourism	480	140

*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals. Jobs Made Available include 1,000 non-grant funded vacancies and around 900 starts to non-grant funded jobs

■ Personal Independence Payment

Mary Glendon:

[32391]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to reduce delays in the processing of Personal Independence Payment claims.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are committed to ensuring that people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment in a timely manner. We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to review all available evidence.

We are currently operating within expected levels. Average clearance times from initial claim to a decision being made for new claims at the end of April 2021 is 19 weeks, which is the same as average clearance times achieved in March 2020, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic

Mary Glendon:

[\[32394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she has taken to ensure that contracted assessment providers provide high quality customer service while they process delayed personal independence payment claims.

Justin Tomlinson:

We are absolutely committed to improving the overall Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimant experience, as this is what claimants rightly expect and deserve. Assessment providers use feedback from support organisations and individuals to improve their customer service, and have used this feedback to make improvements to appointment letters and directions.

PIP assessment providers have consistently exceeded the Claimant Satisfaction target of 90% since the measurement began in 2016. This is measured by a survey, commissioned from a third party research company by the providers on behalf of the department.

Reducing end to end customer journey times for PIP claimants is a priority for DWP. We continue to work closely with both assessment providers, amending and refining current

processes and work closely with them to improve the waiting times whilst maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction.

■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

Kate Osamor:

[\[31481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit and legacy benefit claimants who are eligible to apply for EU Settled Status have failed to do so.

Kate Osamor:

[\[31482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to stop benefit payments to people who are eligible but have failed to apply for EU Settled Status.

Kate Osamor:

[\[31483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department has provided to people who claim (a) employment and support allowance or (b) the equivalent universal credit component who are eligible to apply for EU Settled Status but have so far failed to do to help them make an application.

Kate Osamor:

[31484]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether a person who has not yet been granted EU Settled Status but is eligible to do so and is in the process of claiming a disability benefit will still be eligible to claim that benefit.

Justin Tomlinson:

From 1 July 2021, EEA and Swiss Nationals (excluding Irish Nationals) will require immigration status in order to access income related benefits and public services.

EEA and Swiss nationals, and their family members, in scope of the Withdrawal Agreement can acquire immigration status through the EU Settlement Scheme.

Those currently receiving benefits have not seen their payments stop automatically from 1 July. However, it is important that anyone eligible who hasn't applied to the EUSS does so quickly to ensure that benefit payments are protected.

We are working very closely with the Home Office and HM Revenue and Customs to identify those who have yet to apply. Letters had been issued to encourage existing benefit recipients to apply to the EUSS to protect their existing rights in the UK. The Home Office will shortly be writing to benefit recipients who have still not applied for a status, giving a further 28 days to apply, after which the departments will be notified of those recipients who have still not applied.

Further information can be found here -

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2020/07/02/media-factsheet-eu-settlement-scheme/>

For those that require support making an application to the EU Settlement Scheme we are able to signpost individuals to the Settlement Resolution Centre, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk/y/inside-the-uk/eu-settlement-scheme-settled-and-pre-settled-status-or-service-provider-from-switzerland-visa-applications>

A full list of 72 grant funded organisations able to offer help at a local level to vulnerable and at risk EU citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-community-support-for-vulnerable-citizens>

Detailed guidance will be issued through our Advice to Decision Makers in due course - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-for-decision-making-staff-guide>

■ Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations

Jonathan Reynolds:

[32566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what specific training is given to disability assessors used by her Department for (a) personal independence payment and (b) work capability assessments on mental health to ensure that they are able to (i) accurately assess a mental health disability and (ii) make necessary adjustments during the assessment process.

Justin Tomlinson:

DWP require all Health Professionals (HPs) conducting assessments on behalf of the department to have appropriate skills in assessing people with conditions affecting mental health, including history taking and ability to perform a relevant examination. They are fully qualified in their health discipline, receive training in disability assessment and specific training in mental health conditions and how to identify the impact of these.

Claimants are given the opportunity to alert their assessment provider of any additional requirements they may have and the providers will meet any reasonable requests. Furthermore, companions or advocates are encouraged to attend and can play an active role in assessments. This can be particularly helpful for claimants with mental, cognitive or intellectual impairments who may not be able to provide an accurate account of their condition due to a lack of understanding or unrealistic expectations of their ability. Claimants with severe mental health conditions, who may have no support network in place, can also be provided with additional support during the claims process if they need it.

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[33285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 367 on Social Security Benefits: Medical Examinations, what further progress her Department has made in its discussions with representatives of (a) the Independent Assessment Service and (b) Capita on finding a suitable method of audio recording face-to-face assessments; and when those discussions will conclude.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department continues to work closely with both IAS and Capita to deliver an audio recording service for face to face assessments that removes the requirement for the Claimant to provide the equipment. Arrangements are being finalised and we hope to have this in place as soon as practicably possible.

■ Social Security Benefits: Overpayments**Mike Amesbury:**[\[29888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much her Department recovered from overpayments that were as a result of her Department's and not the claimant's error in each month in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the average amount of overpayment due to her Department's error was recovered from each such claimant.

Will Quince:

In the last month for which figures are available DWP paid out almost £3.5bn in Universal Credit and it should be noted that fraud and error in the benefits system remains low, with 95% of benefits, worth more than £200bn. paid correctly in 2020/21. Official Error overpayments remained at 0.4% of benefit expenditure last year, with UC Official Error Overpayments falling from 1.3% to 0.9%.

Deductions from UC are now capped at 25% (as of April 2021) having previously been 30%. Where requested deductions exceed the 25% maximum, or there is insufficient UC 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.

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, a lower amount can be negotiated.

Deductions in respect of UC Official Error debt for the last 6 months are shown below:

MONTH	VALUE OF IN MONTH RECOVERY	
	WHERE DEBT CATEGORY IS OFFICIAL ERROR	AVERAGE RECOVERY PER CUSTOMER IN MONTH
Jan-21	£12,470,549	£67.47
Feb-21	£14,464,840	£67.15
Mar-21	£16,444,768	£70.11
Apr-21	£16,524,866	£69.95
May-21	£13,563,717	£65.02
Jun-21	£14,584,640	£63.44

* The data shown in the above table is taken from operational data systems, and is not intended for publication. Therefore, the data itself is not quality assured to the standard of published Official Statistics and National Statistics.

■ Universal Credit

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[32332\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of removing the £20 Universal Credit uplift on levels of child poverty in (a) the Kingston upon Hull North constituency, (b) Yorkshire and the Humber and (c) England.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[32382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what regional economic impact assessment her Department has made of removing the £20 uplift to the universal credit standard allowance.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[32383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what gender impact assessment her Department has made of removing the £20 uplift to the universal credit standard allowance.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[32384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what ethnicity impact assessment her Department has made of removing the £20 uplift to the universal credit standard allowance.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[33220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of removing the uplift to the universal credit standard allowance on levels of debt accrued by universal credit claimants.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[33222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made on the potential effect of removing the uplift to the universal credit standard allowance on material deprivation.

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[33223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of removing the uplift to the universal credit standard allowance on income inequality.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made.

Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and we announced the temporary uplift as part of a £400 billion package of measures put in place that will last well beyond the end of the roadmap. Our focus now is on our multi-billion Plan for Jobs, which will support people in the long-term by helping them learn new skills and increase their hours or find new work.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Companies House Corporate Targets 2021/2022

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS191\]](#)

My Right Honourable friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility (Lord Callanan) has today made the following statement:

I have set Companies House the following corporate targets for the year 2021/2022:

Complete and up to date data

97% of companies on the register will have an up-to-date confirmation statement.

Digital Service Availability

Digital services will be available for a minimum of 99.9% of the time.

New Services

Develop a new online journey for submission of confirmation statements.

Develop a digital filing capability for insolvency transactions.

Customer Satisfaction

Be in the top quartile of public service organisations for customer satisfaction.

Diversity

Increase the number of staff recruited to Companies House from under-represented groups by 10%.

Delivering Value

Manage expenditure within budgetary limits.

Spending with small and medium businesses

15% of spend will be spent directly with small and medium businesses.

■ Covid-19 Business Regulatory Easements

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS192\]](#)

The challenges faced by the UK, and other countries across the world, since the pandemic began have been substantial and many businesses have experienced unprecedented disruption. In the face of the threat of the virus the government acted rapidly to provide support to protect businesses, individuals and public services across the UK, and has adapted its economic response as the pandemic has evolved. Our Plan for Jobs has supported jobs and businesses with over £400bn of economic support, from

generous employment support schemes to tax cuts, deferrals, loan schemes and cash grants.

Alongside financial support, the government took the extraordinary step of temporarily relaxing a wide range of rules and regulations to make it easier for businesses to continue working through the disruption caused by COVID-19. These easements cover a variety of areas, including capacity market easements, competition, and the suspension of liability for wrongful trading, among others.

As we have successfully progressed through the stages of the Roadmap we have reduced many of the restrictions that have been in place over the last 15 months. And the progress we have made on the Roadmap means that many of the rules that were relaxed can be reinstated.

While the phenomenal vaccine rollout has offered every adult some protection against the virus, and the crucial link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths is weakened, the global pandemic is not over yet, and cases are currently rising across the UK. This means that vigilance must be maintained and people will be asked to continue to act carefully to manage the risks to themselves and others. There will still be high levels of infection and illness and therefore disruption to lives, businesses and the economy.

We are therefore retaining or extending some of the regulatory easements. This is necessary where they continue to provide flexibility to businesses while they feel ongoing impacts from Covid-19, including on workforce absences, and where relaxed rules will enable them to recover - helping to reinvigorate the high street and boost consumption.

We will be publishing the details on the easements that will expire or be retained on gov.uk shortly.

The relaxation of these rules will be reviewed again in Autumn at which point the government will consider the status of these measures for further extension, permanent retention or expiry.

Ministers will continue to review the measures at regular intervals as needed thereafter to provide certainty to business and ensure that the appropriate regulatory environment is in place as required. A separate process is being taken forward for the measures protecting businesses from eviction, insolvency and debt recovery, which has been outlined in an oral statement by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Steve Barclay on June 16th.

Better Regulation Framework impact assessments

The Government introduced a significant amount of emergency legislation responding to COVID-19 and we recognise that there may be a risk that current Better Regulation Framework requirements might lead to disproportionate administrative burdens on government departments, particularly on the retrospective validation of temporary emergency legislation that is extended to be in force for 12 months or more.

For emergency Covid-19 legislation which is exempt from the business impact target (BIT) under the "civil emergencies" exemption we have decided to relax the administrative requirements set out in the Better Regulation Framework for full impact assessments to be undertaken and scrutinised by the Regulatory Policy Committee

(RPC). This relaxation of the policy requirement covers time-limited measures only. As a matter of policy under the Framework, impact assessments are still expected for other emergency measures which are not temporary, even if they are non-qualifying measures under the “civil emergencies” exemption, and so not legally required to be supported by an impact assessment. Such impact assessments are to be submitted to the RPC in the normal way. The statutory requirement for measures exempted in this way from legal requirements for IAs to be verified as such by the RPC remains.

This adjustment of requirements will remain in place in advance of the wider reform of the better regulation framework completing.

■ **Hospitality Strategy: Reopening, Recovery, Resilience**

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS190\]](#)

On Friday, I published a Hospitality Strategy to support this vital sector.

The hospitality sector contributes significantly to the economy and plays a leading role in supporting local communities, high streets and city centres across the country. However, it has been one of the hardest sectors hit by the pandemic.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on a sector that exists to bring people together was always going to be significant. That is why the Government’s £352 billion package of support included specific and targeted help for hospitality businesses. Despite this, over the course of the pandemic, hospitality businesses have largely been operating at a loss.

To support the sector’s bounce back, we have developed a forward-looking strategy that sets out the Government’s long-term vision to help businesses on their road to recovery and beyond. This will sit alongside and support other government strategies and plans, including the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy and Tourism Recovery Plan.

We have worked closely with sector partners and businesses to develop an ambitious vision for the sector which reflects the aims of returning the sector to its pre-pandemic health, supporting wider economic recovery and creating thousands of resilient and dynamic businesses for years to come.

The strategy recognises the vital role that hospitality businesses will play in the UK’s economic recovery, to society and the levelling up agenda.

DEFENCE

■ **The loss of secret documents update.**

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace): [\[HCWS194\]](#)

On Friday 16 July 2021 my Nobel Friend the Minister of State (Baroness Goldie) made the following Written Ministerial Statement in the House of Lords

On 28 June, the Minister for Defence Procurement noted that an investigation had been launched into the loss of MOD classified documents; and undertook to inform the House

of its conclusions. That investigation has now concluded. The investigation has independently confirmed the circumstances of the loss, including the management of the papers within the Department, the location at which the papers were lost and the manner in which that occurred. These are consistent with the events self-reported by the individual. We are confident that we have recovered all the SECRET papers. The investigation has found no evidence of espionage; and has concluded there has been no compromise of the papers by our adversaries. The individual concerned has been removed from sensitive work and has already had their security clearance suspended pending a full review. For security reasons, the Department will be making no further comment on the nature of the loss or on the identity of the individual. The Department takes protection of its information extremely seriously and will continue to take firm action in response to such incidents.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Digital Identity and Attributes Consultation

Minister for Digital Infrastructure (Matt Warman):

[\[HCWS197\]](#)

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government is today publishing a public consultation on enabling legislation to strengthen digital identity use for the whole economy.

More and more people, in all walks of life, are using products and services online. People expect these transactions to be simple, quick, safe and personalised. However, people in the UK often still have to use a combination of paper documents issued by government, local authorities and the private sector - and a mixture of offline and online routes - when opening a bank account, claiming benefits, starting a new job or applying for a school place. And these steps often need repeating for each new transaction.

Voluntary online authentication, identity and eligibility solutions can increase security, ease of use and accessibility. They are central to transforming the delivery and efficiency of public services and people's ability to operate confidently in an increasingly digital economy.

The Government is committed to realising the benefits of digital identity technologies without creating ID cards. We have committed to put in place the necessary framework and tools so that digital identity solutions enhance privacy, transparency, confidence and inclusion, and that users are able to control their data, in line with the principles published in the 2019 Call for Evidence response.

In our response to the Call for Evidence, we committed to enabling businesses and individuals across the economy to use digital identities securely and with more confidence. This is only achievable by putting in place a legal framework and regulatory infrastructure.

The consultation DCMS is publishing today follows up on that commitment. It sits alongside the UK digital identity and attributes trust framework, which was published as a first draft in February 2021, opening the way for legislation. Digital identity legislation is

needed to underpin a governance framework in law, to enable Government to allow checks by industry against data it holds, and to create confidence in the validity of digital identities. We have worked extensively with industry, civil society, and academia to get to this point.

The consultation sets out our plans to create a digital identity governance framework. Creating a governance system which can build trust in digital identities is vital. This trust will drive innovation and growth in the UK economy and good governance will ensure that the digital identity and attribute principles are upheld.

We are also consulting on our intention to create a permissive legal power for government-held attributes to be checked safely and securely by non-public sector organisations for eligibility, identity, and validation purposes. This will allow digital identities in the UK to be built on a greater range of trusted datasets and ultimately provide people with a choice of how they use this data to prove their identity.

Finally, we are proposing to establish in law that digital identities and digital attributes can be as valid as physical forms of identification or traditional identity documents. This builds on our commitment to enable the use of digital identities in as many areas as possible and to build confidence in their validity.

Further details can be found in the consultation, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/digital-identity-and-attributes-consultation>.

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

EDUCATION

■ Capital Update

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson):

[HCWS199]

I am confirming details of the next 50 schools to benefit from the ten-year school rebuilding programme announced by the Prime Minister in June 2020. I am also confirming the launch of a public consultation on the approach to prioritising schools for future places on the programme.

The school rebuilding programme forms part of the Government's plans to build back better, supporting teachers in England to deliver a high-quality education, so that pupils gain the knowledge, skills and qualifications they need to succeed.

It is also an important commitment to investing in construction sector jobs and skills, including apprenticeships and T-Level placements, helping drive growth as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme will have a continued focus on modern methods of construction and provide opportunities across the industry, including for small and medium-sized enterprises.

As with the first schools announced in February, this second group of schools have been prioritised based on the condition of their buildings. The projects include primary and secondary schools, as well as special and alternative provision schools. This also

represents a substantial investment in schools in the midlands and north of England, with thirty-two out of fifty projects located in these regions.

The new school buildings will be energy efficient designs with high sustainability standards that will be net zero carbon in operation and mitigate the risks of climate change.

The ten-year programme will continue to target school buildings in the worst condition across England and today we have published a consultation on the approach to prioritising schools for the long-term programme. Responses from this consultation will help to shape the way we identify the buildings most in need of replacement or significant refurbishment. The consultation will be open until 8 October 2021.

Alongside the rebuilding programme, the Government has committed £1.8 billion in financial year 2021-22 for maintaining and improving the condition of the school estate.

Further details, including lists of the school rebuilding projects have been published on GOV.UK. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

■ School Funding Update

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):

[\[HCWS200\]](#)

Today I am confirming provisional funding allocations for 2022-23 through the schools, high needs and central school services national funding formulae (NFF). The allocations distribute the final year of the three-year school funding settlement that the Secretary of State for Education announced to Parliament on 3 September 2019. Core school funding increased by £2.6bn in 2020-21, and is increasing by £4.8bn and £7.1bn in 2021-22 and 2022-23 respectively, compared to 2019-20.

These allocations are part of the annual funding cycle. They are separate to the three major interventions we have made to support education recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic –over £3bn in total. All of that support for recovery will be provided on top of the funding allocations announced today for local authorities and schools.

Funding through the schools NFF is increasing by 3.2% overall in 2022-23, and by 2.8% per pupil. The NFF will distribute this funding based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. The main features in 2022-23 are:

- The core factors in the NFF (such as basic per-pupil funding, and funding for additional needs such as deprivation) will increase by 3%.
- The funding floor will ensure that every school is allocated at least 2% more pupil-led funding per pupil compared to its 2021-22 NFF allocation.
- The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase by 2%, compared to 2021-22. This will mean that, next year, every primary school will receive at least £4,265 per pupil, and every secondary school at least £5,525.
- Support for small and remote schools (through the "sparsity" factor) will receive a further increase. In 2022-23 the additional funding that such schools can attract is rising to up to £55,000 for primary schools, and up to £80,000 for secondary

schools – in both cases, a £10,000 increase from 2021-22. We are also moving to using road distances instead of straight line distances when measuring a school's remoteness. This will significantly increase the number of schools attracting this funding. As a result, the funding allocated through the sparsity factor is increasing from £42 million in 2021-22 to £95 million in 2022-23.

High needs funding is increasing by £780m, or 9.6%, in 2022-23 – following the over £1.5 bn increase over the last two years. This brings the total high needs budget to £8.9bn, an increase of over a third since 2019-20. The high needs NFF will ensure that every local authority receives at least an 8% increase per head of population, with some authorities seeing gains of up to 11%. This vital extra resource will continue to help local authorities manage their cost pressures in this area, while the government remains focused on completing the cross-departmental review of the SEND system to ensure that it supports children and young people with SEND as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Central school services funding funds local authorities for the ongoing responsibilities they continue to have for all schools. The total funding for ongoing responsibilities is £284 million in 2022-23. In line with the process introduced for 2020-21 to withdraw funding over time based on the historic commitments local authorities entered into before 2013-14, funding for these historic commitments will decrease by 20%.

The provisional NFF allocations published today will be updated, based on the latest pupil data, to produce final allocations in December that local authorities will receive through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Local authorities will continue to use that funding to determine final allocations for all local mainstream schools. In parallel with the changes being implemented for 2022-23, the Government is in the process of consulting on how we complete our reforms to the schools NFF in the longer term – whereby funding allocations for individual schools are determined by one single national formula, rather than 150 separate, different, local authority formulae.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ COVID-19 Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment)
(Nadhim Zahawi):** [\[HCWS201\]](#)

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published its advice on the vaccination of children and young people. Her Majesty's Government (HMG) has accepted this advice and all four parts of the UK expect to follow the JCVI's advice and align their deployment in each nation.

JCVI's advice is based on currently available data and is kept under review as new data emerges, the JCVI has advised that the Government:

- Maintains the existing eligibility criteria for 16-17 year olds;

- Offers vaccination (for operational flexibility) to all 17 year olds who are within 3 months of turning 18;
- Offers vaccination to 12-15 year olds with the underlying health conditions specified below: severe neuro-disabilities, Down's Syndrome, underlying conditions resulting in immunosuppression, and those with profound and multiple learning disabilities, severe learning disabilities or who are on the GP learning disability register.
- Offer vaccination to 12-15 year olds who are healthy but are household contacts of individuals (adults or children) who are immunosuppressed: The purpose of this is primarily to protect the household member who is immunosuppressed (16-17 year old household contacts are already offered vaccination).

Through the COVID-19 Vaccines programme, we have administered over 80 million vaccine doses in the UK, with recent PHE data suggesting that this has prevented between 6.4 and 7.9 million infections and between 26,000 and 28,000 deaths in England alone. The vaccine is the most effective way of protecting the most vulnerable and minimising hospitalisations and deaths. An early estimate from PHE suggests that in adults under the age of 40 a single dose of the Pfizer vaccine is 61% effective against symptomatic disease, and 72 % for a single dose of the Moderna vaccine.

For children and young people, the risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 is much lower than for older people and we recognise that decisions on vaccination for this group are therefore much more finely balanced than for adults. The JCVI has been clear that for those children and young people with specified health conditions the balance of evidence is that they will benefit from vaccination.

With the deployment to these new groups of children and young people those out, I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine supply via this statement and attached Departmental Minute containing a description of the liability undertaken. The agreement to provide indemnity with deployment of further doses to the population increases the statutory contingent liability of the COVID-19 vaccination programme for the only vaccine currently authorised for use in those aged under 18, the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

It has been and remains the Government's strategy to manage COVID-19 until effective vaccine/s have been deployed at scale. Willingness to accept the need for appropriate indemnities to be given to vaccine suppliers has helped to secure access to vaccines with the expected benefits to public health and the economy alike much sooner than may have been the case otherwise.

Given the exceptional circumstances we are in, and the terms on which developers have been willing to supply a COVID-19 vaccine, we along with other nations have taken a broad approach to indemnification proportionate to the situation we are in.

Even though the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, at no point and at no stage of development has safety been bypassed. The MHRA approval for use of the currently deployed vaccines clearly demonstrates that this vaccine has satisfied, in full, all

the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality. We are providing indemnities in the very unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

I will update the House in a similar manner as and when other COVID-19 vaccines or additional doses of vaccines already in use in the UK are deployed.

HM Treasury has approved the proposal

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Consultation on the new Developing Countries Trading Scheme

Secretary of State for Department for International Trade (Elizabeth Truss):
[\[HCWS193\]](#)

This morning, the Department for International Trade will be launching a public consultation on its new Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS). Post-Brexit Britain can now take a more ambitious, generous, and pro-growth approach to trading with developing nations. The proposed scheme aims to grow trade with lower income nations, supporting jobs and growth across the globe and at home.

This consultation will make sure that the public, business, civil society, associations and other interested stakeholders, can have their say on the Government's approach to preferential market access for developing countries.

We intend this new scheme to be best in class, and have studied programs in Canada, the US, Japan and the EU, before designing a uniquely British offer which backs growth, enterprise and ambition.

This is a major opportunity to grow free and fair trade with developing nations, allowing them to diversify their exports and grow their economies, while British households and businesses benefit from lower prices and more choice. The new UK scheme will mean more opportunity and less bureaucracy for developing countries, for example by simplifying rules of origin requirements for the least developed nations.

The UK currently operates a similar scheme rolled over from the EU, but as an independent trading nation can now take a simpler, more generous, pro-growth approach to trading with developing countries. It would apply to 70 qualifying countries currently and include improvements such as lower tariffs and simpler rules of origin requirements for countries exporting to the UK.

For example, this could mean lowering tariffs on products including rice from Pakistan and trainers from Nigeria. Bangladesh and Vietnam demonstrated that increasing trade through schemes like this one have helped them grow their economy, improve living standards, and drive down poverty.

For instance, Vietnam's exports to the UK more than tripled between 2009 and 2019 while poverty rates plummeted from more than 20% in 2010 to an estimated 5.9% in

2020. Today, it is a fully-fledged FTA partner. We want more developing countries to follow in their footsteps.

The online consultation opens today on GOV.UK and will be live for eight weeks. It will be accompanied by an information note that sets out details of the existing UK preference arrangements. The new Developing Countries Trading Scheme will take effect in 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/designing-the-uk-trade-preferences-scheme-for-developing-nations>

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Report of the Independent Reviewer for National Security Arrangements 2020

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis):

[HCWS196]

The role of the Independent Reviewer of National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland is to monitor compliance with Annex E of the St. Andrews Agreement, reviewing the relationship between MI5 and PSNI in handling national security matters.

His Honour Brian Barker CBE QC, the Independent Reviewer of National Security Arrangements in Northern Ireland, has sent me his report for 2020. What follows is a summary of the main findings of the report covering the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

His Honour Brian Barker states:

2020 was a most difficult year, overtaken by, and then submerged under, the Covid-19 pandemic. It opened with good news: a functioning Executive and Assembly re-emerged after a three-year gap, in parallel with the publication of *New Decade, New Approach*. It closed, still under the shadow of the virus, with the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

The dominant focus faced by the community throughout was to cope with the uncertainties of lockdowns, and the consequences of the unpredictable spread of the pandemic; a combination that led to considerable unforeseen pressures and understandable anxieties in all quarters.

The last visit to Northern Ireland that I was able to make was in February for a Northern Ireland Committee on Protection (NICOP) meeting. The subsequent lockdown, the medical and social emergency and no predictable future pathway made any subsequent planning and conducting of the usual types of personal briefings and interviews impossible. The alternative approach adopted was to receive regular briefings from members of MI5 and PSNI during virtual NICOP meetings.

Dissident Republican activity during the year was somewhat reduced due to enforced life pattern changes and continuing pressure from the security forces, as their leadership took stock. The number of incidents fell slightly compared to 2019. The overall picture in this area, sadly, had changed little. The threat from both dissident republican groups and loyalist paramilitaries remained, and some areas of the community continued to be

subject not only to terrorist activities but also to unacceptable criminal acts and attitudes at a level which has almost come to be regarded by many as normal.

Nevertheless, a number of operations were successfully concluded and were marked with high profile court appearances of senior participants and the imposition of significant sentences. A major success was the coordinated arrest in mid-August of ten individuals who have since been charged with a variety of terrorist offences following a long running and carefully co-ordinated joint operation between MI5 and the PSNI. Incarceration of key individuals will be a serious blow to dissident republican operations with the resulting loss of leadership and planning capability.

My meetings with senior members of MI5 and PSNI were restricted to virtual contact through secure links in the latter part of the year. It was apparent that the many extra health and operative difficulties faced by MI5 since April, in order to continue to function at the expected level, had been overcome. Benefits gained from regular meetings at senior level with PSNI and the continuing strides made in overall co-operation with a variety of agencies had led to significant resulting successes in the field. The overall impression was of effective co-operation having gone up a level, as working partnerships were strengthened and respective responsibilities better understood.

The dire circumstances faced by the PSNI on the ground, coping externally with administering changing regulations and internally with infection and shielding, had required a change in posture; but adaptation had been impressive and results and control overall had been encouraging. The decrease in activity had led to a sharp decline in arrests under terrorism legislation, compared with the previous year, but there had been an increase in the recovery of ammunition and explosives. The traditional marching events, following leadership advice and public appeals, were severely curtailed.

I was pleased to note that the Policing Board were able to appoint a new Chair and Vice Chair in April and I look forward to the opportunity of meeting them. In the course of the year the Board published their new Corporate Plan and the new stylised Policing Plan 2020-2025. Their Human Rights Advisor was asked to examine the challenges and response of PSNI to community activity (including Black Lives Matter demonstrations). The conclusions were generally positive given the difficulties, although with some reservations.

The annual statistics published in November for 2019/20 show that the powers of stop and search under section 47a of the Terrorism Act 2000 were not exercised. There were 179 premises searched under warrant under section 37 Schedule 5 of the same Act. There were 128 (down from 146) persons detained under section 41 of the Terrorism Act and 125 (98%) were held for 48 hours or less. 17 persons were charged with a total of 39 offences including two charges of murder, one charge of attempted murder, 15 charges of firearms offences, 8 charges of drug offences and 6 charges of explosive offences.

A total of 26 (down from 34) persons were disposed of by non-jury trial, 18 of whom were found guilty of at least one charge. A total of 13 (down from 17) non-jury trial certificates were issued by the DPP. There was a total of 14 (up from 6) persons convicted in the Crown Court under the Terrorism Act 2000, the Terrorism Act 2006 or the Counter-

Terrorism Act 2008. There were 465 (down from 1515) examinations carried out by police officers under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000, all of these were examinations of persons, 34 of which resulted in a detention. No compensation or agency payments were made under section 38 schedule 4 of the Justice and Security (NI) Act 2007 where property was broken, destroyed or damaged or other private property rights interfered with.

The extent of my investigations, regrettably, have had to be extensively curtailed. However, in coping with extraordinary difficulties, I have good reason to believe that both MI5 and PSNI have maintained high standards and motivation and have achieved commendable results. The two major Dissident Republican groups undoubtedly suffered severe setbacks in what was a very successful year for the security forces. The danger remained of some sort of reactive show of strength, which fortunately did not materialise; and the minor groups continued to maintain a low profile. Police and prison officers continued to be regarded as legitimate targets and still had to face unacceptable risks. In pockets of the community intimidation continued, and although the figures for paramilitary shootings and beatings dropped, it continued to be concerning.

My conclusions, restricted by the exceptional conditions, in relation to Annex E of the St Andrews Agreement are as follows:

FURTHER TO REINFORCE THIS COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SAFEGUARDS, THE GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS THAT IT ACCEPTS AND WILL ENSURE THAT EFFECT IS GIVEN TO THE FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES WHICH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE HAS IDENTIFIED AS CRUCIAL TO THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENT:

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- | | |
|---|---|
| a: All Security Service intelligence relating to terrorism in Northern Ireland will be visible to the PSNI | Clear evidence of successful collaboration.
There is compliance |
| b: PSNI will be informed of all Security Service counter terrorist activities relating to Northern Ireland | Regular and effective top-level meetings.
There is compliance. |
| c: Security Service intelligence will be disseminated within PSNI according to the current PSNI dissemination policy, and using police procedures | There is compliance |
| d: The great majority of national security CHIS in Northern Ireland will continue to be run by PSNI officers under existing handling protocols | There is compliance |
| e: There will be no diminution of the PSNI's responsibility to comply with the Human Rights Act or the Policing Board's ability to monitor said compliance. | The new leadership of the Policing Board is now in place and the Human Rights advisor has been asked to investigate and provide reassurance to the Board. I look forward to a |

FURTHER TO REINFORCE THIS COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SAFEGUARDS, THE GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS THAT IT ACCEPTS AND WILL ENSURE THAT EFFECT IS GIVEN TO THE FIVE KEY PRINCIPLES WHICH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE HAS IDENTIFIED AS CRUCIAL TO THE EFFECTIVE OPERATION OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENT:

good working relationship with the new HR Advisor.

■ The Third Report on the Use of the Petition of Concern Mechanism in the Northern Ireland Assembly

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis): [\[HCWS198\]](#)

I am laying before both Houses of Parliament the third report by the UK Government on the use of the Petition of Concern mechanism in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

As part of the New Decade, New Approach deal upon which devolved government was restored in Northern Ireland on 11 January 2020, the UK Government committed to undertaking such a report every six months.

This report covers the period from 12 January 2021 to 11 July 2021, during which no Petition of Concern has been lodged against any motion in the Assembly.

The fact that there have been no uses of the Petitions of Concern since the restoration of the political institutions is a positive reflection of the conduct of business within the Assembly. However, I want to take this opportunity to reinforce the importance of a stable, mature, functioning Executive and Assembly that is focussed on addressing the issues that really matter to their daily lives.

The next UK Government report on the use of the Petition of Concern will cover the period from 12 July 2021 to 11 January 2022.

The UK Government is standing by its commitment to bring forward legislation that provides the necessary reforms to the Petition of Concern mechanism. The Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill has reached the Commons Report stage in its passage through Parliament. Once this legislation has completed its passage through Parliament and received Royal Assent, it is crucial that the Assembly reflects the detail of these reforms in its standing orders to ensure the full implementation of these aspects of the New Decade, New Approach deal.

TRANSPORT

■ Light Rail update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps): [\[HCWS195\]](#)

Light rail is a lifeline for many communities across the UK. During the pandemic, the Government has provided significant levels of financial assistance to the light rail sector through the Light Rail Revenue Grant and the Light Rail Restart Revenue Grant,

supporting six light rail operators and Local Transport Authorities in England outside of London, with over £200 million in funding since March 2020.

To date, Light Rail Restart Revenue Grant has funded up to 100% of pre-Covid service levels, ensuring key workers have continued to be able to travel easily and safely as well as ensuring the public could access necessary amenities. Critically, as restrictions are lifted and passengers return, the light rail sector is important in helping local economic recovery, thereby supporting the Government's 'Levelling-Up' agenda.

To encourage passengers back, light rail services should be as available as they were prior to the pandemic. Without support, however, it may not be possible for operators to maintain the services they have provided up until now.

I can therefore announce that a further £56 million in financial support in the form of recovery funding has been made available for the light rail sector. Funding operators and local authorities from 20 July until the end of this financial year, this will succeed the Light Rail Restart Revenue Grant which ends on 19 July. This funding will support operators in adapting their commercial offerings to ensure the longer-term viability and self-sustainability of the sector and is intended to be the final tranche of Covid-related support.