



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 21 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:43 P.M., 21 July 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	6	COP26	13
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	6	■ COP26: Information	13
■ Animal Experiments	6	■ Developing Countries: Natural Disasters	13
■ Copyright	6	■ Livestock Industry: Climate Change	13
■ Employment: Coronavirus	7	■ Local Government: Greenhouse Gas Emissions	14
■ Energy Companies Obligation	7	■ Police: UN Climate Conference 2021	14
■ Football Association Premier League: Competition	7	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: British Overseas Territories	15
■ Heating: Carbon Emissions	8	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Coronavirus	15
■ Heating: Housing	8	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Local Government	15
■ Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade: Coronavirus	9	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Trade Unions	16
■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Warwickshire	9	DEFENCE	16
■ Lone Parents: Coronavirus	9	■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations	16
■ Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia	10	■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus	17
■ Offshore Industry: North Sea	10	■ Armed Forces: Mental Health Services	18
■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus	10	■ Army Medical Services: Towthorpe	18
CABINET OFFICE	11	■ Ascent	18
■ Cabinet Office: Contracts	11	■ AWE Aldermaston	18
■ Devolution	11		
■ Members and Peers: Correspondence	11		
■ Pay: West Yorkshire	12		
■ Vaccination: Ethnic Groups	12		

■ Defence Equipment and Support: Managers	19	■ Sports: Racial Discrimination	32
■ Defence Equipment: Procurement	19	■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure	32
■ Defence Innovation Fund	21	EDUCATION	33
■ Defence: Procurement	21	■ Physical Education	33
■ European Fighter Aircraft	22	■ Pre-school Education: Finance	33
■ Israel: Arms Trade	22	■ Pupils: Disadvantaged	34
■ Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Engines	22	■ Pupils: Safety	35
■ Merchant Shipping: Pensions	23	■ Schools: Coronavirus	37
■ Military Aircraft: Training	23	■ Students: Finance	38
■ Military Intervention: Casualties	24	■ Teachers: Hearing Impairment	38
■ Ministry of Defence: Procurement	24	■ University of Bristol: Judaism	39
■ Ministry of Defence: Research	25	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	39
■ Ministry of Defence: York	25	■ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks	39
■ Navy: Coronavirus	26	■ Export Health Certificates	40
■ Queen Elizabeth Barracks: Sites of Special Scientific Interest	26	■ Flood Control	41
■ RFA Fort Victoria: Fires	26	■ Floods: Insurance	42
■ Submarines	26	■ Livestock: Animal Welfare	42
■ USA: Military Bases	27	■ River Thames: Pollution	43
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	27	■ Southern Water	43
■ BBC: Recruitment	27	■ Tree Planting	44
■ Charities: Coronavirus	27	■ Waste Management: Pollution	45
■ Football: Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy	28	■ Water: Somerset	45
■ Football: Coronavirus	28	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	46
■ Football: Racial Discrimination	29	■ Caribbean: Overseas Aid	46
■ Internet: Safety	30	■ Channel Islands: World War II	46
■ Ofcom: Public Appointments	30	■ Climate Change: International Cooperation	46
■ Sports: Gambling	31	■ Colombia: Environment Protection	47
		■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	48

■ Crimea: Politics and Government	49	■ Coronavirus: Air Pollution	61
■ Developing Countries: Overseas Aid	49	■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	62
■ Education: Females	50	■ Coronavirus: Screening	63
■ Falkland Islands: EU External Trade	51	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	65
■ Foreign Relations	52	■ Defibrillators	65
■ Gaza: Israel	52	■ Department of Health and Social Care: Ministerial Policy Advisers	66
■ Gibraltar: EU External Trade	53	■ Food: Advertising	66
■ Global Partnership for Education	53	■ General Practitioners	66
■ India: Coronavirus	54	■ General Practitioners: West Yorkshire	67
■ India: Hospitals	55	■ Health Services	67
■ Israel: Palestinians	55	■ HIV Infection	67
■ Israeli Settlements	56	■ HIV Infection: Disclosure of Information	68
■ Mozambique: Christianity	56	■ Hospitals: Parking	68
■ Niger: Christianity	56	■ Medical Treatments	68
■ Overseas Aid: Famine	57	■ Mental Health: Children and Young People	69
■ Overseas Aid: Press Freedom	57	■ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: Standards	70
■ Russia: Ukraine	57	■ NHS: Protective Clothing	70
■ South Africa: Rule of Law	58	■ NHS: Software	70
■ South Africa: Violence	58	■ Obesity	71
■ Tunisia: Coronavirus	59	■ Pharmacy	71
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	59	■ Pregnancy: Coronavirus	72
■ Biocidal Products: Regulation	59	■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges	72
■ Borderline Substances Advisory Committee	59	■ Psychiatric Hospitals: Finance	73
■ Cancer: Coronavirus	60	■ Strokes	73
■ Cancer: Health Services	60	■ Surgical Mesh Implants	73
■ Cancer: Medical Treatments	60	■ Travel: Coronavirus	74
■ Care Homes and Hospitals: Protective Clothing and Social Distancing	61	■ Travel: Quarantine	75
■ Coronavirus	61		

HOME OFFICE	76	NORTHERN IRELAND	87
■ Animal Experiments: Coronavirus	76	■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]	87
■ Asylum: Finance	76	■ UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland	88
■ Biometric Residence Permits: Turkey	77	SCOTLAND	89
■ Ferries and Roads: Customs	77	■ Internet: Harassment	89
■ Fraud: Telephone Services	78	TRANSPORT	89
■ Police: Conduct	79	■ Cycling: Kensington High Street	89
■ Police: Coronavirus	79	■ DiDi: Data Protection	90
■ Slavery: Victims	80	■ Great British Railways: York	91
■ Windrush Lessons Learned Review	80	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences	91
HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION	82	■ Public Transport: Coronavirus	91
■ Parliament: Coronavirus	82	■ Taxis: Coronavirus	92
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	82	■ Travel: Coronavirus	92
■ Buildings: Inspections	82	TREASURY	92
■ Camping Sites: Planning Permission	83	■ Children: Day Care	92
■ Derelict Land: Planning Permission	83	■ Nuclear Power: Finance	93
■ Planning Permission: Somerset	83	■ Overseas Aid	93
■ Planning: Parliamentary Scrutiny	84	■ Tax Avoidance	94
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	84	■ Tom Cooper	94
■ Arms Trade: Israel	84	■ UK Government Investments: Directors	95
■ Trade Advisory Groups	85	WORK AND PENSIONS	95
■ Trade Agreements: Religion	85	■ Bereavement Support Payment: Cohabitation	95
JUSTICE	86	■ Food Banks	95
■ Probation: Contracts	86	■ Industrial Health and Safety	96
LEADER OF THE HOUSE	86	■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus	97
■ House of Commons Chamber: Coronavirus	86	■ Kickstart Scheme	98
		■ Personal Independence Payment	98

■ Poverty: Children and Families	99	EDUCATION	107
■ Social Security Benefits: Hemsworth	99	■ Teachers Update	107
■ State Retirement Pensions	100	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	109
■ Universal Credit	100	■ DHSC update	109
■ Universal Credit: Overpayments	101	■ Government Responses to the CQC 'Out of Sight - Who Cares?' Report and to Baroness Hollins' Interim Report on Seclusion and Restrictive Practice for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People	110
■ Universal Credit: Restart Programme	102	■ Publication of the Government response to the Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (IMMDS Review)	111
MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS	103	■ Publication of the national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026	119
HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	103	HOME OFFICE	121
■ Housing Revenue Accounts	103	■ NCA Remuneration Review Body Report 2021	121
WRITTEN STATEMENTS	104	■ Police Pay	122
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	104	HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT	123
■ Use of the Industrial Development Act 1982 for Coronavirus related assistance	104	■ HOUSING UPDATE	123
CABINET OFFICE	105		
■ Notification to Parliament of a Contingent Liability: Indemnification to UNFCCC	105		
■ Response to the 2021 Senior Salaries Review Body Report	105		
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	107		
■ Update on the Government response to the loot box call for evidence	107		

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

■ Animal Experiments

Kenny MacAskill: [\[34614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the annual statistics of scientific procedures on living animals in Great Britain for 2020, if she will take steps to ensure that the number of procedures continues to decrease and are replaced with human-relevant methods.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[34616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether her Department plans to take steps to support a transition from using animals in scientific research to human specific research methods to ensure parity between the research methods used in the UK and those in other countries.

Amanda Solloway:

The use of animals in research is carefully regulated and remains important in ensuring new medicines and treatments are safe. At the same time, the Government believes that animals should only be used when there is no practicable alternative and it actively supports and funds the development and dissemination of techniques that replace, reduce and refine the use of animals in research (the 3Rs). This is achieved primarily through funding for the National Centre for the 3Rs, which works nationally and internationally to drive the uptake of 3Rs technologies and ensure that advances in the 3Rs are reflected in policy, practice and regulations on animal research. The NC3Rs is widely recognised as being world leading, supporting research and innovation that provides researchers in academia and industry with technologies that are more predictive, cost-effective and humane than current animal models.

Since the NC3Rs was launched it has committed £100 million through its research, innovation, and early career awards to provide new 3Rs approaches for scientists in academia and industry to use. This includes almost £27 million in contracts through its CRACK IT Challenges innovation scheme to UK and EU-based institutions, mainly focusing on new approaches for the safety assessment of pharmaceuticals and chemicals that reduce the use of animals.

■ Copyright

Jonathan Edwards: [\[32354\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make a statement on how the Government plans to use copyright policy to protect the livelihoods of creators.

Amanda Solloway:

The UK has one of the best copyright frameworks in the world and the Government remains committed to ensuring that it continues to protect the livelihoods of creators. Copyright legislation is kept under review and has been updated many times over the years; the Government does not rule out future changes where this is supported by the evidence.

■ Employment: Coronavirus**Marion Fellows:**[\[32426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether there are legal protections in place to prevent employers from mandating people who are severely immunocompromised from having to return to their workplace after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends in September 2021.

Paul Scully:

There are a range of legal protections which could be engaged where it is difficult for an employee to return to work as a result of an underlying health condition. But the law does not distinguish specifically between particular health conditions.

An immunocompromised person may be considered to have a disability and benefit from protections under the Equality Act which include the duty on an employer to make reasonable adjustments. A disability under the Equality Act is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities. A reasonable adjustment can include letting someone work somewhere else.

■ Energy Companies Obligation**Alex Norris:**[\[32487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the lifetime bill savings for homes who have had energy efficiency measures installed under the Energy Company Obligation since its inception in 2013.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Between January 2013 and March 2021, approximately 1.6 million measures have been delivered through the Affordable Warmth element of the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), targeted at reducing home heating costs for low income, fuel poor and vulnerable people, corresponding to an estimated £16.2bn in lifetime bill savings.

Details are published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/household-energy-efficiency-statistics-headline-release-june-2021> (Table 2.1).

■ Football Association Premier League: Competition**Chi Onwurah:**[\[34485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2021 to Question 31400 on Monopolies, what assessment the

Competition and Markets Authority has made of the Premier League in respect of fair competition.

Paul Scully:

An Independent Fan Led Review of Football Governance, chaired by my Hon. Friend the Member for Chatham and Aylesford (Tracey Crouch MP) is underway . It is a root-and-branch examination of football in this country, looking at the financial sustainability of the football pyramid, governance regulations, and the merits of an independent regulator. It will also consider the current Owners' and Directors' test, and the transparency and accountability of that process.

Responsibility for investigating individual and market-wide competition issues falls to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the UK's competition authority. As an independent authority, it is for the CMA to decide which cases to investigate, which it does according to its prioritisation principles. The CMA may also carry out detailed examinations of why particular markets may not be working well and take remedial action to address features of markets which restrict competition. It is for the CMA to determine the information to be published regarding the discharge of its regulatory functions.

■ **Heating: Carbon Emissions**

Alan Brown:

[\[32433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to publish the Heat and Buildings Strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course. The strategy will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings, as well as our approach to the key strategic decisions needed to achieve a mass transition to low-carbon heat.

■ **Heating: Housing**

Alex Norris:

[\[32486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the timeframe is for the phasing out of high carbon fossil fuel heating from all homes, as outlined in the Energy White Paper.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Achieving net zero means buildings need to be almost completely decarbonised by 2050. As set out in my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, over the next 15 years we will gradually transition away from fossil fuel boilers and incentivise people to switch to low-carbon alternatives as appliances are replaced in a way that is fair, affordable and practical following the grain of the market.

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out our approach in more detail.

■ Hospitality Industry and Retail Trade: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[34528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to rising cases of covid-19 in the UK, what steps he will take to prevent the spread of covid-19 in (a) retail and (b) hospitality venues.

Paul Scully:

On Monday 5 July, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out the details of the final stage of the roadmap and our approach for managing Covid as we learn to live with the virus. The 'Working Safely' [guidance](#) was updated on 14 July in advance of moving to step 4 happening on 19 July. It sets out a range of mitigations businesses should consider when carrying out their risk assessment.

■ Local Enterprise Partnerships: Warwickshire

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[32528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership will receive its three month overdue core funding provision.

Paul Scully:

We aim to let Local Enterprise Partnerships have information about core funding for 2021-22 shortly.

■ Lone Parents: Coronavirus

Sir Alan Campbell: [\[32284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support and advice is available for single parents in full-time employment and who risk losing that employment in the event that they required to self-advised to isolate for 10 days.

Paul Scully:

The Government is sympathetic to the significant challenges working parents, and single parents in particular, have faced during the pandemic.

The Government has published guidance on employment rights for those who are self-isolating or unable to attend work due to Coronavirus. This guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/if-you-need-to-self-isolate-or-cannot-attend-work-due-to-coronavirus>.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) also provides authoritative and impartial advice free to employees or employers in relation to employment rights issues via their website - www.acas.org.uk, by telephone helpline 0300 123 1100 or text phone 18001 0300 123 1100. Acas also provides employees and employers with Early Conciliation to help them resolve/settle their workplace dispute without going to court.

■ Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia**Chi Onwurah:**[\[34484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Investment Security Unit has considered the sale of the Newport Wafer Fab.

Paul Scully:

We are aware of the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab by Nexperia, and the Government has been in close contact with Newport Wafer Fab throughout.

We are unable to comment on the detail of commercial transactions, or of national security assessments. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely and will not hesitate to take action if needed.

■ Offshore Industry: North Sea**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[34460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what progress he has made on the North Sea Transition Deal.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Immediately following the publication of the Deal in March this year, we met with industry, government and regulator members of the North Sea Transition Forum in April to agree our approach to implementing and overseeing the Deal. We have established governance mechanisms to identify near term and longer-term priorities, and to drive progress. As committed in the Deal, we have set up a government-led group to address barriers to electrification of oil and gas platforms. We continue to make progress on the business case for the Global Underwater Hub in Aberdeen and on proposals for spending the £2m allocated in the Budget for the Deal.

■ Retail Trade: Coronavirus**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[34461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the long term viability of town centre retailing in response to changes in purchasing behaviour during the covid-19 restrictions.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises and values the diversity of the retail sector and is clear that it wants to see the sector continue to thrive in all forms and settings, including town centres.

Retail remains a key part of the high street and thriving town centres will need a strong retail offering. While the trend towards online shopping has been accelerated by Covid-19, 72% of retail sales in 2020 took place in stores and physical retail will remain an important route to consumers.

The Retail Sector Council remains a key part of working to address the challenges the sector faces and on 15 July. The Government published the Build Back Better

High Streets Strategy, which sets out our long-term plan to support the evolution of high streets into thriving places to work, visit and live. The report can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-high-streets>.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Contracts

Angela Rayner: [\[34508\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July 2021 to Question 31419 on Cabinet Office: Contracts, what estimate he has made of the number of staff of his Department who will be owners of declaration logs; how many such staff have started to receive data protection training for that role to date; and how many staff have completed such training.

Julia Lopez:

Work is progressing on creating a log of declarations which will cover existing and future contracts. This includes identifying the number of individuals who will be responsible for the log and finalising the data protection training which they will require.

■ Devolution

Stuart Anderson: [\[31539\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the timeframe is for publishing the White Paper on Devolution in England.

Chloe Smith:

We will publish a landmark Levelling Up White Paper later this year, articulating how bold new policy interventions will improve opportunity and boost livelihoods across the country as we recover from the pandemic.

■ Members and Peers: Correspondence

Fleur Anderson: [\[34618\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to improve response times to correspondence from (a) hon. Members and (b) Peers.

Julia Lopez:

The Government places great importance on the effective and timely handling of correspondence. While each department and agency is responsible for its own performance, the Cabinet Office published [data](#) on response timeliness for each department on 15 July 2021, and will publish data more frequently in the future. While the overall performance against departmental targets decreased from 85% in 2019 to 70% in 2020, the volume of correspondence sent from MPs and Peers to the Government increased by 81% between 2019 and 2020.

To further improve the timeliness of correspondence, the Cabinet Office will shortly publish a revised Guide to Handling Correspondence to remind departments and agencies of their obligations and the expected standard of service.

■ **Pay: West Yorkshire**

Jon Trickett: [\[34453\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment his Department has made of the average wage per hour for workers in West Yorkshire.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSAs response to PQ34453 [UKSA's final response to PQ34453.pdf]

■ **Vaccination: Ethnic Groups**

Layla Moran: [\[34570\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179464, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the his Department's work to (a) address specific concerns from ethnic minority groups regarding coronavirus vaccines and (b) amplify NHS voices publicising the use of religious sites as vaccination centres to date.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ 33512](#) on 21 April 2020, and to [PQ 40655](#) on 11 May 2020.

Since the vaccination programme began, the Cabinet Office has worked closely with communications teams in local authorities to promote vaccine uptake, particularly to communities with lower vaccine take-up. Support has included the commissioning of translated materials, the deployment of upweighted advertising in specific areas, and the use of multi-lingual local community street teams to share information about the available vaccines.

Through the Community Champions scheme councils and voluntary organisations will deliver a wide range of measures to protect those most at risk - building trust, communicating accurate health information and ultimately helping to save lives. MHCLG has allocated over £23 million of funding to 60 councils and voluntary groups across England to expand work to support those most at risk from COVID-19 and boost vaccine uptake.

COP26**■ COP26: Information**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[29017\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what mechanisms are in place to audit information provided to his Department by (a) regulatory bodies and (b) non-departmental public bodies.

Alok Sharma:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 23158](#) on 6 July 2021.

■ Developing Countries: Natural Disasters

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[31416\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether developing countries affected by loss and damage incurred by extreme weather and climate-linked disasters will receive additional finance, separate from the £100 billion climate finance goal commitment.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Presidency is clear about the importance of developed countries meeting and surpassing the commitment to jointly mobilise \$100bn of climate finance a year through to 2025, from a range of public and private sources.

At COP25, countries highlighted that existing sources of funds from a wide variety of sources, including disaster reduction and response funds respond to loss and damage. It also urged donors and these other funds to scale up support relevant to averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage in the most vulnerable countries. At COP26 and in the run up we will push for progress on these actions and to renew calls for coherent action using climate, development and disaster preparedness and response finance.

Through the COP26 Presidency we are also calling for greater quantity, quality and access to finance and for responses to be joined up. The Taskforce on Access to Finance aims to align support behind the national climate action plans of developing countries to improve access to climate finance. The outcomes will be to agree a new approach to access, marshalling coherent, programmatic support for countries' own, nationally-determined climate priorities, alongside specific, implementable recommendations to address the system of climate finance as a whole which includes enabling them to better prepare, build resilience and respond to disasters – averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage.

■ Livestock Industry: Climate Change

Christian Wakeford: [\[29168\]](#)

To ask the President for COP26, whether the Government plans to raise the climate and environmental impact of global intensive animal agriculture in its climate mitigation discussions with world leaders at the COP26 summit.

Christian Wakeford: [\[29169\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to help ensure that the COP26 summit results in commitments to reduce emissions from (a) agriculture and (b) the wider land use sector, without those emissions being displaced to other countries.

Alok Sharma:

As COP26 Presidency, we are calling for global ambition and action to reduce emissions across all sectors, in order to meet net zero by 2050 – including in agriculture, forestry and other land use, which is collectively responsible for 23% of global emissions.

We have already seized the opportunities of our G7 and COP26 Presidencies to drive international action and commitments on sustainable agriculture. The G7 Leaders' Summit was a critical point as we work towards COP26. The G7 leaders committed to achieve net zero no later than 2050, with deep emissions reduction targets in the 2020s – consistent with keeping 1.5 degrees within reach. The G7 Leaders also acknowledged the harmful effects of some subsidies on the environment and the need to reform policies with recognised impacts on nature – and committed to work to accelerate an inclusive global transition to sustainable and climate resilient agriculture.

Together with the World Bank, we are co-hosting an international Policy Dialogue on the 'Transition to Sustainable Agriculture through redirecting public policies and support and scaling innovation'. Through the Dialogue, we are developing a Policy Action Agenda on the transition to sustainable agriculture.

Local Government: Greenhouse Gas Emissions**Helen Hayes:** [\[29858\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what recent meetings he has held with representatives of (a) councils and (b) local government organisations on the role of local government in meeting the national net zero target; and how he plans to articulate that matter at COP26.

Alok Sharma:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 7885](#) on 7 June 2021.

Police: UN Climate Conference 2021**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[28337\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, from which departmental or public body's budget the accommodation and incidental costs will be taken of police officers and security service staff assigned to COP26 in Glasgow.

Kenny MacAskill: [\[28338\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether his Department will make a financial contribution to the costs incurred by the Scottish Government or City of Glasgow Council relating to the attendance of its police officers and security service staff at COP26 in Glasgow.

Alok Sharma:

Accommodation and incidental costs for police officers and security staff directly involved in the delivery of COP26 will be drawn from the Cabinet Office COP26 budget.

The UK Government is working closely with the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council across all planning for COP26. Any additional policing or security costs that are directly attributable to COP26 will be met by the UK Government.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: British Overseas Territories**Alicia Kearns:**[\[30426\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what plans he has to ensure a ministerial-level representative from the Overseas Territories is included in the UK's delegation to COP26.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Government is working closely with all Overseas Territories, and UK officials regularly meet with representatives from the Overseas Territories to ensure that their perspectives are accurately represented. We are currently developing the policy for those who will be included under the COP26 UK delegation based on precedent and this will be communicated in due course.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Coronavirus**Wera Hobhouse:**[\[31510\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to the announcement of 29 June 2021 that the UK will provide vaccinations to COP26 delegates, how the Government plans to vaccinate COP26 delegates ahead of the conference in Glasgow.

Alok Sharma:

As announced at the G7 Summit, the UK is working alongside the UNFCCC and other partners, to provide COVID-19 vaccines to Registered COP26 Attendees who would be unable to get them otherwise, including delegates from lower income countries.

We are now asking all those individuals looking to take up this vaccine offer to identify themselves through the UNFCCC COP registration process as soon as possible and no later than 23 July. Further logistic detail will be provided to the individuals involved via UNFCCC.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Local Government**Caroline Lucas:**[\[29769\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to the Local Government Association motion on Local Government contributions towards national climate action in the year of COP26, published on 7 July 2021, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequate representation of local government at COP26 in order to highlight the progress being made on climate change at a local level.

Alok Sharma:

In the run up to COP26, we are continuing to engage with local authorities and leaders across the UK through the UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council. We also work closely with a number of non-state actor organisations such as the C40 Cities, ICLEI and UK100 to help further engage with local authorities.

BEIS has contributed towards a locally led campaign delivered through the local energy hubs, to highlight work on net zero by Local Authorities, communities and businesses across the UK. This will include running regional Electric Vehicle roadshow events in the run up to COP and hosting events in each region during the COP itself.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Trade Unions

Stephen Kinnock: [\[33239\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether any British trade unions will be participating in COP26.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[33240\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, whether any non-British trade unions will be participating in COP26.

Alok Sharma:

The UK is committed to delivering an ambitious and inclusive COP26. We know that approaching our Presidency in a fair, inclusive and balanced way will lead to the most sustainable outcomes.

We are working with a diverse group of Friends of COP, leading figures from around the world who are sharing their expertise in support of a successful summit. This includes Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. We are also engaging regularly with the UNFCCC constituency focal points, which include the Trade Union non-governmental organisations.

The Expression of Interest process for stakeholders such as Trade Unions to apply to put forward proposals for involvement in the UK-run areas of COP26 closed on Friday 5 March 2021. We have begun notifying organisations of the outcomes.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[34012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the effect of the withdrawal of UK and NATO military personnel from Afghanistan on the political stability of that nation.

James Heappey:

The UK continues to play a leading role as we transition to a new phase of international support for Afghanistan. As the Prime Minister said in his statement to the House on 8 July 2021, the international military presence in Afghanistan was never intended to be permanent.

We will continue to support the Government of Afghanistan, including its efforts to counter terrorism, through our diplomatic and development work and support to the security sector. We will continue to stand with the people of Afghanistan to support a stable, peaceful future for the country. We are also supporting the international efforts to energise the Afghan peace process. For there to be any chance of a lasting peace, the Taliban must engage meaningfully in a dialogue with the Afghan government.

■ **Armed Forces: Coronavirus**

Layla Moran:[\[34038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) Royal Navy, (b) British Army, (c) Royal Air Force, (d) Maritime Reserve, (e) Army Reserve, (f) Royal Auxiliary Airforce, (g) Royal Fleet Reserve, (h) Army Reserve (Regular) and (i) Air Force Reserve personnel who have contracted covid-19 in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) to date.

James Heappey:

The below table details the number of UK Armed Forces personnel that have had a positive COVID-19 infection test result entered into their medical record, by Service and year, up to 25 June 2021.

	2020	2021	ALL
ALL	4,310	5,192	9,502
a. Royal Navy	1,416	1,080	2,496
b. British Army	2,006	3,281	5,287
c. Royal Air Force	730	705	1,435
d. Maritime Reserve	23	14	37
e. Army Reserve	77	74	151
f. Royal Auxiliary Reserve	19	12	31
g. Royal Fleet Reserve	10	5	15
h. Army Reserve (Regular)	8	11	19
i. Air Force Reserve	21	10	31

■ Armed Forces: Mental Health Services**Jim Shannon:**[\[35647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what additional mental health support his Department plans to provide for armed forces personnel returning from Afghanistan.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is committed to the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our Armed Forces personnel. All Armed Forces personnel are supported by dedicated medical services, including mental health support; this includes those who served in Afghanistan. The MOD works with the single Services, Defence Medical Services, the NHS, and other stakeholders to promote mental fitness, prevent ill-health, and reduce stigma. The MOD provides a 24-hour mental health helpline delivered by Combat Stress. Togetherall allows Armed Forces personnel access to its 24-hour staffed digital forum and the Samaritans provide crisis support to anyone struggling to cope with mental ill-health. The Veterans Gateway is available for those who want a choice over non-MOD assistance. The NHS is also available via their 111 helpline.

■ Army Medical Services: Towthorpe**Rachael Maskell:**[\[32446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with the NHS on the future use of the Army Medical Services training centre at Towthorpe.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has not held any discussions with the NHS on the future use of the Army Medical Services training centre at Towthorpe.

■ Ascent**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[32317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which companies comprise the Ascent consortium which operates the Military Flying Training System.

Jeremy Quin:

Ascent Flight Training is a joint venture between Babcock International and Lockheed Martin.

■ AWE Aldermaston**John Healey:**[\[35501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what were the total constructive losses to his Department for the termination of Project Hydrus in 2010.

Jeremy Quin:

Following the decision not to proceed with construction activities on Project Hydrus, the final write off cost for the termination of the project was £117.7 million and components valued at £71 million were incorporated into the joint UK/French hydrodynamic capability established under the TEUTATES Treaty.

Defence Equipment and Support: Managers

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the salary band is of the Head of Defence Equipment and Support.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the anticipated length of service is of the incumbent Head of Defence Equipment and Support.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the salary band is of the Head of Defence Digital.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the anticipated length of service is of the incumbent Head of Defence Digital.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the salary band is of the Head of the Submarine Delivery Agency.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the anticipated length of service is of the incumbent Head of the Submarine Delivery Agency.

Jeremy Quin:

The salary band for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Defence Equipment and Support is £280,000 - £284,999. The anticipated length of service is four years to 20 May 2022.

The salary band for the Head of Defence Digital (Chief Information Officer) is £120,000 - £208,100. The incumbent is employed on a permanent contract.

The salary band for the CEO of the Submarine Delivery Agency is £280,000-£285,000. The incumbent is employed on a five-year contract that commenced in September 2017.

Defence Equipment: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his planned timetable is for publishing his Department's next Equipment Plan.

Mr Mark Francois:

[33151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which the 10 largest programmes are by value in his Department's latest Equipment Plan; and what estimate he has made of the (a) acquisition cost and (b) through-life cost of each of those programmes.

Jeremy Quin:

We plan to publish the Ministry of Defence's 2021-2031 Equipment Plan in Autumn 2021.

The 10 largest programmes by whole life costs in the department's Equipment Plan, as of 31 March, are:

Programme Name

Dreadnought

Complex Weapons Portfolio

Type 26 Global Combat Ship Programme

Nuclear Warhead Capability Sustainment Programme

Land Environment Tactical Communication and Information Systems

Astute Boats 1-7

Future Maritime Support Programme

Lightning Programme

Future Beyond Line Of Sight

Armoured Cavalry

The department reports on these programmes as part of the Government's Major Projects Portfolio which includes whole life cost data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/major-projects-data#2021-data>.

Cost estimates are developed in accordance with HM Treasury guidance (including The Green Book and HM Treasury Business Case Guidance) and the MOD's guidance on investment approvals (Joint Service Publication 655). Costs are regularly scrutinised and monitored through these processes.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority will be publishing their annual report shortly that will include those whole life costs that can be disclosed while respecting ongoing competitive tendering or other commercial sensitivities.

■ Defence Innovation Fund

John Healey:

[\[34436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, (a) how many projects received funding from the Defence Innovation Fund in 2020/21 and (b) what was the total amount spent on those projects by his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

59 Projects received funding from the Defence Innovation Fund in 2020-21. The total amount spent on these projects was around £70 million.

■ Defence: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[34464\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether it is his policy for the prime contractor to calculate the ROM costs for a defence programme.

Jeremy Quin:

When the Ministry of Defence is estimating the potential cost of a programme, officials may engage with industry, before the selection of a prime contractor, to establish an initial view of cost in the form of a ROM (Rough Order of Magnitude) cost. However, this will only be a guide and at all times it remains the Department's

assessment, not that of industry. As programmes mature, requirements, opportunities and risks become progressively better understood and refined, as do likely costs.

■ **European Fighter Aircraft**

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy published in March 2021, what plans he has for the Tranche 1 of Typhoon aircraft when they leave service.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is currently reviewing potential disposal options for the RAF's Tranche 1 Typhoon aircraft which on current planning will go out of service in March 2025.

■ **Israel: Arms Trade**

Stephen Timms: [\[32279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of reports that Israeli (a) F-16 fighter jets and (b) Apache helicopters carrying out airstrikes on Gaza contain British-supplied components; and if he will make a statement.

James Heappey:

HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We consider all export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. HM Government publishes quarterly and annual statistics on all our export licensing decisions, including details of export licences granted, refused and revoked. These can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/export-control-organisation>

■ **Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Engines**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[34463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) working and (b) complete F-35 engines does the Department own.

Jeremy Quin:

21 Pratt & Whitney F135 engines are fitted in the UK's F-35 Lightning fleet, all of which are serviceable and in working order, with their legal title residing with the UK. The UK does not hold spare F135 engines. Instead, the engines and their modules are swapped out when they need changing or repairing as part of the F-35 Global Spares Pool.

■ Merchant Shipping: Pensions

Matt Rodda: [\[33321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 18563 on Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund, what estimate he has made of the potential future cost to the public purse in the (a) short term and (b) long term in relation to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's role as a sponsoring employer of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund scheme.

Matt Rodda: [\[33322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 18564 on Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund, what estimate he has made of the projected average future entitlement for members of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund scheme through the Royal Fleet Auxiliary.

Leo Docherty:

Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) seafarers are Ministry of Defence (MOD) employees and members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme. The RFA does not sponsor the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund and the MOD is not responsible for any costs or entitlements associated with it.

In addition, my answer to Questions 18563 and 18564 on 28 June 2021 contained an error. It stated:

The RFA does not sponsor the Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund and the MOD is not responsible for any costs or entitlements associated with it.

It should have said:

The RFA does not sponsor the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund and the MOD is not responsible for any costs or entitlements associated with it.

■ Military Aircraft: Training

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how long it takes on average to train a Royal Air Force fast jet pilot from initial recruitment to full operational status under the Military Flying Training System.

James Heappey:

It is not within the remit of UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) to deliver pilots to 'full operational status'. UKMFTS only delivers the Phase 2 element of flying training which prepares pilots in readiness for their entry to Phase 3 training: a platform specific Operational Conversion Unit (OCU). Pilots go on to achieve operational status, known as Combat Ready, approximately six months after completing their OCU training.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when it plans to issue the competitive tender for Project Telum for light aircraft flight training.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[32319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to reduce the carbon footprint of the light aircraft training fleet.

James Heappey:

It is expected that the RAF will have its first zero emission aircraft operational by the end of this decade, which, through Project TELUM, will provide its youth air experience aircraft for air cadets, university cadets and elementary flying training.

We hope to launch the competition for Project TELUM in 2023, but this remains to be confirmed, as the requirement will be informed by studies being conducted by the RAF's Rapid Capabilities Office and the Defence and Security Accelerator, which are still ongoing.

■ **Military Intervention: Casualties**

John Healey: [\[34430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, (a) what methodology the Ministry of Defence uses to calculate casualty damage estimates for UK lethal strikes and (b) whether that methodology is the same as that used to assess strikes in which the UK has provided assistance.

James Heappey:

The UK Ministry of Defence, along with many other strategic partners and nations, has adopted a Collateral Damage Estimation (CDE) policy and standard methodology to demonstrate due diligence and compliance with the Law of Armed Conflict. In line with the UK Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict, in the conduct of military operations, constant care shall be taken to spare the civilian population, civilians and civilian objects. The UK expects all nations to operate in accordance with applicable international law and UK assistance would not be provided to those who do not.

■ **Ministry of Defence: Procurement**

John Healey: [\[34435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what percentage of Ministry of Defence procurement spending went to UK (a) small and (b) medium-sized enterprises in financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Jeremy Quin:

In financial year 2019/20, the Department spent £4.515 billion directly and indirectly with Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, accounting for 21.3% of our procurement spend. The figures for financial year 2020/21 are due to be published by the Government early next year.

■ Ministry of Defence: Research**John Healey:**[\[34437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what was the total net expenditure on (a) research and (b) development by his Department in financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Jeremy Quin:

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces an annual 'Research and development expenditure by the UK government' publication which provides detail of research and development expenditure for UK government Departments including the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The ONS publication reviews research and development expenditure in detail and presents the net expenditure broken down into 'Research' and 'Development' spend respectively. The latest release of this publication covers financial year 2019/20 expenditure and can be found here: [Research and development expenditure by the UK government - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

As outlined in the ONS publication, MOD's net expenditure in 2019/20 on Research was £647 million and on Development was £370 million.

The detail of the Ministry of Defence's net research and development expenditure for 2020/21 will be published by the ONS in April 2022. MOD's audited Annual Report and Accounts, which will include total R&D spend in financial year 2020/21, will be published in September.

■ Ministry of Defence: York**Rachael Maskell:**[\[32442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many meetings (a) he has had and (b) officials in his Department have had with City of York Council on the disposal of Ministry of Defence sites in York as part of his Department's A Better Defence Estate programme.

Rachael Maskell:[\[32444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the disposal and redevelopment of Imphal Barracks will contribute to new build figures for York given that the disposal of that site falls outside of the Local Plan time period.

Jeremy Quin:

Officials in the Department have met with City of York Council officers on seven occasions since April 2016 in relation to the inclusion of Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Towthorpe Lines and Imphal Barracks within the local plan. The Department is unaware of any such meetings between the Defence Secretary and the City of York Council.

Imphal Barracks will be disposed of in 2031 which we understand is within the local plan period of 2017-2032/33. The Council's draft policy supports the site delivering 769 dwellings, recognising development is not anticipated to commence until the end of the plan period.

■ Navy: Coronavirus**John Healey:** [\[33116\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether crew from partner navies involved in the Carrier Strike Group 21 have been allowed crew off-ship during port visits during the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heappey:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Shore leave for the crews of the Carrier Strike Group 21 integrated escorts, the USS The Sullivans, and HNLMS Evertsen, is a matter of national policy and a decision for the Commanding Officer of their Ships. The crew of HNLMS Evertsen did disembark from their Ship on a port visit to Constanza, likewise, the crew of USS The Sullivans in Cyprus. The USMC embarked in HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH abide by the Ship's regulations.

■ Queen Elizabeth Barracks: Sites of Special Scientific Interest**Rachael Maskell:** [\[32445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to protect the Site of Special Scientific Interest at Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Strensall.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department has robust policies, processes and plans in place to protect and maintain Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the UK Defence Estate. This fully applies to the Strensall Common SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

I can confirm the adjacent Strensall Training Area is not being disposed of and will be retained by the Department. The small overlap of SSSI/SAC within Queen Elizabeth Barracks will be excluded from the allocation for development.

■ RFA Fort Victoria: Fires**Mr Mark Francois:** [\[32321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any armed forces personnel were treated for smoke inhalation following the fire aboard FRA Victoria on May 10 2021.

James Heappey:

As a precautionary measure, a number of Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel were taken to Dorchester Hospital and treated for smoke inhalation following the fire onboard RFA FORT VICTORIA on 10 May 2021. They were released later that day and no further medical treatment has been required.

■ Submarines**Mr Mark Francois:** [\[33156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the initial operating capability for the SSNR programme to replace the Astute class submarines.

Jeremy Quin:

The Submersible Ship Nuclear (Replacement) project is currently in the Programme Definition and Design Phase, during which the Ministry of Defence will identify potential capability solution choices.

USA: Military Bases**John Healey:**[\[34431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Ministry of Defence requires that actions taken by the United States from bases in the UK be governed by UK interpretations of international law.

James Heappey:

Any US operation from a base in the UK is considered on a case by case basis, and this includes the legal basis for any proposed activity. Though it would be inappropriate to comment on the specifics of operations, use of a base in the UK is permitted based on any proposed activity being in accordance with UK law and the UK's interpretation of relevant international law.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**BBC: Recruitment****Christian Matheson:**[\[33250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions his Department has had with representatives of the BBC about internal staff appointments at the BBC.

Christian Matheson:[\[33251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions (a) he, (b) his officials and (c) advisors have had with representatives of the BBC about internal staff appointments at the BBC.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The BBC is operationally and editorially independent from the government, and the government has no role in internal or executive recruitment at the BBC.

Meetings with external organisations and individuals undertaken in a ministerial capacity are published on GOV.UK on a quarterly basis.

Charities: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[32440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional support he will make available for charities supporting people who are continuing to self-isolate as a result of the rise in covid-19 infection rates.

Matt Warman:

Government recognises the huge contribution of charities and the voluntary sector in the national effort against coronavirus. It has provided a multi-billion-pound package of support for Britain's charities to continue their vital services, including for those self-isolating.

Charities continue to benefit from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and many will have benefited from government grants where they have been required to close non-essential retail. This support is in addition to the £750 million targeted support package which has helped over 13,000 organisations continue to maintain vital services for those most affected by the pandemic.

At this time, government does not have plans to offer additional targeted funding for these sectors, but does continue to monitor sector health closely. The government is committed to working with charity sector representatives to support a strong and resilient sector.

■ Football: Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy**Hilary Benn:**[\[33121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether his Department has undertaken research into the incidence of chronic traumatic encephalopathy among footballers.

Nigel Huddleston:

The safety, wellbeing and welfare of everyone taking part in sport is absolutely paramount. National Governing Bodies are responsible for the regulation of their sports and for ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect participants from harm, including serious injuries. With that in mind, we expect sports to do all they can to protect their players as a fundamental part of their duty of care.

The Government remains committed to working with sports to build on the positive work on concussion that is already taking place, including the use of research. To that end, the Secretary of State and I hosted two roundtables on concussion in sport earlier this year to understand the issues from the perspectives of players and to push the sports on what more they can be doing, including research.

■ Football: Coronavirus**Alex Sobel:**[\[33325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many people were refused entry to the European Championship Final at Wembley on 11 July 2021 for breaking covid-19 quarantine rules.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government was clear that anyone suspected of entering the UK with the intention of breaching isolation in order to attend a EURO 2020 match would be denied entry, and that their tickets may be cancelled (if not transferred to someone else). This policy combined with communications to supporters of teams playing in

the UK had a significant deterrent effect on those who might otherwise have travelled to the UK for the tournament.

All EURO 2020 matches at Wembley were subject to strict entry requirements. Those seeking to enter were required to provide a negative Lateral Flow test result or (for those from England, Scotland and Wales) proof of full vaccination. Anyone failing to provide these would have been denied entry. The English Football Association was responsible for enforcing these requirements and no data is held on whether any of those denied entry were also deemed to have been breaking border restrictions.

Of the Italian contingent present at the Final, the vast majority were based in the UK (as - other than in the original ballot prior to the pandemic - tickets were not sold to people outside of the Common Travel Area). A small contingent of accredited guests were exempt from the isolation requirement in order to attend the match, but otherwise subject to strict public health restrictions - this included a group of c380 who flew in and out on the day, with no contact with the general public.

■ **Football: Racial Discrimination**

Rachael Maskell: [\[33273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to prevent racism at local football clubs.

Rachael Maskell: [\[33274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much public funding is available to support antiracism education at local football clubs.

Rachael Maskell: [\[33275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps is he taking to help promote diversity in junior local football clubs.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is clear that racism has no place in football, sport, or society at large. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in sport and physical activity, including football. We are in regular dialogue with the football authorities across a range of matters, including tackling racism and increasing diversity at all levels from grassroots to elite football.

Following a DCMS-led summit attended by footballing bodies and relevant sector partners, the football authorities introduced multiple measures to tackle discrimination in the game. This included increasing the minimum sanctions for discriminatory behaviour and improving reporting systems at all levels of the game.

We also welcomed the launch of The FA's 'Football Leadership Diversity Code' last year, which is a step in the right direction to ensure English football better represents our modern and diverse society, on and off the pitch. The FA has committed to following this with a version adapted for the National League System and grassroots clubs this year.

Opportunities for participation are crucial too. The Government invests £18m a year into football facilities, through the Football Foundation, to improve access to quality facilities across the country with an additional £75m announced this year as well. Inclusivity forms a part of the assessment criteria for any application for funding from the Foundation, with it being a core value of the organisation.

The Government will continue to liaise closely with the football authorities on their efforts to improve diversity in the sport.

■ Internet: Safety

Chi Onwurah: [\[34489\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to protect (a) children and (b) vulnerable users online before the Online Safety Bill is enacted.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ahead of Online Safety legislation, the government is taking robust action to ensure that children and vulnerable users are safe online.

Our new regulatory regime for UK-established video sharing platforms requires them to take appropriate measures to protect under-18s from harmful material. Ofcom will be able to take enforcement action against platforms that do not comply.

The Age Appropriate Design Code, which will come into force in September 2021, will provide stronger protections for children's personal data and guidance to companies on the privacy standards they must adopt on services that children are likely to access and which process their personal data.

On 14th July we published the government's Media Literacy Strategy, which will educate and empower users with the skills and knowledge they need to keep themselves safe online, with an amplified focus on vulnerable and disabled users.

In June 2021, we published Safety by Design guidance and a One Stop Shop on child online safety. This guidance will ensure that companies are equipped with the knowledge that they need to embed safety into platform design to protect users.

■ Ofcom: Public Appointments

Christian Matheson: [\[33248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will list the members of the interview panel for the first selection process for the Chair of Ofcom.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The first process to appoint the permanent Chair of Ofcom was run in line with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code for Public Appointments, and regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. In line with the requirements of the Governance Code, the members of the interview panel were published in March 2021 on the Cabinet Office's Public Appointments Website. The panel consisted of

Susannah Storey (Director General, DCMS), Paul Potts (Senior Independent Panel Member), Melanie Richards and Lord Livingston of Parkhead.

Christian Matheson: [\[33249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many applicants in the first process for the appointment of Chair of Ofcom had their applications carried forward automatically to the second process.

Mr John Whittingdale:

A second process to appoint a permanent Chair of Ofcom has not yet been launched but announcements will be made in due course. The process will be a fair and open competition, and run in line with the Governance Code for Public appointments and regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

■ Sports: Gambling

Ronnie Cowan: [\[34520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what data and research he has on the player base of people playing (a) loot boxes, (b) social casinos, (c) twitch gaming and (d) e-sports betting.

Carolyn Harris: [\[34544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with (a) the Gambling Commission, and (b) gaming operators on the development of Esports Betting.

Carolyn Harris: [\[34545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made on the potential effect of Esports Betting on gambling-related harm.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We continue to work with the video games industry, other government departments, and relevant regulatory bodies to ensure games are enjoyed safely. We launched a call for evidence in September to understand players' experiences with loot boxes and to examine evidence of potential harms. This received over 30,000 responses and we have been working to evaluate fully the evidence gathered. The response will be published in the coming months and will set out preferred actions and potential solutions to any issues identified from the evidence.

The government regularly engages with the Gambling Commission and other bodies to discuss emerging trends, including esports betting. Esports betting is regulated with the same protections as any other sports, and operators must abide by the same regulation and license conditions.

Data from the Gambling Commission's quarterly surveys shows that in the year to December 2020 9% of adults reported they had ever bet on esports with money or items. Further details can be found at:

<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/publication/taking-a->

[more-in-depth-look-at-online-gambling#ref-4](#) The government does not collect statistics on the player base of people opening loot boxes, playing social casino games or accessing twitch gaming streams.

■ **Sports: Racial Discrimination**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to tackle racism in sports other than football.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is clear that racism has no place in sport, or society at large. The sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation' has diversity and inclusion at its heart.

Sport England, UK Sport and the other home nations' sports councils have recently published the results of a detailed, independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport. Each Council is working to develop their own specific action plans to deliver on the initial commitments relating to people, representation, investment, systems and insight. This will involve working closely with relevant groups or communities to tackle racism in sport.

One area which is important in increasing inclusion in sport is the diversity of the sporting workforce and governance structures. The recently reviewed Code for Sport Governance requires all sporting bodies in receipt of substantial public funding from UK Sport and Sport England to have a detailed and ambitious diversity and inclusion action plan, which we hope will foster positive and lasting change.

The Government will continue to work with our arm's length and national governing bodies, as well as sector partners such as Sporting Equals, to effectively tackle racism in sport at all levels. However it is ultimately for all individual sports' national governing bodies, to decide on the specific aims and appropriate initiatives in their organisations, and to evaluate progress with these.

■ **Telecommunications: Infrastructure**

John Nicolson:

[\[33958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department will publish its response to the consultation on the Electronic Communications Code 2017, published on 27 January 2021.

John Nicolson:

[\[33959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which Minister in his Department is responsible for the consultation of the Electronic Communications Code 2017, published on 27 January 2021.

John Nicolson:

[\[33960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Minister of State for Digital and Culture, the hon. Member for Gosport, has held meetings with stakeholders on the consultation on the Electronic Communications Code 2017, since its publication on 27 January 2021.

Matt Warman:

The responsibility for the Electronic Communications Code sits with myself as the Minister for Digital Infrastructure. The Minister for Digital and Culture, has not been involved in any of the discussions regarding this issue.

The consultation on changes to the Electronic Communications Code closed on 24 March 2021. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the possible outcomes of the consultation at this stage, as responses are being considered. However, the consultation response will be published in due course. We will engage with stakeholders after the consultation response has been published to provide further information, and will bring forward legislative proposals before this House as soon as parliamentary time allows.

EDUCATION

■ Physical Education

Emma Hardy:

[\[33314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many hours per week his Department recommends that (a) primary and (b) secondary schools dedicate to physical education.

Nick Gibb:

Physical education (PE) is an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum and should be taught to pupils of all ages. Currently, PE is the only foundation subject compulsory through all stages of the National Curriculum.

It is for schools to decide how much time should be dedicated to PE and the Department does not set specific expectations. The Department will be looking at examples of good PE and sport with the aim of illustrating how it can be most effectively provided during the school week.

■ Pre-school Education: Finance

Jon Cruddas:

[\[32293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial effect of losing fee paying families on early years education providers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

We have spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past 3 years on our early education entitlements and the government continues to support families with their childcare costs. On 25 November 2020, we announced a £44 million investment for the 2021-

22 financial year, for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers. The Early Years National Funding Formula allocates our funding fairly and transparently.

Last year, when access to childcare was restricted to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, the government block-bought early years places so that childcare providers received early entitlement funding even when children were not able to attend settings. On 1 June 2020, early years was one of the first sectors to re-open, and has been able to welcome all children to settings ever since. The government has also provided unprecedented support to businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak, through schemes such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. As a result, childcare providers have been able to furlough their staff whereby they have experienced a drop in their income from parents or government to help with staffing costs.

As with other sectors, the COVID-19 outbreak has been an uncertain time for childcare providers, with many reporting concerns about long term viability of their settings as a result. Our policy is to ensure that there are sufficient childcare places to meet demand from parents. Despite the level of uncertainty faced by providers over the COVID-19 outbreak, Ofsted data shows that as of 31 March 2021, the number of childcare places for providers on the Early Years Register has remained broadly stable since August 2015. This is in the context of declining birth rate (in 2019 there was a 12.2% decrease in live births since the most recent peak in 2012).

A recent survey by Ipsos MORI in March 2021 found that nearly nine in ten (88%) parents of 0 to 4 year olds whose child used formal childcare before COVID-19 reported that their child was using formal childcare at the time of the survey.

We liaise regularly with local authorities and they have not reported to us a significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place, this term or since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020. Where parents have been unable to temporarily secure a childcare place (for example, due to their usual setting being temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak), this has been able to be quickly resolved locally, and local authorities are not reporting significant sufficiency of supply issues. We continue to work with local authorities and the sector to ensure there is sufficient, safe and affordable childcare for those who need it most.

■ Pupils: Disadvantaged

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[34459\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his officials will discuss the National Tutoring Programme and other similar schemes in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with officials in the devolved Administrations to ensure best practice for supporting disadvantaged pupils is implemented across the UK.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has worked closely with the devolved administrations throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, mutually and beneficially exchanging information and policy

developments across the full range of issues and challenges facing education systems in the UK. For example, in addition to education recovery, there has also been a UK-wide discussion on the reopening of schools and colleges and arrangements for awarding qualifications in 2021.

One example where the Department is working with the devolved administration to enhance educational opportunities is on the Turing scheme, the UK-wide replacement for Erasmus+, which will support 35,000 students from schools, further education and higher education across the UK to do study and work placements abroad. It aims to improve social mobility, targeting students from disadvantaged backgrounds, making life-changing opportunities accessible to everyone across the country.

The Department will continue to engage with the devolved administrations on the response to the COVID-19 outbreak and on how to support education recovery. This engagement will include sharing information and evidence on education recovery initiatives, including the National Tutoring Programme.

■ Pupils: Safety

Damien Moore:

[32508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to (a) tackle safeguarding failings in schools and (b) promote student health and wellbeing.

Vicky Ford:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has powers to intervene in both maintained schools and academies on safeguarding grounds, which are summarised in ‘Schools Causing Concern: Guidance for Local Authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners’.

Where a maintained school is judged to be ‘inadequate’ by Ofsted because safeguarding is ineffective, the Secretary of State must make an order so that it can be converted into a sponsored academy. Where an academy is judged to be ‘inadequate’, the Secretary of State may terminate the academy’s funding agreement and transfer it to a new trust. Ofsted will always judge a school to be ‘inadequate’ where safeguarding is ineffective.

The ‘Schools Causing Concern: Guidance for Local Authorities and Regional Schools Commissioners’ guidance also makes it clear that, where there are specific concerns about safeguarding in a maintained school, the local authority is expected to use its powers to address them in the first instance. Where there are specific concerns about safeguarding in an academy, the department will work closely with the trust to ensure that they take the necessary action.

The department’s statutory guidance ‘Keeping children safe in education’ (KCSIE) applies to all schools, including independent schools, through the Independent School Standards, which require that independent schools should have regard to KCSIE. All independent schools are expected to comply with the Independent School

Standards at all times. The standards include requirements to protect the welfare, health, and safety of pupils.

Where schools do not meet the strict safeguarding standards that are in place, we will always take action. If it becomes clear that there are current failings in any school's safeguarding practice, we will commission Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate to conduct an inspection. If a school is found to not be meeting the required safeguarding standard, we will make sure that it either improves or closes.

Ofsted was commissioned to undertake a review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, with the report published on 10 June 2021. The department has accepted the findings of the review in full and has committed to go further. The statutory guidance for KCSIE for this September has already been updated, ensuring that schools have even clearer guidance on how to deal with reports of sexual abuse. The 'Report Abuse in Education' helpline has been extended until October to allow anyone to report a concern over sexual abuse in schools, make a referral or receive advice.

The department will also extend the pilot support and supervision programme for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in up to 500 further schools, and 10 further local authorities. Alongside creating an online DSL hub and considering how we give greater status to DSLs, my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport have asked the Children's Commissioner to immediately start looking at how we reduce children's access to pornography and other harmful content.

The new compulsory Relationships, Sex and Health Education curriculum will be implemented in full, from next term. Pupils need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal, and social lives in a positive way. As such, we have made Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools in England alongside making Relationships Education (in primary schools) and Relationships and Sex Education (in secondary schools) compulsory from September 2020. The knowledge that pupils gain will help support their own wellbeing and others' wellbeing and help them to become successful and happy adults.

The aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing is to give them the information that they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing, to recognise issues in themselves and in others and, when issues arise, to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources.

Physical health and mental wellbeing are interlinked, and it is important that pupils understand that good physical health contributes to good mental wellbeing. Through the School Sport and Activity Action Plan, the department aims to ensure that sport and physical activity are an integral part of both the school day and after-school activities and to provide children with greater opportunities to do 60 minutes of sport and physical activity every day.

The government recently confirmed the continuation of the £320 million Physical Education (PE) and sport premium for the 2021/22 academic year, and further

permitted schools to carry forward any unspent PE and sport premium funding remaining at the end of this academic year. Primary schools can use this funding to develop or add to their PE, sport and physical activity provision including engagement of all pupils in regular physical activity.

Mental health and wellbeing are a priority for the government. As the country came out of lockdown, we prioritised reopening schools above all else because it is so vital for children and young people's wellbeing, as well as their education.

In May, as part of Mental Health Awareness week, we announced more than £17 million to improve mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges, building on our commitment to make mental health and wellbeing a central part of the education recovery work.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[34530]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to maintain stringent covid-19 restrictions within schools beyond 19 July 2021.

Nick Gibb:

In line with Step 4 of the Government's roadmap, the majority of COVID-19 restrictions have now been relaxed across all parts of society in England.

The Department's priority is for all schools and nurseries to deliver face-to-face, high quality education to all children, pupils and students. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, and mental and physical health. 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 and nurseries, against the risks posed by COVID-19, in a context that has now fundamentally changed due to the success of the vaccination roll-out.

The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise the guidance for schools and nurseries from Step 4. Schools should continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone, maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated and follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The Department's aim is to balance the risks associated with COVID-19 whilst moving to a 'steady state' that minimises both the burden of implementing control measures on staff and parents, and the impact that those measures have on young people's educational experience.

■ Students: Finance**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[34011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish its plans for alternative student finance for students whose religion prohibits them from taking out a student loan payment.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has been considering Alternative Student Finance carefully, alongside its other priorities, as it concludes the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding and responds to the detailed recommendations of the independent panel chaired by Sir Philip Augar.

We will provide an update on this matter when we conclude the Post-18 Review.

Daisy Cooper: [\[34603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the Government will make sharia-compliant Takaful finance available for student loans.

Michelle Donelan:

The government has been considering Alternative Student Finance carefully, alongside its other priorities, as it concludes the Post-18 Review of Education and Funding and responds to the detailed recommendations of the independent panel chaired by Sir Philip Augar.

We will provide an update on this matter when we conclude the Post-18 Review.

■ Teachers: Hearing Impairment**Dr Matthew Offord:** [\[32360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the provision of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf in the London Borough of Barnet.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[32361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf in England.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[32362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has been made of the vacancy rate of Qualified Teachers of the Deaf in England.

Vicky Ford:

Information on the number of qualified teachers of the deaf is not collected centrally.

The department is firmly committed to ensuring that children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), including hearing impairments, receive the support they need to achieve in their early years, at school and college. High needs funding, which is specifically for supporting children with more complex SEND, will be increasing by £780 million in the financial year 2022-23. This comes on top of the

over £1.5 billion increase over the previous two years and will bring the overall total of funding for high needs to £8.9 billion. Within that total, the provisional allocation to the London Borough of Barnet is £65.3 million, an 8% per head increase on the £60.5 million of high needs funding that council is receiving this financial year. Decisions about how that funding is used, including for the employment of specialist teachers for deaf children, are made by local authorities.

■ **University of Bristol: Judaism**

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[33175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has received any representations on the views expressed by Professor David Miller at Bristol University on Jewish students and organisations.

Dr Andrew Murrison: [\[33176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether Bristol University has shared with him the results and conclusions of its investigation into Professor David Miller's conduct towards Jewish students launched in March 2021.

Michelle Donelan:

The views of Professor Miller are ill-founded and wholly reprehensible, and the government wholeheartedly rejects them. We consider that the University of Bristol could do more to make its condemnation of that conduct clear to current and future students.

I understand the university is currently investigating these comments. The university has not yet completed the investigation. The government is not involved in this process and all details will remain confidential to the university until it has reached its conclusion.

I met with representatives of the University of Bristol in May 2021. I was reassured that the university recognises its obligations to keep Jewish students safe and to support them if they feel in any way threatened. I understand they are committed to completing the confidential investigation as quickly as possible with the rigour required for a complex investigation of this kind.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks**

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[32542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to create and improve protected landscapes.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England, as the statutory advisor to the Government on landscapes, announced an ambitious programme to create and improve protected areas across England on 24 June 2021.

As part of this programme Natural England has started consideration of two new Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in the Yorkshire Wolds and Cheshire Sandstone Ridge. Consideration of extending the Surrey Hills and Chilterns AONBs is also underway.

Natural England will also undertake an England-wide assessment to identify conservation and enhancement needs across England, including any remaining places suitable for National Park or AONB designation and those places where alternative forms of action will be more appropriate and are wanted by local communities.

On 24 June, the Secretary of State laid a Written Ministerial Statement on the Government's response to the Landscapes Review, setting out our support for the independent Landscapes Review's recommendations to improve nature recovery and public access, and bring the family of protected landscapes closer together.

The new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme will provide additional investment to allow farmers and other land managers to work in partnership with National Park Authorities and AONB teams to improve public access, and deliver bigger and better outcomes for the environment, for people and for places. Our future Local Nature Recovery scheme, part of the future agriculture policy, will also support nature's recovery in our protected landscapes and beyond.

These actions will help deliver on the Government's commitment to protect 30% of land in the UK by 2030 for nature.

■ Export Health Certificates

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[34467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to (a) simplify the application process for Animal Health Certificates for pet owners wishing to bring pets into the EU and (b) incentivise vets to take the requisite courses to issue Animal Health Certificates.

Victoria Prentis:

The United Kingdom (UK) has now been formally 'listed' as a 'Part 2' third country for the purposes of the EU pet travel regulations, which means that new rules now apply to pet movements from Great Britain (GB) to the EU and Northern Ireland (NI). These rules are governed by the EU Pet Travel Scheme, including those relating to certification for travel to the EU and NI.

Defra has been clear that there are no animal health or biosecurity justifications for these additional rules to travel to the EU or NI. We will continue to press the EU Commission in relation to securing 'Part 1' listed status, recognising that achieving this would alleviate some of the new requirements for pet owners and assistance dog users travelling, including the requirement for an Animal Health Certificate (AHC).

Our advice for pet owners and users of assistance dogs travelling is that they should continue to contact their vet at least one month in advance to ensure their pet has the

correct vaccinations and paperwork to travel abroad. The costs of completing and issuing an AHC are commercial decisions, set by individual veterinary practices.

APHA has publicised the availability of the required training course and has made it easily available on-line. As of 13 July 2021, there are 7,387 Official Veterinarians in Great Britain authorised by APHA to issue Animal Health Certificates. COVID travel restrictions have previously decreased demand for AHCs to allow pets to travel with their owners from January this year; however, we are not aware of any concerns about there being insufficient numbers of authorised OV's to meet expected demand for AHCs in the future as travel restrictions continue to lift.

■ Flood Control

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of Environment Agency management of property level resilience measures to prevent flooding; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of transferring responsibility for property level resilience to local authorities.

Rebecca Pow:

In 2020, the industry-led Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Roundtable launched a PFR code of practice that sets out how PFR schemes should be scoped and delivered. This targets property level resilience measures. The Environment Agency is funding training for several partners, including local authorities, to strengthen consistency and confidence in delivering PFR schemes. A national procurement framework for PFR already exists and is used by the Environment Agency and local authorities. The Environment Agency is currently updating the framework to embed the Code of Practice.

Local Authorities have a significant role in developing and implementing PFR schemes. As risk management authorities, local authorities can submit applications to secure contributions from flood defence grant-in-aid or local levy for PFR schemes. Between 2015 and 2021, 80 property flood resilience schemes increased protection for 1,700 homes. 85% of these were not led by the Environment Agency (they were mostly led by local authorities). In the 2021 to 2027 programme there are over 150 property flood resilience schemes in the pipeline, to better protect over 4,000 homes. Approximately half will not be led by the Environment Agency.

In February this year, the Government launched a call for evidence on local factors in managing flood and coastal erosion risk and property flood resilience. We also published a consultation on improvements to the Flood Re scheme to help increase PFR uptake. These included questions to inform the future development of PFR policy. Both have now closed and we expect to publish shortly a summary of the responses we received.

Defra is funding regional pathfinders led by groups of local authorities in the South West (Torbay, Devon and Cornwall), Yorkshire, and the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, to

explore how best to drive uptake of PFR. The Yorkshire pathfinder is led by the City of York Council. The Government is also working to develop mechanisms that will improve the quality of work and training for PFR.

■ Floods: Insurance

Rachael Maskell: [\[32447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of extending the eligibility of the Flood Re scheme to include properties built after 2009.

Rebecca Pow:

Current planning rules state that development in floodplains should be avoided where possible. Where development in a flood risk area is necessary, it should be made safe and appropriately flood resilient without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Properties constructed since 2009 should therefore already be able to access insurance at affordable prices. Flood Re is designed to help existing properties at flood risk, built before 2009, who could not otherwise access affordable flood insurance.

Rachael Maskell: [\[32448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of flood insurance for businesses.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra carries out regular research on the availability and affordability of flood insurance for homeowners and businesses. The most recent study, carried out in 2018, showed that most businesses were able to obtain flood insurance, with only 2% of small businesses not able to find suitable insurance cover. The next round of research is due to be completed by autumn 2022.

For those businesses that may struggle to access insurance, the insurance industry offers a number of innovative insurance products to help those who are at risk of flooding. Businesses are also encouraged to shop around or consider using a broker to help them find a suitable product.

■ Livestock: Animal Welfare

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[32543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help tackle livestock worrying.

Victoria Prentis:

New measures to crack down on livestock worrying are to be introduced in England and Wales through the Kept Animals Bill, introduced to Parliament on 8 June.

We will enhance enforcement mechanisms available to the police and expand the scope of livestock species and locations covered by the law. Improved powers will enable the police to respond to livestock worrying incidents more effectively – making it easier for them to collect evidence and, in the most serious cases, seize and detain dogs to reduce the risk of further incidents.

The scope of livestock species covered by the legislation will be extended to include animals such as llamas, emus, enclosed deer and donkeys. New locations will include roads and paths, as long as the livestock have not strayed onto a road.

■ River Thames: Pollution

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[31308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to minimise the levels of pollution in the River Thames.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency is the primary regulatory authority to minimise pollution of the River Thames.

The Environment Agency regulates water companies, industry, business and farming activities through permitting of discharges which may directly or indirectly impact the river. Regulated water discharge activities include discharges from sewage treatment works and permits place restrictions on the quality and quantity of effluent discharged to the environment. The Environment Agency carries out compliance checks including data audits of permitted discharges. The Environment Agency continues to hold water companies to account, and has prosecuted Thames Water 10 times since 2017 with fines totalling £28.4 million.

The construction of the Lee Tunnel, completed in 2016, conveys storm sewage from the largest pumping station to the newly extended Beckton Sewage Treatment Works in West Ham. The construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel, which will be connected to the Lee Tunnel, will operate as the London Tideway Tunnels and will capture the majority of flows from CSOs through London between Acton and Beckton. The completion of the London Tideway Tunnels will remove the majority of storm sewage discharges, resulting in better water quality, which the EA will monitor.

Thames Water's five sewage treatment works along the tidal Thames were enlarged by between 40-60% between 2010 and 2020. New discharge permits with tighter limits were issued and came into force in 2013. This has resulted in improvements in year-round water quality, which has encouraged aquatic life and made the river more resilient to polluting discharges.

■ Southern Water

Stephen Morgan:

[\[34566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Progress made but too many water companies still falling short, published on 13 July 2021, when he plans to meet Southern Water to

discuss sewage and waste water to spill into the environment; and if he will make it his policy to publish the minutes of that meeting.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State will meet with Southern Water following summer recess.

I met with Southern Water's CEO and management team in April this year to discuss their environmental performance as part of regular engagement between Ministers, Defra officials and Southern Water. My officials will be meeting with Southern Water this week to discuss their 2020 Environmental Performance Assessment and overall performance.

We do not routinely publish minutes of ministerial meetings.

■ **Tree Planting**

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[32544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help increase tree planting.

Rebecca Pow:

We are committed to increasing tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament. We published our ambitious England Trees Action Plan on the 18 May, which sets out our plans to at least treble tree planting rates in England in support of this, using more than £500 million from the Nature for Climate Fund.

The Plan sets out a range of new incentives which will provide significant support for 2021/22 planting season and beyond. This includes the recently launched £15.9 million England Woodland Creation offer for landowners, land managers and public bodies to apply for support to create new woodland, using traditional methods of tree establishment as well as natural colonisation, agroforestry, and riparian planting. We've also extended our Urban Tree Challenge Fund, delivering trees in areas of low tree cover and social deprivation, and have launched a new £2.7 million Local Authority Treescape Fund, aimed at establishing more trees in non-woodland settings such as riverbanks or hedgerows. We have also committed £25 million for our Woodland Creation Partnerships, which includes support for the development of the newly created Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest.

For the last planting season (2020/21) we kick-started tree planting efforts through a number of initiatives including, £12.1 million investment in expanding England's ten Community Forests; £1.4 million of planting along rivers through the Environment Agency; and support from the £80 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund for a range of charity projects to protect and plant trees. These initiatives contributed to the planting of 13,410 hectares across the UK in 2020/21, of which 2180ha were planted in England.

■ Waste Management: Pollution

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[34462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the 2020 data on air pollutant emissions from waste plants will be included on the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register.

Rebecca Pow:

The 2020 data for the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) will be available in December 2021. PRTR data is collated by 30 November each year and will be published within one month of this. The UK's PRTR includes a range of industrial activities, including waste and wastewater management, which are listed in Annex I of the UK PRTR legislation.

■ Water: Somerset

David Warburton:

[\[34001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of potential measures to reduce phosphorous discharge into the surface water catchment area for the Somerset Levels and Moors Special Protection Area.

Rebecca Pow:

There are a range of potential measures that can be deployed to reduce phosphorous discharge in the Somerset Levels and Moors catchment. Natural England and the Environment Agency are working with all the relevant parties, including local planning authorities (LPAs) and Wessex Water as well as landowners and developers to evaluate and implement the various options.

To prevent additional phosphorous loading from new development, mitigation measures such as wetland and woodland creation will need to demonstrate that they will be effective in the long term. It is clear from other catchments facing nutrient loading that they have a key role to play in removing nutrients, enabling nutrient-neutral development. Several mitigation schemes for specific developments have been assessed and approved and the LPAs in Somerset are developing a strategy to support wider rollout of these mitigation schemes. There will be significant further investment of up to £57 million over the next three years by Wessex Water to reduce phosphorous discharge from water treatment works.

In the farming sector there are many joint projects underway and more is likely to be needed. The current approach is to encourage the uptake of voluntary measures to reduce the amount of phosphorous entering the system, including Catchment Sensitive Farming. These include a focus on river and habitat improvements, better farming infrastructure, and enforcement by the Environment Agency where necessary.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Caribbean: Overseas Aid**

Sarah Champion: [\[32404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 19597 on Caribbean: Overseas Aid, of the £456 million of Official Development Assistance in the priority ODA-eligible Caribbean countries, how much was spent on advancing global LGBT rights in (a) Antigua & Barbuda, (b) Belize, (c) Dominica, (d) Grenada, (e) Guyana, (f) Jamaica, (g) St Lucia and (h) St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to protecting and promoting the rights of LGBT+ people around the world, including in the Caribbean. We have several global programmes that have had specific Caribbean components, not least those supporting the work of The Commonwealth Equality Network. Due to the classifications set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the regional nature of some of this project work, we do not hold information on country by country spend on LGBT+ rights.

■ Channel Islands: World War II

Andrew Rosindell: [\[33159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of the 30th June 2021 to question number 20592 on Channel Islands: World War II, does his Department have plans to hold discussions with their German counterparts about the declassification of documents from the Nazi occupation of the Channel Islands.

Wendy Morton:

We do not currently plan to hold discussions with our German counterparts. We have not identified any records on this subject which continue to be held by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) which need to be declassified. All identified documents are held at The National Archives and are therefore accessible to the public, subject to any legal exemptions.

■ Climate Change: International Cooperation

Dr Kieran Mullan: [\[32552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to promote international co-operation on tackling climate change.

James Duddridge:

We are taking four key goals to governments across the world in order to secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach. For our mitigation goal, countries are being asked to come forward with ambitious 2030 emissions

reduction targets. For our adaptation goal, we are helping countries to adapt to protect communities and natural habitats. To increase climate finance, we are urging developed countries to deliver on their promise to raise at least \$100 billion in climate finance per year, and we have committed to doubling our International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion over the next 5 years. Collaboration is our fourth goal, for which reaching agreement in the negotiations is our formal responsibility as the Presidency of COP26. Doing so will help deliver on our other three goals and demonstrate that the world is moving to a resilient, net zero economy.

In April, the UK hosted the first Ministerial meeting of the Forest, Agricultural Commodity and Trade Dialogue, under which 24 countries endorsed a joint statement of principles to work together to secure sustainable agricultural commodity production and protection of forests. The UK is also working to accelerate a transition to more sustainable land use practices through the COP26 Sustainable Agriculture Campaign, supporting action to align agricultural policies and support with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement targets.

■ **Colombia: Environment Protection**

Caroline Lucas: [\[32349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterparts on reports that at least 44 environmental defenders, including 21 indigenous activists, were killed in Colombia from 20 July 2020 to 30 April 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. The UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, raised our concerns around killings of human rights defenders, including environmental activists and indigenous community leaders, on a virtual visit to Colombia in February.

Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we consistently raise our concerns regarding violence against human rights defenders and social leaders at the UN Security Council, as we did at meetings in April, and on 13 July. We will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia.

Caroline Lucas: [\[32350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports that at least 44 environmental defenders, including 21 indigenous activists, were killed in Colombia from 20 July 2020 to 30 April 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government remains concerned about the persistent level of violence towards human rights defenders and social leaders in Colombia. Through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £63 million in support of peace agreement implementation, security, and stability in

Colombia since 2015, we will continue to prioritise funding interventions to protect human rights defenders, including environmental activists, and social leaders.

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government, and in multilateral fora. The UK's Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, raised our concerns around the killings of human rights defenders, including environmental activists and indigenous community leaders, on a virtual visit to Colombia in February. Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[32351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that environmental defenders are protected under the terms of the UK-Colombia Partnership for Sustainable Growth.

Wendy Morton:

The UK and Colombia signed the "Partnership for Sustainable Growth" in June 2019. The UK-Colombia Partnership for Sustainable Growth commits both countries to working more closely together to advance low carbon investments, and improve resilience against the worst effects of climate change. The Partnership is underpinned by International Climate Finance programmes, and other UK Official Development Assistance representing approximately £278 million of committed funding. The promotion of sustainable economic opportunities will help tackle some of the root causes of ongoing violence.

Through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £63 million in support of peace agreement implementation, security, and stability in Colombia since 2015, we continue to prioritise funding interventions to protect human rights defenders and social leaders.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Layla Moran:

[\[34569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many doses of coronavirus vaccines the Government has donated to the COVAX scheme to date.

Wendy Morton:

Our G7 Presidency has championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. At the G7 Leaders Summit in June, the Prime Minister confirmed that the UK will share 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines within the next year, with 30 million of these being donated by the end of 2021. 80% of these will go to COVAX. We are on track to ensure that the first 5 million doses are shared by the end of September, and will make an announcement shortly.

■ **Crimea: Politics and Government**

Dr Kieran Mullan:

[\[32547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the political situation in the Crimea.

Wendy Morton:

Seven years on from Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, we continue to make clear to Moscow that Crimea is, and will remain part of Ukraine. Russia must withdraw forces and end illegitimate control.

Under UK leadership, G7 Foreign Ministers issued statements on 18 March, to mark the seventh anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, and on 12 April, calling for de-escalation following Russia's build-up of military forces in Crimea and near the Ukrainian border. The Foreign Secretary has raised these matters directly with his counterparts, including on 17 June with Russian FM Lavrov.

We remain deeply concerned about ongoing human rights abuses experienced by minorities in Crimea, including Crimean Tatars. We have contributed nearly £700,000 this financial year to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, which monitors and documents human rights abuses in Crimea. We will continue to call for international monitoring missions to have access to Crimea, currently denied by Russia.

We welcome and support Ukraine's proposal to establish an International Crimean Platform. We are exploring what role we can play.

■ **Developing Countries: Overseas Aid**

Sarah Champion:

[\[34502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to consult local communities in (a) lower and (b) middle income countries to ensure that the reduced ODA budget is spent in a way that is as responsive as possible to their needs.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) is committed to locally-led development. This year, we have continued to work together with local partners and suppliers to ensure the UK can continue to make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. For example, we have protected funding to a new 10-year, £60 million co-funded partnership with Comic Relief that will test innovative approaches to building the capacity and sustainability of civil society organisations in Ghana, Zambia and Malawi to help them pursue their own strategic objectives.

Following announcement of the temporary reduction of ODA in 2021, FCDO Ministers engaged with over 80 NGOs, partners and parliamentarians, including through a roundtable for civil society. For 2021/22 spend, the Foreign Secretary completed a cross-government review of how ODA should be allocated against the government's priorities and set out in the results in a WMS on 26 January.

■ Education: Females**Dr Kieran Mullan:**[\[32551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that girls receive 12 years of quality education throughout the world.

Wendy Morton:

Standing up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education is a priority for the UK Government. Between 2015 and 2020, the UK supported over 15 million children in gaining a decent education, of which 8 million were girls. 2021 is a year of UK leadership on the world stage. We have used our Presidency of the G7 to press for coordinated action on girls' education. In May, we secured G7 support for two, new ambitious global targets of getting 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 by 2026. We also agreed a declaration that prioritised girls' education in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and outlined the collective action that the G7 will take in helping achieve these global targets.

On 28-29 July, along with Kenya, the UK will host the Global Education Summit to raise vital funds for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). At the G7 Leaders' Summit, the Prime Minister secured a landmark commitment from the G7 to provide at least \$2.7 billion to the Global Partnership for Education. This includes £430 million from the UK, which is an uplift of 15% from our current position as top bilateral donor, and our largest ever pledge to the GPE.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[34549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much official development assistance will be spent in 2021-22 on supporting girls' education; and how much was spent in each of the last five years.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO will spend £400 million of bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) on girls' education in 2021. We are not in a position to draw or comment on comparisons to previous years at this stage. ODA is reported on a calendar year basis, and includes sectoral breakdowns, such as education. The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office's National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development,' includes this information. Provisional ODA for 2020 spend is available through this, with sectoral breakdowns due to be published in the autumn. The UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset, will be published in 2022.

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

Layla Moran:

[\[34571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has as to how the £400 million of ODA funding allocated to girls' education for 2021-2022 will be spent.

Wendy Morton:

We are not able to discuss the specifics for individual programmes whilst we are working through the implications of our programme spending for girls' education with partners. During the business planning process for Official Development Assistance (ODA), we took into account the delivery of our global targets on girls' education - to get 40 million more girls into school, and 20 million more reading in the next 5 years. The UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset, will be published in 2022.

Layla Moran:

[\[34572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the change in ODA budget allocation to girls education in 2021-22 compared to that change in (a) 2020-2021 and (b) 2019-2020.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO will spend £400 million of bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) on girls' education in 2020. We are not a position to draw or comment on comparisons to previous years at this stage. ODA is reported on a calendar year basis, and includes sectoral breakdowns, such as education. The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office's (FCDO) National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development,' includes this information. Provisional ODA spend for 2020 is available, with sectoral breakdowns due to be published in the autumn. The UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset, will be published in 2021.

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■ Falkland Islands: EU External Trade

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps is his Department taking to assist the Falkland Islands with discussions with the European Union on trade between those two parties.

Wendy Morton:

We remain unwavering in our commitment to safeguard the interests of Overseas Territories, and we are providing them support, including the Falkland Islands, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. During negotiations of the UK-EU Trade

and Cooperation Agreement, the UK made clear to the EU from the outset that we were negotiating on behalf of the Overseas Territories. However, the European Commission refused to negotiate a future relationship that included the Overseas Territories. We sought to change the Commission's position, but the Commission declined to engage. As a result, tariffs now apply on exports from the Falkland Islands. We continue to work with the Falkland Islands Government to agree appropriate actions to mitigate against the impact of tariffs on their exports to the EU, and to take advantage of the opportunities available to us as an independent trading nation.

■ Foreign Relations

Sally-Ann Hart:

[\[903016\]](#)

What steps he is taking to enhance UK soft power overseas.

Wendy Morton:

The Integrated Review highlighted the UK's status as a soft power superpower.

The FCDO is continuing to fund projects and programmes that support UK soft power, including through a 27% increase this year in funding for the British Council

Since 2016, we have provided over £370m via the BBC World2020 programme, which has seen the creation of 12 new language services, and we continue to support our Chevening, Marshall and Commonwealth scholarships.

Our international leadership and determination to work as a force for good in the world is an important part of our soft power, as we are seeing through our hosting of the G7 and COP26, and our support for a globally accessible Covid-19 vaccine.

■ Gaza: Israel

Stephen Timms:

[\[32277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy of reports that British-made military components and hardware were used by Israeli forces carrying out airstrikes on Gaza.

James Cleverly:

HM Government takes its export control responsibilities very seriously and operates one of the most robust arms export control regimes in the world. We consider all export applications thoroughly against a strict risk assessment framework and keep all licences under careful and continual review as standard. HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. HM Government publishes quarterly and annual statistics on all our export licensing decisions, including details of export licences granted, refused and revoked. These can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/export-control-organisation>.

■ Gibraltar: EU External Trade

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps is his Department taking to support Gibraltar in discussions with the European Union on future trade between those two parties.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government continues to work side by side with the Government of Gibraltar to prepare for negotiations between the EU and UK in respect of Gibraltar based on the Framework agreed with Spain on 31 December 2020. At the UK-Gibraltar Joint Ministerial Council on 29 March 2021 the UK Government and Government of Gibraltar set out our joint approach to negotiations. We remain in constant contact with them as we make preparations, waiting for the EU to agree its mandate. The UK will stand fully behind Gibraltar, its people and its economy in any scenario.

■ Global Partnership for Education

Marion Fellows:

[\[32427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of a top-up of its pledge to the Global Partnership for Education to maximise prospects of the five billion dollar target being reached.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is leading the way in the run-up to the Global Education Summit on 28-29 July. At the G7 Leaders' Summit, the Prime Minister announced the UK pledge of £430 million to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), which is an uplift of 15% from the last financing period, and our largest ever contribution to GPE. This is also the largest bilateral pledge announced so far, and our co-host Kenya, we are urging other nations to step up their pledges to GPE.

This significant pledge meant that 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% of GPE's 5-year target of \$5 billion, and would be the single biggest ever boost to children's education opportunities around the world.

Marion Fellows:

[\[32428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent correspondence he has had with his US counterpart on a US pledge to the Global Partnership for Education.

Wendy Morton:

We continue to work with all donors, and are in regular contact with counterparts in the US ahead of the Global Education Summit due to take place in London on 28-29 July. As co-hosts of this Summit, we continue to use the full weight of our diplomatic networks and development expertise to ensure the Summit is a success.

At the G7 Leaders' Summit, the Prime Minister secured a landmark commitment from our G7 partners to provide at least \$2.7 billion to the Global Partnership for Education. This includes £430 million from the UK, which is an uplift of 15% from our current position as top bilateral donor, and our largest ever contribution to the GPE.

Marion Fellows:

[\[32429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the prospects of the five billion dollar Global Partnership for Education replenishment target being met at the Global Education Summit in July 2021.

Wendy Morton:

At the Global Education Summit (GES) on 28-29 July, we hope to secure \$4 billion, or 80% of the Global Partnership for Education's 5-year rolling target of \$5 billion. This would be the single biggest ever boost to children's education opportunities around the world. As part of commitment, we hope to help GPE diversify its funding base, with new sovereign and private donors. We are also working closely with our co-hosts, Kenya, to galvanise domestic financing to education from developing nations.

At the G7 Summit, the Prime Minister announced the UK pledge of £430 million to the GPE. This five-year pledge is our largest ever pledge to GPE, and an uplift of 15% from our current position as top bilateral donor. This generous contribution meant we were able to secure commitment from G7 partners of at least \$2.7 billion to GPE ahead of the GES.

■ **India: Coronavirus**

Alex Norris:

[\[32493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government has to donate covid-19 vaccine doses to India.

Nigel Adams:

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK has championed the importance of rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are among the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), committing £548 million, which through match-funding leveraged \$1 billion from other donors in 2020. This support has been critical to COVAX's distribution of COVID-19 vaccines to over 130 countries and economies, including India, and to support countries to assess vaccine introduction readiness, develop detailed national deployment and vaccination plans, and strengthen delivery systems.

The Foreign Secretary launched the UK-India Vaccines Hub in December 2020, which has expanded collaboration between our two countries on vaccine trials, regulation, and vaccination strategies. Our two vaccine task forces are in regular contact, discussing the acceleration of the vaccine programme, target groups, dose intervals, and the best strategies to increase vaccine confidence.

■ India: Hospitals

Alex Norris:

[\[32494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of supporting India with the establishment of covid-19 field hospitals.

Nigel Adams:

The Government of India has informed us that government to government donations to support their response to the pandemic are no longer being sought. The Government of India is no longer setting up COVID-19 field hospitals and has not requested support from the UK Government.

The UK was the first country to deliver life-saving medical support to India to help fight COVID-19. We put together a package focusing on India's most urgent needs, including oxygen concentrators, ventilators, and oxygen generating units. The latest shipment was delivered on 9 May, which brought the total package of equipment to 495 oxygen concentrators, 1,200 ventilators and three oxygen generating units.

There is also significant scientific and medical collaboration underway between the UK and India. Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance have regularly spoken to their Indian counterparts to exchange advice, insight and expertise. NHS England and NHS Improvement established a Clinical Advisory Group, led by Chief People Officer Prerana Issar, to support India's COVID-19 response.

UK-India collaboration is benefitting both countries and the world. We will continue to work closely with the Government of India during this difficult time, as well as the wider international community in the global fight against the pandemic.

■ Israel: Palestinians

Sarah Champion:

[\[32405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of (a) the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's finding of 1 July 2021 that Israel is holding three female Palestinian university students in arbitrary detention and (b) the UN Working Group's request that the Government of Israel remedy the situation without delay and that the appropriate remedy would be to release the students immediately.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the findings by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on Israel's continued detention of Layan Kayed, Elyaa Abu Hijla and Ruba Asi. We continue to call on the Israeli authorities to comply with their obligations under international law.

■ Israeli Settlements

Stephen Timms: [\[32278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent of UK firms operating in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory.

James Cleverly:

The UK's position on settlements is articulated in the Overseas Business Risk Guidance: settlements are illegal under international law. There are therefore clear risks related to economic and financial activities in the settlements, and we do not encourage or offer support to such activity. Ultimately it is the decision of each individual or company whether to operate in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The UK Government is clear that advancement of settlements across the West Bank should be suspended immediately.

■ Mozambique: Christianity

Alexander Stafford: [\[32557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports by Aid to the Church in Need of 1 July 2021, what assessment his Department has made as to whether Christians are being targeted in the insurgency in Mozambique.

James Duddridge:

The acts of terrorist insurgents have sadly affected peoples of all faiths in Cabo Delgado. Mozambique is an important partner for the UK, and a valued member of the Commonwealth. We are working with the Government of Mozambique to address the root drivers of conflict and instability, including by providing targeted assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding.

■ Niger: Christianity

Alexander Stafford: [\[32558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports by Aid to the Church in Need on 2 July 2021, what support his Department is providing to Christians in Niger as result of news of an attack on Fantio and Dolbel in the Tillabéri region.

James Duddridge:

Actions by violent extremist groups in the Sahel and West Africa seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion and have targeted both Christian and Muslim communities. The UK Government condemns acts of terrorism in the Sahel, and is committed to supporting freedom of religion or belief for all. In July this year I discussed the deteriorating security situation in the Tillabéri region of Niger with the Nigerien Minister for Foreign Affairs and President Bazoum. The UK supports long-term stability in Niger and the wider region through the provision of three Chinook helicopters to France's counter-terrorism Operation Barkhane, and through our

programmatic support to Niger's High Authority for the Consolidation of the Peace in Torodi, as well as the UN's Regional Stabilisation Facility in the Diffa region. The UK also provides significant humanitarian assistance to Niger, providing life-saving aid to over 718,000 Nigeriens between 2019 and 2021.

■ Overseas Aid: Famine

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[34551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much official development assistance will be spent in 2021-22 on reducing the risk of famines; and how much was spent in each of the last five years.

James Duddridge:

Full budgets per country for 2021-22 and a final audited spend for 2020-21 will be published in due course, including in our regular Statistics on International Development and in the FCDO Annual Report and Accounts.

■ Overseas Aid: Press Freedom

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[34550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much official development assistance will be spent in 2021-22 on promoting freedom of media to investigate and how much was spent in each of the last five years.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is a strong supporter of media freedom through Official Development Assistance (ODA). Full detail of UK ODA spend on media freedom is available through OECD statistics. The most recent such figure is for 2019 when the UK provided US\$156 million, approximately £120 million. The figures for the previous five years are \$141 million for 2018, \$153 million for 2017, \$59 million for 2016, \$42 million for 2015 and \$34 million for 2014. The UK is consistently one of the top five international donors to the media sector.

■ Russia: Ukraine

Mark Logan: [\[33364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the diplomatic and security situation around the Siverskyi Donets River in the Luhansk region of Ukraine following allegations of repeated shelling attacks by Russian forces; and what steps his Department is taking to ease tensions in that region.

Wendy Morton:

While the UK has received no specific reporting on this alleged incident, we remain very concerned by the overall upward trajectory in the number of ceasefire violations in eastern Ukraine. We call on the sides to uphold the ceasefire.

The UK remains one of the largest contributors to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, which monitors and reports on the security situation in Ukraine. We fully support the Minsk agreements to deliver a peaceful resolution to the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Four in this regard. As outlined in the G7 Foreign Ministers' statement on 18 March, we call on Russia to play its part to end the conflict by immediately ceasing its support for the armed formations it backs and fulfilling its obligations under the Minsk agreements.

■ South Africa: Rule of Law

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[32338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support the Government is providing to help the upholding of the rule of law in South Africa.

James Duddridge:

The UK is concerned by the outbreak of violence and looting in South Africa in recent days, which has sadly resulted in loss of life, injuries, and substantial damage to buildings and businesses. We strongly support President Ramaphosa's emphasis on the importance of the rule of law. As a long-standing friend of South Africa, the UK works closely with South Africa on a wide-range of areas including on security, health, economic and social issues. The British 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 regularly updated Travel Advice pages.

■ South Africa: Violence

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[32339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he his Department to amend its travel advice for UK nationals travelling to South Africa in response to the outbreak of violence in that country following the recent incarceration of former President Zuma for contempt of court.

James Duddridge:

We are closely monitoring the situation in South Africa. The FCDO continues to advise against all but essential travel to the whole of South Africa based on current COVID-19 risks. We have been regularly updating FCDO Travel Advice during the recent unrest and have publicised consular contact details on social media. Our consular staff are contactable 24/7 for British Nationals directly affected by the protests and needing help.

■ Tunisia: Coronavirus

Damien Moore:

[R] [\[32506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance his Department is providing to Tunisia to help tackle the covid-19 pandemic in that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. We are among the largest donors to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, committing £548 million. The UK is also donating 80% of its surplus vaccines to COVAX. This support to COVAX has been critical to it supplying COVID-19 vaccines to over 120 countries and economies, including Tunisia. By the end of June, Tunisia received over 760,000 doses from COVAX and will eventually receive 20% of their entire national requirement from COVAX absolutely free.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Biocidal Products: Regulation

Alex Norris:

[\[32490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of the regulatory systems for (a) hand sanitiser and (b) disinfectant products in (i) Australia and (ii) the US; whether his Department plans to implement similar regimes; and what steps his Department is taking to protect consumers from (A) misleading and (B) inaccurate statements on the efficacy of those products.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: We have made no such assessment.

Hand sanitisers and surface disinfectants are biocidal products. They are regulated by the Health and Safety Executive under the Biocidal Products Regulation (BPR). The BPR establishes a process for the in-depth assessment of both the safety and efficacy of biocidal products, which mirrors the system used across the European Union. Some products for use as antibacterial or antiviral products for use on people's hands may instead be regulated under the cosmetics or medicines legislation, depending on the products' intended use, function, composition or how they are described. The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 also apply across all sectors and prohibit misleading and deceptive commercial practices by traders who sell goods, including hand sanitisers and disinfectant, to consumers.

■ Borderline Substances Advisory Committee

Alex Norris:

[\[34024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances has adequate (a) structures and (b)

processes to support innovation and growth in the specialist medical nutrition industry in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

The Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS) and the Department are working with the British Specialist Nutrition Association, the trade body for the medical nutrition industry and its members to update the ACBS' processes, its application form, and guidance.

■ **Cancer: Coronavirus**

Jim Shannon:

[\[29046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he plans to put in place for cancer patients who have experienced disruption to their treatment during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

The National Health Service is focusing on reducing the number of people waiting over 62 days on cancer pathways, rescheduling diagnostic procedures or treatment for those who have had their care delayed by the pandemic. Cancer services have been prioritised within the £1 billion made available in 2021/22 to support the recovery of elective activity. This funding is being used to support evening and weekend clinics to meet demand for services.

■ **Cancer: Health Services**

Jim Shannon:

[\[29045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his planned timescale is for delivering the commitment to provide every person with cancer with personalised care.

Jo Churchill:

Personalised care and support plans based on holistic needs assessments continue to be implemented across all cancer types.

By December 2020, approximately 80% of cancer multi-disciplinary teams were delivering these plans. The first official data collected in Quarter 4 2021/22 will inform further adoption and delivery.

■ **Cancer: Medical Treatments**

Alex Norris:

[\[32492\]](#)

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

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence are currently developing proposals

for the Innovative Medicines Fund (IMF) and expect to lead a public engagement exercise later this year. The IMF will build on and extend the successful Cancer Drugs Fund which has provided access to the most promising cancer medicines to over 64,000 National Health Service patients. The IMF will continue to support patient access to personalised cancer medicines where appropriate.

■ **Care Homes and Hospitals: Protective Clothing and Social Distancing**

Rachael Maskell: [\[30393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) face masks and (b) social distancing will still be required in hospitals and social care settings after 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) guidelines will continue to apply across all health and care settings after 19 July in order to ensure vulnerable patients are protected. This includes the continued use of personal protective equipment, face masks in enclosed or crowded areas and maintaining safe distance. The IPC guidelines state that patients and visitors in all care areas must be encouraged and supported to wear a face mask or face covering, providing it is not detrimental to their medical or care needs.

Guidance in National Health Service settings, including hospitals and primary or community care settings, is undergoing further review.

■ **Coronavirus**

Daisy Cooper: [\[34604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will update the list of covid-19 symptoms to highlight the most commonly reported symptoms linked to the Delta variant.

Jo Churchill:

Experts keep the symptoms under review as our understanding of the virus develops. We are assessing data from the COVID Symptom Study, in addition to other surveillance studies and will update our guidance if necessary.

■ **Coronavirus: Air Pollution**

Ben Bradley: [\[29886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the ability of hydroxyl free radical air purification technologies to prevent the primary cause of covid-19 transmission via aerosol and water droplets.

Jo Churchill:

The Innovation and Partnerships team NHS Test and Trace concluded that there is a limited evidence base on the effectiveness of air cleaners which use hydroxy radicals as a method of purification against COVID-19. They also found that these cleaners

may generate undesirable secondary chemical products that could lead to health effects such as respiratory or skin irritation.

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Rachael Maskell: [\[21963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional steps he is being advised to take to control the rise in the level of infection of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 June 2021]: We are currently considering a range of options for addressing future phases of the COVID-19. The United Kingdom will continue to use its genomics, epidemiology and virology capacity to ensure that public health interventions are effective and proportionate. New technology to rapidly detect new COVID-19 mutations is being deployed in NHS Test and Trace laboratories. Any decisions on the mid to long-term strategy will be supported by the continuing vaccine programme.

Helen Hayes: [\[21979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to promote the importance of ventilation and aerosol transmission in covid-19 public health messaging.

Helen Hayes: [\[21980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on aerosol transmission of covid-19 and ventilation in public spaces.

Helen Hayes: [\[21982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve ventilation in public spaces to mitigate aerosol transmission of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 29 June 2021]: The Government's 'Hands. Face. Space. Fresh Air' campaign delivers advice on behaviours to help stop the spread of COVID-19 which includes meeting others outside and the importance of ventilation when meeting others inside. The advice 'Ventilation of indoor spaces to stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)' is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus/ventilation-of-indoor-spaces-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19>

There have been regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues infection prevention controls and social distancing measures to limit transmission, which includes ventilation.

The Government has established a programme to consider how to improve CO₂ monitoring and ventilation across public and private sector buildings to help limit transmission in the autumn and winter and improve long-term pandemic resilience.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he plans to provide to communities which have an R rate over one in response to covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is working with regional and local partners to prevent, manage and contain outbreaks of COVID-19, ensuring responses are locally led, regionally supported, and nationally enabled. We are currently working with local systems to outline what national support is available to areas with high or increasing case rates through both the enhanced response area and the enduring transmission support packages.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Caroline Lucas:

[\[25775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the proportion of people with symptoms of covid-19 who come forward for a PCR test in the most recent time period for which figures are available; and by what methods he makes that estimate.

Jo Churchill:

We have not made a specific assessment.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if there is a threshold at which his Department will recommend use of surge testing for covid-19 infections.

Jo Churchill:

Whilst there is no set threshold, national teams work in partnership with local authorities and health protection teams across all regions to introduce appropriate public health interventions based on assessment of local need. The Government and its scientific experts are monitoring the evolving situation closely.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[33334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2021 to Question 22025, and with reference to the findings of the US Food and Drug Administration that more research is required to determine the effectiveness of antibody testing in assessing the protection to immunocompromised patients of covid-19 vaccination, if she will make it her policy to commission and prioritise such research in the level of vaccine protection in immunocompromised people.

Nadhim Zahawi:

As part of the COVID-19 Immunity National Core Study, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is providing £4 million towards the OCTAVE study. This study is examining

COVID-19 vaccine responses in clinically at-risk groups, including immunocompromised patients. UKRI is also providing a further £3 million towards a research call to support projects examining the nature and quality of COVID-19 vaccine responses and the mechanisms of immune failure that lead to either COVID-19 re-infection or vaccine breakthrough. This call is now closed and results will be announced in due course.

Layla Moran:

[\[34037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the list of covid-19 symptoms that make individuals eligible for a PCR test will be updated to take into account symptoms of the delta variant of that virus.

Jo Churchill:

Experts keep the symptoms under review as our understanding of the virus develops. We are assessing the data from the COVID Symptom Study, in addition to other surveillance studies and will update our guidance if necessary.

Justin Madders:

[\[34516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the criteria used to identify individuals suitable for participation in the daily testing pilot.

Jo Churchill:

To be eligible for the daily contact testing workplace pilot evaluation scheme, people who have been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 either in or outside the workplace must:

- have no COVID-19 symptoms;
- give their informed consent to take part;
- not live with anyone with a positive test for COVID-19 or symptoms;
- not live in Scotland or Northern Ireland;
- not travel in or out of Scotland or Northern Ireland while taking part in daily contact testing for work or personal reasons; and
- be able to commit to test for at least five of the next seven scheduled days. A maximum of two days self-isolating in the seven-day schedule is permitted.

To be eligible for the daily contact testing clinical study, people who have been identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 must:

- not have COVID-19 symptoms;
- live in England;
- not be in full-time education;
- be aged 18 years old and over;
- not be under the quarantine rules for arriving in England.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Karen Bradley:

[\[33218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to align the separate national digital proof of covid-19 vaccination status systems of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland so that information on vaccine status can be shared throughout the UK, in particular for people who are registered with a GP in one nation and due to work received the covid-19 vaccination in a different nation.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are continuing to work closely with the devolved administrations to ensure that a United Kingdom-wide approach is developed where possible. The adoption of a UK-wide COVID Pass letter has been agreed with the devolved administrations, which includes each nation's health service logo. England and Wales launched the letter in early July, with Northern Ireland and Scotland to follow by late July.

Information for those vaccinated in England but registered with a general practitioner (GP) in Wales or Scotland is already in place. We are working with officials to ensure the cross-border data is in place for those vaccinated in Wales and Scotland but registered with a GP in England by late July. Work is underway to find a solution for cross border vaccinations with Northern Ireland.

■ Defibrillators

Stuart Anderson:

[\[31538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help improve access to defibrillators in (a) schools and (b) the wider community.

Jo Churchill:

Since May 2019 new and refurbished schools are required to have at least one automated external defibrillators (AED) as part of the Schools Rebuilding Programme and Free Schools Programme. Schools outside that criteria are encouraged to purchase an AED, as part of their first aid equipment. The Government has published guidance on how schools can buy, install and maintain an AED at a reduced cost through the NHS Supply Chain's defibs4schools programme.

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out an ambition to ensure fast and effective action that will help save lives of people suffering a cardiac arrest. A national network of community first responders and defibrillators will help save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028. This will be supported by educating the general public, including young people of school age, about how to recognise and respond to out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Ministerial Policy Advisers**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[22197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether political (a) advisers and (b) aides in his Department declared potential conflicts of interest in the last 12 months.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 30 June 2021]: Cabinet Office set the current declaration of interests policy for special advisers. All special advisers declare any relevant interests to the Permanent Secretary.

■ Food: Advertising**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[29920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations his Department has received from the Scottish Government on provisions on the control of advertising of (a) alcohol and (b) other products within the Health and Social Care Bill which was introduced on 6 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: The Department has not received any representations from the Scottish Government about provisions on the control of advertising of alcohol within the Health and Care Bill. The Bill proposes new restrictions on the advertising of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar, across the United Kingdom. We have discussed these proposals with the Scottish Government prior to introduction and will continue engagement across the entire Health and Care Bill as it progresses through Parliament.

■ General Practitioners**Rachael Maskell:** [\[34524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the facilities to book GP appointments (a) by telephone, (b) online and (c) in-person are adequate to meet the increased demand for such appointments.

Jo Churchill:

On 20 May, NHS England and NHS Improvement published an updated standard operating procedure for general practice in the context of COVID-19 restrictions easing. Practices must ensure they offer both face to face and remote appointments and that patients' preferences for care are respected unless there are good clinical reasons to the contrary. Practice receptions must be open so patients without access to online services are not disadvantaged. General practices have also been asked to ensure patients understand how to access general practitioner services by providing clear and up to date information on practice websites.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with a number of areas to test advanced telephony requirements and specifications, which will improve telephone

capacity. NHS England and NHS Improvement intend to share learning from these areas to support practices across the country to improve telephony.

■ **General Practitioners: West Yorkshire**

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[27014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that West Yorkshire GP services retain their medical practitioners.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that the local strategy for delivering the general practitioner workforce ambitions and priorities is being led by the West Yorkshire and Humber Primary Care Workforce Steering Group. The Steering Group works collaboratively with place leads, professional committee, Health Education England and NHS England and NHS Improvement to deliver retention initiatives across their primary care services.

■ **Health Services**

Paul Bristow: [\[R\] \[33349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the Government's long-term policy on a new UK health diagnostics sector and preventative health strategy following the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

We have no current plans to publish a new long-term policy on the United Kingdom health diagnostics sector. We are establishing the Office for Health Promotion, to drive the prevention agenda across Government and we will set out more detail on our plans for improving public health later in 2021.

■ **HIV Infection**

Caroline Lucas: [\[32346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the HIV Commission's plan published in December 2020, what progress his Department has made on (a) reducing new cases of HIV in England by 80 per cent by 2025 and (b) ending new cases of HIV in England by 2030; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

Between 2014 and 2019, there was a 34% reduction in new HIV diagnoses in England. In March 2020, the Government announced that the HIV prevention drug pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) would be routinely available across England in 2020/21 as part of the commitment to achieve zero new HIV transmissions. PrEP is now routinely available in the specialist sexual and reproductive health services throughout the country.

In addition, the Department is developing a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and an HIV Action Plan on reaching the 2030 target, both of which are planned for publication later this year.

■ HIV Infection: Disclosure of Information

Caroline Lucas:

[\[33889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, from what date the Government will provide annual reporting to Parliament on progress made on the Government's commitment to end new cases of HIV in England by 2030.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has made a commitment to reach zero new HIV transmissions in England by 2030, and the Department is currently developing a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan which are planned for publication later this year. Following these publications, it is anticipated that the Government's annual reporting to Parliament on the progress made will begin from 2022 onwards.

■ Hospitals: Parking

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[33993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of permanently exempting NHS staff from parking charges.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: No such assessment has been made. On 25 March 2020, the Government committed to provide free hospital car parking for National Health Service staff for the duration of the pandemic. Trusts continue to be funded to deliver this commitment.

■ Medical Treatments

Alex Norris:

[\[32491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to make a statement to the House following the publication of the NICE Methods Review programme manual; and if he will include in the statement his assessment on whether the outcome of the Review can support access to personalised cancer treatments.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: There are no current plans to do so. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body and is responsible for its own methods and processes. NICE currently expects to consult stakeholders on proposed changes to its methods and processes in the summer.

Jim Shannon:

[\[33921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NICE plans to broaden its application of the non-reference discount rate to the single technology appraisal pathway.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) standard methodology is to apply a discount rate of 3.5% but NICE's committees have flexibility to apply a non-reference discount rate of 1.5% in defined exceptional circumstances. NICE has explored whether there is a case for changing the approach to discounting in the development of its technology appraisal recommendations as part of the ongoing methods and processes review. NICE expects to consult on a draft programme in the summer, with implementation of the changes from early 2022.

Jim Shannon:

[\[33922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to work with NICE to help ensure that its committees (a) adequately consider and (b) are accountable to patient testimony.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body and is responsible for the methods and processes it uses in developing its guidance. Patients are represented on NICE's committees and patient groups are able to register as stakeholders in the development of guidance and comment on its recommendations. NICE is currently reviewing its methods and processes for developing recommendations on new technologies, including its processes for patient involvement.

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

Rachael Maskell:

[\[30383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the role that physical education and school sport can play in promoting mental wellbeing among children and young people.

Jo Churchill:

Physical activity is important in promoting children and young people's mental wellbeing and there are strong links between physical activity and increased self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and future aspirations. Physical activity is also associated with lower levels of anxiety and depression. This was highlighted in the Government's 2019 School Sport and Activity Action Plan which the Department for Health and Social Care developed with the Department for Education and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

■ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence: Standards**Peter Dowd:** [\[30368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the performance of NICE in (a) conducting appraisals of new medicines and (b) development of (i) clinical guidelines and (ii) quality standards in relation to the resources allocated to that body.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: The Department assesses the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) performance against the targets set out in its annual business plan. NICE is currently on track to meet its performance targets for the publication of technology appraisals, clinical guidelines and quality standards. NICE's Annual Report and Accounts sets out its activity, performance and expenditure for key areas of its business, including its appraisals of new medicines and the development of clinical guidelines and quality standards.

■ NHS: Protective Clothing**Neale Hanvey:** [\[31552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his most recent estimate is of the total number of (a) items of personal protective equipment, (b) face masks and (c) surgical gowns procured during the covid-19 outbreak which could not be used by the NHS as a result of them failing to meet appropriate standards of safety; and what the cost involved in each case was.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: The data is not available in the format requested.

The Department is taking steps such as repurposing or recycling items and seeking to recover costs in instances where contracts have resulted in the supply of substandard personal protective equipment.

Rachael Maskell: [\[32439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he is planning to maintain the current level of supply of personal protection equipment to health and care settings after 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The Government has committed to providing free personal protective equipment to health and social care settings until the end of March 2022.

■ NHS: Software**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[33303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of NHS staff in (a) Birmingham, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England who

(i) use the NHS Test and Trace app and (ii) have been notified to self-isolate by that app in each week since the beginning of 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The data is not available in the format requested.

It is not possible to determine whether an app user is a member of National Health Service staff or use app data to estimate on how many members of NHS staff have been notified to self-isolate by the app in any given area or time period.

■ **Obesity**

Alex Norris:

[\[12278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the impact of obesity on (a) people's health and wellbeing and (b) the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: We published 'Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives' in July 2020. The strategy demonstrates an overarching campaign to reduce obesity, takes forward actions from previous chapters of the childhood obesity plan and sets out measures to get the nation fit and healthy, protect against COVID-19 and protect the National Health Service.

Actions include restricting the advertising of high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) products being shown on TV and online, restricting promotions of HFSS products by location and price, calorie labelling in restaurants, expanding weight management services and making conversations about weight in primary care the norm.

In July 2020, Public Health England launched the Better Health Campaign which promotes evidence-based tools and advice to help people look after their mental and physical health. The campaign shows adults the simple steps they can take to eat more healthily, increase their physical activity, care for their mental wellbeing and quit smoking. Change4Life and Start4Life programmes support families to eat well and move more with resources to motivate and encourage behaviour change including simple healthy eating messages, recipes and more.

■ **Pharmacy**

Martyn Day:

[\[33281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timescale is for a consultation on proposals for the roll-out of a hub-and-spoke dispensing model across community pharmacy.

Jo Churchill:

The Department is currently engaging with stakeholders to develop clear and practical models that will form the basis of a consultation. A date for consultation has not been confirmed.

■ **Pregnancy: Coronavirus**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[32512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) assess and (b) reduce covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among pregnant women.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) updated their advice on 19 April, which indicates that women who are pregnant should be offered vaccination at the same time as non-pregnant women, based on their age and clinical risk group.

COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy data, including for among pregnant women, is monitored by the Office for National Statistics, recording the reasons given for vaccine refusal. Two of the available response options are related to pregnancy and fertility.

Our vaccine toolkits for local services, stakeholders, partners and employers cover information around pregnancy, breastfeeding and fertility concerns to reduce hesitancy. We have sourced and shared case stories of women of childbearing age who have been vaccinated before, during or after pregnancy to reassure women. NHS England and NHS Improvement's Chief Midwifery Officer and 'media medics' have made appearances on consumer and lifestyle media to reassure people about their concerns. We have also supported local webinars and engagement sessions focused on women's vaccine concerns and have also been tailored to specific demographic groups. Women can also speak to their general practitioner practice or maternity service if they have any questions about the vaccine or can talk to a healthcare professional at their appointment.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[34579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of pregnant women currently in hospital with covid-19.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have made no such estimate.

■ **Prescriptions: Fees and Charges**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[30425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to introduce prescription charges for those over the age of 60.

Jo Churchill:

A public consultation is underway on aligning the upper age exemption for National Health Service prescription charges in England with the state pension age. The Government will consider the responses to the consultation and outline its next steps in due course.

■ **Psychiatric Hospitals: Finance**

Philip Davies: [\[32334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level of need for capital funding in acute mental health hospitals.

Philip Davies: [\[32335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of which mental health hospitals are most in need of capital investment.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department has made no specific assessments. Trusts are legally responsible for maintaining their estates and providing healthcare services, with their boards deciding which investments they make. The Estates Returns Information Collection is completed by all trusts, including mental health trusts, on an annual basis and contains information relating to the costs of providing, maintaining and servicing the National Health Service estate, including the capital cost of bringing the full estate to a defined standard. The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement draw on this assessment and other data to secure and direct national funding.

■ **Strokes**

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[30402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the findings of the Stroke Association's report, Stroke Recoveries at Risk, published in September 2020; and what steps he is taking to support stroke survivors.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: The Stroke Association's report acknowledges that the pandemic has led to many beneficial innovations across the stroke care pathway. Many clinical teams are using virtual rehabilitation alongside face-to-face contact with 80% of patients who received such virtual care reporting positive or very positive experiences

The National Stroke Service Model, published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in May, will ensure that all patients will be entitled to needs based regular reviews following their stroke, typically at six weeks, six months and then annually. In addition, NHS England and NHS Improvement have funded the Stroke Association's provision of Stroke Connect, which was developed in direct response to COVID-19. The service offers stroke survivors reassurance, support and links to the wider services they can access as part of their recovery.

■ **Surgical Mesh Implants**

Emma Hardy: [\[17820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer of 24 May 2021 to Question 3127 on Surgical Mesh Implants, if he will place a copy in the

Library of the Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) form used to collect data after mesh removal procedures.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 June 2021]: There is no specific Patient Reported Outcome Measures form for mesh removal.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Paul Blomfield:

[10360]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the processes in place to ensure that providers of covid-19 travel tests meet the targets they advertise for processing tests.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no specific assessment.

The Department monitors all providers' performance, including test turnaround times and those providing inadequate services receive a five-day warning to demonstrate they have rectified their service or they are removed from the list of providers on GOV.UK.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[23041]

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 green, amber and red lists.

Jo Churchill:

Decisions to place countries on the 'red', 'amber' or 'green' lists are taken by Ministers informed by evidence, including the Joint Biosecurity Centre's 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>

Daisy Cooper:

[32521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to exempt British holders of an EU Digital Covid Certificate from quarantine on the same basis as applies to holders of the NHS Covid-19 Pass.

Jo Churchill:

We will provide an update in due course on the approach for vaccinated individuals from other countries, including British holders of an EU Digital COVID Certificate, who have been vaccinated with vaccines that are not approved for use in the United Kingdom.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Sarah Owen:**[\[18604\]](#)

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

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 23 June 2021]: The data is not currently available as it is being collated and centrally validated.

Dan Jarvis:[\[31405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there are adequate safeguards in place to ensure the safety of women in covid-19 quarantine hotels.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: All hotels contracted into the managed quarantine system have security supervisors on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We regularly meet with security companies to ensure all staff adhere to the highest professional standards. It is a requirement that contracted security staff have passed the Security Industry Accreditation process.

We have agreed with security providers that, where possible, lone females will be dealt with by female security staff. Where this is not possible, two security staff will be provided at all times in a chaperone capacity.

John Spellar:[\[33112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure adequate standards of (a) food, (b) cleanliness and (c) safety in covid-19 quarantine hotels.

Jo Churchill:

Hotels providing managed quarantine facilities can meet the vast majority of dietary requirements and must provide guests with three meals a day. Enhanced cleaning regimes take place throughout the hotel and guests are provided with their own cleaning equipment for their rooms. The Department has ensured that vulnerable people in quarantine hotels are signposted to the appropriate support and safeguarding procedures are followed where appropriate. All hotels have a security presence and access to an onsite medic 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Department engages with hotels and service providers on a regular basis to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the services provided.

HOME OFFICE**■ Animal Experiments: Coronavirus****Kenny MacAskill:**[\[34615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of recording the number of animals used in covid-19 research in the Statistics of scientific procedures on living animals in Great Britain for 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

The number of animals used in experiments relating to the Covid-19 outbreak will be reported in the annual statistics of scientific procedures on living animals in Great Britain for 2021.

Data will not be collected that identifies the number of animals used in procedures specifically related to Covid-19 research. The use of animals for Covid-19 research falls within a range of purposes in the published data and may be recorded under the categories of basic research, translational research or regulatory research.

■ Asylum: Finance**Alex Cunningham:**[\[34481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of people who were entitled to receive asylum support that did not have a functioning Aspen card in each week since the Aspen card transition.

Kevin Foster:

Our systems do not allow us to provide the data requested. However, we can confirm fully functioning Aspen cards, including translated instructions on how to activate them, were distributed to all service users via first class post prior to the transition date of 24 May. The vast majority of service users who held a previous Sodexo Aspen card on 24th May - the date the new service went live - have now activated their new PFS Aspen card.

Those who have issues or are unsure how they can activate their cards are able to contact the 24/7 Migrant Help helpline. Where service users do not have active cards, Emergency Cash Payments (ECP) are being requested (accommodation providers can facilitate these) to ensure service user's critical needs are met.

Our latest available management information proposes the following approximations for the activation of cards amongst those who previously held a Sodexo card prior to 24 May:

- As of 28/05 – approximately 73% of service users has activated their card
- As of 04/06 – this figure rose to approximately 83%
- As of 22/06 –over 93% of service users had activated their new Aspen card
- As of 09/07 – over 95% had activated their card

[These figures have been taken from a live operational database and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard].

We continue to work with strategic delivery partners to ensure all cards are successfully received and activated with the appropriate service users being targeted for assistance.

■ Biometric Residence Permits: Turkey

Stephen Hammond:

[\[32340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the average length of time taken to issue biometric residence permit cards to Turkish citizens living in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Data is not available broken down by nationality in relation to Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) production and delivery times.

Data is published relating to performance against decision making service standards for each application route and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visas-and-citizenship-data-q1-2021>

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) advise 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 Licencing Agency (DVLA). DVLA have 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. 2.1% (19,250) took longer than 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.

■ Ferries and Roads: Customs

Jim Shannon:

[\[33230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the appropriate checks are taking place on (a) road and (b) ferry passengers entering the UK from the EU.

Chris Philp:

Carriers are legally required to check all passengers for completion of a negative pre-departure test (PDT) taken within the previous 3 days, and a passenger locator form (PLF).

Passengers cannot submit a PLF without providing a valid reference for test bookings, an MQS booking (if appropriate), or a declaration of exemption.

From 19 July, carriers must also check vaccine status certification, when passengers declare a completed course of NHS vaccination in their PLF.

The legal requirement on carriers is underpinned by a robust compliance regime, which is overseen by regulators

■ **Fraud: Telephone Services**

Charlotte Nichols:

[32535]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to (a) reduce the number of scam calls, (b) protect victims and (c) help ensure that offenders are prosecuted.

Kevin Foster:

The Government will not tolerate criminals lining their pockets while causing serious financial and emotional harm to victims. We recognise the devastating impact fraud can have and how crucial it is we do everything in our power to protect victims and bring the perpetrators to justice.

We are working closely with the industry, regulators, law enforcement and consumer groups to crack down on scam callers and to protect victims and to ensure they are not left out of pocket through no fault of their own.

We have been working with Ofcom to disrupt phonenumber enabled scams. 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. I would also highlight the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations (PECR) governs unsolicited live or automated direct marketing calls and imposes strict obligations on organisations which make direct marketing calls to individuals in the UK. The ICO has the powers to impose civil monetary penalties of up to £500,000 for serious contraventions of the PECR.

We are working with national and local policing, including police and crime commissioners, to support the victims of such crimes. The National Economic Crime Victim Care Unit, based within Action Fraud, also plays an important role by helping victims to recover and to protect themselves against future fraud.

Our law enforcement and intelligence colleagues also play a crucial role in keeping the public safe and bringing these opportunistic criminals to justice. We are considering all routes, including legislation, to give them the tools they need to go after the fraudsters and, crucially, to protect those who are vulnerable to these harmful crimes.

The Fraud Action plan, detailing our strategy to further strengthen our approach in combatting fraud will be published after the 2021 Spending Review.

However, the best way to this problem is to try and identify the sources of these calls and stop them.

- We are encouraging the public to forward suspicious text messages to 7726 (which is free of charge) and to forward suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

The police and other services will be collating reported texts and emails, and when they come from the same source, as they do on many occasions, they will act swiftly to shut it down

We also continue to encourage anyone who has been targeted by a scam to report it. Action Fraud is the central police reporting point for all victims of fraud and can be contacted by phone on 0300 123 2040 or through their website:

http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud

■ Police: Conduct

Damien Moore:

[32509]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure the integrity of criminal investigations after police conduct has been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct; and if she will make a statement.

Kit Malthouse:

All police forces, as well as the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), operate independently from the Government.

The police and complaints and discipline systems, reformed by this Government in February 2020, set out the legislative framework that relevant bodies are required to follow in the event of adverse incidents resulting in a death or serious injury during or following contact with the police, complaints against the police, or should police conduct matters arise.

Where the IOPC determines that, following referral of a complaint, an investigation should be carried out locally by the force, the complainant has a right to apply for a review of the outcome by the IOPC. IOPC remains the review body. The IOPC can also decide to change its original investigation decision and investigate independently.

Decisions taken by the IOPC can be challenged by way of judicial review.

■ Police: Coronavirus

Chi Onwurah:

[34486]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the loss of late night levies during the covid-19 outbreak on the income of Police Forces; and what steps she is taking to mitigate this loss.

Kit Malthouse:

The coronavirus outbreak has caused enormous disruption to all businesses, public services and to individuals across our nation. The decision whether to impose a Late Night Levy (LNL) is a matter for the relevant local authorities, as is a decision to cease applying the LNL when it comes up for renewal. The LNL is designed to support policing initiatives in the night time economy.

In April 2020 I wrote to chairs of licensing committees in England and Wales advising that licensing authorities have discretion to delay the suspension of a licence for non-payment of the levy, where this is related to Covid-19. This advice was intended to allow businesses to continue selling alcohol until they are able to pay the levy.

Any temporary loss of funding has been at a time when late night premises have been closed or operating under restrictions.

■ **Slavery: Victims**

Alex Norris:

[\[32488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether ensuring that survivors of modern slavery are able to rebuild their lives with adequate employment will be central to her proposed new anti-slavery strategy.

Victoria Atkins:

On 24 March, the Government announced a review of the 2014 Modern Slavery Strategy, with a view to developing a new modern slavery strategy in due course.

A revised strategy will allow us to build on the considerable progress we have made to date, adapt our approach to the evolving nature of these crimes, and continue our leadership in tackling modern slavery.

The review will consider all aspects of the 2014 strategy and the Government's future response, including our approach to victim support, law enforcement, supply chains, prevention and our international response.

The new strategy will be developed following a period of public engagement, including charities, and therefore we cannot pre-empt the content at this stage.

Nonetheless, supporting victims to be able to rebuild their lives will continue to be a key plank of the Government's approach.

■ **Windrush Lessons Learned Review**

Tim Farron:

[\[32341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the recommendations of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, what progress her Department has made on implementing a learning programme on UK history from June 2021.

Priti Patel:

In response to Recommendation 6 from the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, the department is launching a learning programme over the summer, with full implementation from autumn 2021.

To develop the approach and learning content we have conducted a training needs analysis which examined the learning needs of our staff and enabled consultation with key stakeholders. In line with Wendy Williams' requirements set out in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan, we engaged with external stakeholders to shape the learning products.

We plan to launch the first stage of learning activity this month. This will be a series of pages linking to historical Windrush related resources on the Home Office intranet page, available to all Home Office staff members. This follows increased and extended consultation, which was considered necessary ahead of the launch.

Consultation, scoping and build is underway to develop the full range of bite-sized, blended learning products with experts from external organisations and academia informing content design and considerations.

Further materials and resources will become available for staff across the summer period to build momentum and boost conversations. These products are designed as a pre-cursor to the full launch from beginning of Quarter 3.

Tim Farron: [\[32342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether, with reference to the Answer of 18 May 2021 to Question 263 on the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, what the planned completion date is for publishing an evaluation of the compliant environment policy and associated measures.

Priti Patel:

We are taking a phased approach to the review of the compliant environment so that any evaluation is robust and any data collected is properly analysed and reviewed by experts.

As set out in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan, the initial analysis of data and evidence on the compliant environment will be completed by Autumn 2021.

Wendy Williams will return to review progress in September 2021.

Tim Farron: [\[32343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review, when the draft ethical framework for decision making will be published.

Priti Patel:

We are committed to developing and publishing an Ethical Decision-making Model as part of the Windrush Comprehensive Improvement Plan and in response to Recommendation 17 of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review.

The purpose of the model is to prompt decision makers to consider the impact of their proposed decision and whether there are any unintended consequences, ensuring that the right decision is made first time.

The model does not replace existing immigration legislation, rules, or guidance, nor does it constitute a separate route for caseworkers to exercise discretion or grant leave.

We are committed to publishing the ethical decision-making model and intend to do so by the autumn.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ Parliament: Coronavirus****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[34559]**

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what steps the House of Commons Commission is taking to protect the safety of all Parliamentary staff from covid-19.

Sir Charles Walker:

The House of Commons Commission has ensured that the House Service has implemented the working safely during coronavirus guidance to ensure we remain a Covid-secure workplace.

At every stage of the Government roadmap, or when updated guidance has been published, the Parliamentary Covid risk assessment has been reviewed and updated to ensure the appropriate mitigations are put in place. The latest version of the risk assessment was published in the last week, incorporating Government guidance on 'how to stay safe and help prevent the spread from 19 July' and the sector specific guidance published on the 14th July.

The risk assessment has been made available to all and can be found at

<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/transparency-publications--hoc-transparency-publications/health-and-safety/hop-v1-hop-covid-risk-assessment-issued.pdf>

To complement the Parliamentary Covid risk assessment the individual risk assessment tool has been in use since November 2020, to allow the House Service to identify those at higher risk and ensure appropriate measures are in place.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Buildings: Inspections****Catherine West:****[32468]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many EWS1 qualified fire assessors have (a) received their training and (b) been deployed in each month since January 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

In November, we announced nearly £700,000 to train up to 2,000 more assessors, which should speed up the valuation process for homeowners in cases where an EWS1 form is required. This training is being delivered by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). This training commenced in January, and there are now around 880 candidates enrolled on the course. Following successful completion, they will be able to carry out EWS1 assessments.

■ Camping Sites: Planning Permission

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[32365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when his Department plans to make a decision on temporarily suspending the need for planning permission on authorised temporary campsites due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Christopher Pincher:

A statement was made to the house on 28 June 2021 about supporting tourism in England. This introduced temporary provisions to stay in force over the course of this holiday season, due to expire on 31 October 2021. The statement instructs local authorities to exercise their discretion in regard to planning enforcement, and only take action against pop up campsites or the expansion of existing campsites where there are significant adverse effects on amenity, public health and safety or the environment.

■ Derelict Land: Planning Permission

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[34510\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what data his Department holds on the number of brownfield sites that have been granted planning permission in England since January 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not hold information on the information requested.

It is for each local authority to consider how best the land in its area should be used, and to plan accordingly, and to identify and publish in its Brownfield Register those sites it finds suitable for housing-led redevelopment.

■ Planning Permission: Somerset

David Warburton:

[\[34000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of nutrient neutrality requirements on levels of approval of planning applications in Somerset.

Christopher Pincher:

We do not collect information on the number of planning applications that are delayed or not approved due to the nutrient pollution issue, but this data may be held at a local level by Local Planning Authorities. As such as we have not made a direct assessment of the number of planning applications that have not been approved due to the nutrient pollution issue in the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar. The Government is working to tackle nutrients pollution. Together with DEFRA, we have set up a monthly Government task force involving Natural England and the Environment Agency to ensure a clear action plan is in place, focusing on solutions for both permitting housebuilding to resume while not compromising the condition of

Protected Sites. Alongside this, we are continuing to support Local Planning Authorities through the work of the Planning Advisory Service.

■ **Planning: Parliamentary Scrutiny**

Ruth Cadbury: [\[32413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to subject the upcoming planning Bill to pre-legislative scrutiny.

Christopher Pincher:

We will be publishing a full response to the Planning for the Future White Paper.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ **Arms Trade: Israel**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[34506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason information on licences granted for the export of arms to Israel is not released for six months after those licences were granted.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Official licensing statistics are published on a quarterly basis, three and a half months after the end of the reported time period. For example, data for 1st January to 31st March 2021 was published 13th July 2021.

This is to allow for any reporting delays to be captured in the data, checking processes to be carried out, etc. These processes are to ensure accurate and reliable statistics in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[34507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of varying the terms of any licences issued for the export of arms to Israel as a result of the violence in that country and the neighbouring Palestinian Territory in May 2021.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government takes its export responsibilities seriously and will continue to assess all export licences in accordance with the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria (the 'Consolidated Criteria'). HM Government will not grant an export licence if to do so would be inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria.

We continue to monitor the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories closely, and we will take action to suspend, refuse or revoke licences – in line with the Consolidated Criteria – if circumstances require.

■ Trade Advisory Groups

Imran Hussain:

[\[32418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on how many occasions each trade advisory group has met since 1 January 2021; and how long did each of those meetings last.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The duration of each meeting has ranged from one to two hours.

TRADE ADVISORY GROUP	NUMBER OF MEETINGS SINCE 1 ST JANUARY 2021
Agri-food	2
Automotive, Aerospace and Marine	2
British Manufactured and Consumer Goods	2
Chemicals	2
Creative Industries	2
Financial Services	2
Investment	3
Life Sciences	2
Professional Advisory Services	2
Telecoms and Technology	2
Transport	2

■ Trade Agreements: Religion

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[34006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that trade deals respect the rights of religious minorities.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all. HM Government regularly reports on violations of these freedoms, including in an annual report published by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

We are clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of rights and responsibilities. We will continue to take a balanced approach with our partners, delivering the best outcome for the United Kingdom, maximising the benefits of trade and upholding our values.

JUSTICE**■ Probation: Contracts****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[34473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to The future of the Probation Service: Government Response to the Committee's 18th Report of 2019–21, response to Recommendation 8, when the independent review of bidding under the Dynamic Framework will be published.

Alex Chalk:

The independent review of the Dynamic Framework will be published by the independent reviewer, Richard Oldfield by Autumn.

All 110 contracts for Day 1 services have been awarded and approximately two-thirds of contract value has been awarded to VCSE organisations. These were fixed price contracts for rehabilitative services commissioned through the Dynamic Framework, with a volume cap (with volume bands applying only in larger contracts) to mitigate financial risk to suppliers as a result of volume movement.

The Dynamic Framework is designed to allow for commissioning at regional, police force area or local authority level depending on what is most appropriate for a given service. Regional Probation Directors have flexibility to develop commissioning plans that best meet their needs.

We also published more detailed data on suppliers and their supply chains to be in the procurement portal (which is open to any party that requests access) on 21 May 2021.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE**■ House of Commons Chamber: Coronavirus****Rachael Maskell:**[\[33277\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, what steps he plans to take to protect hon. Members who have not yet received their second covid-19 vaccine and are potentially at risk of infection if social distancing and mask wearing is not observed in the Commons Chamber.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

On Monday 19 July 2021, the majority of legal restrictions in England were removed and people are now expected to protect themselves and others through informed choice. I encourage all adults to take up the offer of two vaccine doses, to protect themselves and others against covid. Guidance on social distancing and mask wearing in the House of Commons are matters for the House authorities and the Commission to agree, rather than the Government and Mr Speaker has written to Members to encourage them to wear a face covering when in the Chamber. The House has already agreed that arrangements for proxy voting and virtual participation

in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and committees should remain in place until the House rises for the summer recess.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33278\]](#)

To ask the Leader of the House, if he will take steps to ensure that hon. Members will be able to participate in proceedings in a fully socially distanced area of the Chamber in which hon. Members will also be required to wear face coverings after 19 July 2021.

Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg:

On Monday 19 July 2021, the majority of legal restrictions in England were removed and people are now expected to protect themselves and others through informed choice. Guidance on social distancing and mask wearing in the House of Commons are matters for the House authorities and the Commission to agree, rather than the Government and Mr Speaker has written to Members to encourage them to wear a face covering when in the Chamber. Prayer cards to reserve seats have also been reinstated, Erskine May part one, paragraph 6.51 states:

In the Commons no place is allotted to any Member, but by custom the front bench on the right hand of the Chair (called the Treasury bench or government front bench) is appropriated for the members of the administration. The front bench on the opposite side, though other Members occasionally sit there, is reserved by convention for the leading members of the Opposition. It is not uncommon for senior Members who are in the habit of attending in one place to be allowed to occupy it as a matter of courtesy. Members who have no such claim to a seat must be present at prayers if they wish to secure the right to a particular seat until the rising of the House (Standing Order Nos 7 and 8). Members may leave cards upon seats to indicate that they intend to attend prayers (and so secure seats for the remainder of the sitting). These 'prayer cards' are dated and must be obtained personally by the Member who wishes to use them from an attendant who is on duty in the House for that purpose from 8 am until the House meets.

The House has already agreed that the arrangements for proxy voting and virtual participation in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and committees should remain in place until the House rises for the summer recess.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Marco Longhi:

[\[902950\]](#)

What steps the Government is taking to help create jobs and attract investment in Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government is committed to creating jobs and attracting investment in Northern Ireland - a key part of our plans to level up across the UK.

The Government's 'Plan for Jobs' has protected jobs and livelihoods. And we have committed £600m to City & Growth Deals to help boost the economy, enhancing skills and creating new jobs such as the 100+ announced by Tech firm Iqale.

We are also working with DIT and Invest NI to attract inward investment, including by highlighting Northern Ireland's strengths at a NI showcase event in London in September.

Geraint Davies: [\[902952\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) representatives of social media platforms on tackling sectarian abuse and incitement online.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[902953\]](#)

What discussions he has held with cabinet colleagues and social media platforms on tackling sectarian abuse and incitement online.

Mr Robin Walker:

Online abuse is an issue that affects all four nations of the United Kingdom and it is important that we work together to keep people safe from such abuse.

In May, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport published its draft Online Safety Bill. The Northern Ireland Department of Justice, who have lead responsibility in Northern Ireland for tackling sectarian abuse and incitement online, has been engaged in this work.

Rob Roberts: [\[902959\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on co-ordinating a UK wide response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I continue to hold regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues as part of the Government response to covid-19. This includes regular meetings with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and, of course, the First and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland.

Although each devolved administration controls its own public health policy, we have been coordinating our responses to Covid, seeking alignment in policy and approach where appropriate, to ensure we were able to tackle the pandemic.

This joined-up approach has been pivotal in delivering the successful vaccine rollout right across the UK which has seen over 995,493 of the adult population in Northern Ireland receive both doses of the vaccine. It will be important that we maintain this collective approach as we seek to recover from the pandemic.

■ UK Trade with EU: Northern Ireland

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[32366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and I meet regularly with colleagues to discuss matters relating to Northern Ireland, including the implementation of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol.

It is imperative that the Protocol is operated in a pragmatic and proportionate way to ensure that it impacts as little as possible on the people of Northern Ireland. The UK is working hard and in good faith to find solutions. We need to find a way forward, a new balance of arrangements, adapted to the practical reality of what we have seen since January, and based on the common interests we all share.

The Government set out its approach to the Protocol in Parliament today.

SCOTLAND**■ Internet: Harassment****Ruth Jones:**[\[34045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Scottish Government and (b) social media platforms on tackling abuse online.

Mr Alister Jack:

Scotland Office officials and officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have been working closely with officials in the Devolved Administrations, including in the Scottish Government, throughout the development of proposals regarding the now published draft Online Safety Bill, and will continue to engage throughout the legislative process.

The new regulatory framework will hold platforms to account for tackling harmful content and behaviours online.

TRANSPORT**■ Cycling: Kensington High Street****Andy Slaughter:**[\[34468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what communication took place between his Department and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea prior to that council's decision to remove the temporary cycle infrastructure on Kensington High Street; and whether his Department advised against the removal of the temporary cycle lanes in that location.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Transport in London is devolved meaning the Department has no role in respect of borough decisions of this sort, which are a matter for the Mayor of London. The Department was not, therefore, formally consulted on the Royal Borough's plans. As a general point, the Department agrees that local authorities should not remove cycle

lanes before their impacts have been properly assessed, and will shortly issue further advice to authorities on this matter.

Andy Slaughter:

[\[34469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding was allocated to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea for the building of the temporary cycle infrastructure on Kensington High Street, and whether those funds are planned to be clawed back following the removal of the scheme in response to his Department's guidance to local authorities.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has been allocated a total of around £1 million from the Department's Active Travel Fund and Transport for London's London Streetspace Programme. This has supported a number of active travel measures in its area in response to the pandemic including school streets, low traffic neighbourhoods, changes to the public realm to allow greater social distancing, and cycle lanes like the one on Kensington High Street. Funding is generally transferred once schemes are delivered and once claims are brought forward by each Borough, meaning that the total amount of funding provided to date is much less than the total allocated. Borough payments are due to be finalised in September 2021, and will reflect scheme delivery in each area. No funding has been or will be provided to the Royal Borough to cover the costs of removing the cycle lane on Kensington High Street.

In common with other authorities in London and elsewhere, the Royal Borough's performance in delivering active travel infrastructure is being taken into account in all future funding allocations. The delivery of active travel schemes in London and decisions on active travel funding for individual boroughs are overseen by a group including senior representatives from the Department for Transport and Transport for London.

The Department will be issuing updated statutory Network Management Duty guidance to all local transport authorities shortly which will make clear that they should always leave cycling and walking schemes in place for long enough for their impacts to be properly assessed.

■ **DiDi: Data Protection**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[32560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to ascertain where ride-hailing service DiDi stores data from UK riders and drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

It is for the company themselves to ensure that they comply with relevant data protection legislation and, if necessary, to satisfy the Information Commissioner's Office, as regulator, that they are doing so.

■ Great British Railways: York

Rachael Maskell: [\[33982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of Great British Railways being headquartered in York.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We are still in the early stages of the Rail Transformation Programme and will consider options for the location of Great British Railways' headquarters in due course.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences

Jessica Morden: [\[32333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is taking to prioritise driving license (a) applications and (b) amendments for heavy goods vehicle drivers.

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.

■ Public Transport: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[34529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to require (a) face coverings and (b) social distancing on public transport beyond 19 July 2021 to help tackle the spread of covid-19.

Rachel Maclean:

On 19 July, many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed through the pandemic were lifted. This included the requirement to wear face coverings on

public transport and the social distancing rules (2m or “1m+”). Instead of legal mandate, Government expects and recommends that people continue to wear face coverings in crowded areas, which includes public transport.

■ **Taxis: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell: [\[32438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the taxi sector on the wearing of face coverings and ventilation in taxis in response to the higher levels of covid-19 transmission in that sector.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department for Transport has engaged with the taxi and private hire vehicle sector through the COVID pandemic. This engagement informed the guidance issued by the Department on actions that drivers, operators and owners of taxis or private hire vehicles can take to protect against coronavirus; this included the wearing of face coverings and ventilation in vehicles.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[33864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of recognising non-NHS administered covid-19 vaccines to allow quarantine-free travel from amber list countries for people who have been vaccinated overseas.

Robert Courts:

The government is working closely with medical and public health experts and will provide an update in due course on the approach to vaccinated individuals from other countries.

TREASURY

■ **Children: Day Care**

Jon Cruddas: [\[32294\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the cost for providers of delivering the Government's tax-free childcare scheme during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

Tax Free Childcare (TFC) is delivered by the Childcare Service via GOV.UK. Parents and childcare providers manage their accounts via the Service.

There is not a cost to parents or providers in managing their accounts. A small number of providers may incur set up costs to ensure their processes are compatible with the online system. HM Revenue & Customs, who administer TFC, do not hold this information.

■ Nuclear Power: Finance

Sarah Champion:

[\[34504\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the International Capital Markets Association Green Bonds Principles including nuclear energy, and the Government's Green Financing Framework excluding nuclear energy, if he will reconsider the exclusion of nuclear energy from the Green Financing Framework.

John Glen:

The government recognises that reaching net zero emissions by 2050 will require power to be generated from low carbon sources. As set out in the Government's Energy White Paper last autumn, nuclear power will play an important role in achieving net zero. The UK Government Green Financing Framework explicitly states that nuclear power is, and will continue to be, a key part of the UK's low-carbon energy mix.

Some energy sources have been excluded from the UK Government Green Financing Framework, including nuclear energy. This is in line with current international market standards for sovereign green bonds. The Green Bond Principles published by the International Capital Market Association do not address the question of nuclear energy. All other major sovereigns have explicitly excluded nuclear energy in their green bond frameworks.

The UK Government Green Financing Framework does not represent an assessment of what the government considers 'green' or affect an expenditure's eligibility for traditional financing instruments. We will review the framework on a regular basis with the aim of adhering to best practices in the market.

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

■ Overseas Aid

Rachael Maskell:

[\[32441\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the (a) decline in GDP and (b) reduction of the aid target to 0.5 per cent of GDP on the total amount of Official Development Assistance.

Steve Barclay:

In the context of unprecedented economic and fiscal circumstances, the Government decided at the 2020 Spending Review to temporarily reduce the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget to spend the equivalent of 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) on overseas aid in 2021.

As usual, the FCDO National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development', provides a breakdown of UK ODA expenditure for each calendar year. Final 2020 spend will be published in Statistics on International Development in the

autumn this year. Final ODA spend for subsequent years will be published in a similar manner.

The Government remains committed to the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 and to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI as ODA once the fiscal situation allows. The Chancellor's Written Ministerial Statement of 12th July 2021 sets out the responsible fiscal circumstances under which the Government will return to 0.7 per cent.

■ Tax Avoidance

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[33137\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether there is any stipulation within the appointments procedures of his Department that would prevent a person who was previously a member of a tax avoidance vehicle from becoming an official within his Department.

Kemi Badenoch:

HM Treasury's appointment procedures set out that all Civil Servants working in the Department must follow the Civil Service Code, which includes a commitment to the Civil Service and its values.

Furthermore, any external interests are required to be declared to HM Treasury upon joining the organisation, plus ongoing as they arise thereafter.

■ Tom Cooper

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[32300\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether declarations of interest were received by UK Government Investments from Tom Cooper on his appointment as a Director in 2017 in respect of (a) Inside Track 1 LLP, (b) Inside Track 2 LLP, and (c) Ingenious Film Partners 2 LLP, when he was appointed as a Director in 2017.

Kemi Badenoch:

As with all external interests of its staff, UKGI discussed the disclosure of Tom Cooper's membership and passive investment interest in film partnerships managed by Ingenious Media at the time of his appointment. Tom Cooper is not and has not been a director of these entities.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[32301\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps UK Government Investments took to ensure there were no conflicts of interest in the appointment of Tom Cooper as a Director in 2017; and whether other directorships were required to be declared as part of the appointment process for that post.

Kemi Badenoch:

UK Government Investments (UKGI) requires all staff, including directors, to declare any external appointments on joining the organisation and on an ongoing basis where new appointments arise during the course of their appointment at UKGI. This is to

ensure there are no conflicts of interest arising from its staff holding external posts and so any potential conflicts of interest can be managed appropriately.

■ **UK Government Investments: Directors**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[32303\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will require directors of UK Government Investments to publish details of their commercial clients.

Kemi Badenoch:

The details of external appointments and interests held by UKGI Board members, including non-executive and executive directors, are published in UKGI's annual report. UKGI staff are required to declare the details of any external appointments internally in line with UKGI's policy. These interests are not published. There are currently no plans to change this policy.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Bereavement Support Payment: Cohabitation**

Patricia Gibson: [\[34518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to rulings of the (a) Supreme Court in 2018 and (b) High Court in 2020, what plans the Government has to ensure that cohabiting couples are recognised as being entitled to bereavement support payments.

Patricia Gibson: [\[34519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress the Government has made on ensuring that cohabiting couples are treated equitably for Bereavement Support Allowance.

Guy Opperman:

On 15th July 2021, we laid the draft proposal for a Bereavement Benefits (2021) Remedial Order before Parliament.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bereavement-benefits-proposal-for-implementation-of-the-mclaughlin-2018-and-jackson-2020-judgments>

This proposes to extend eligibility for Widowed Parent's Allowance and Bereavement Support Payment to surviving cohabittees with dependent children.

■ **Food Banks**

Alex Norris: [\[32495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the suitability of local authority-run emergency food support schemes for people with special dietary requirements.

Alex Norris:

[\[32496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that people with special dietary requirements are able to access appropriate emergency food support from their local authority.

Will Quince:

Local Authorities in England have powers to run Local Welfare Assistance Schemes at their discretion, which may include emergency support. It is for Local Authorities to assess need in their area and to determine the design of any such scheme, including eligibility, access and nature of provision, giving due consideration to their duties under the Equality Act and other relevant legislation. No assessment has been made by DWP of the suitability of local authority-run emergency food support schemes for people with special dietary requirements.

Since 1 December 2020, DWP has allocated funding to upper tier Local Authorities in England, through the Covid Winter Grant Scheme and the Covid Local Support Grant, to provide additional support to families and individuals who may be struggling with the cost of food and essential utility bills due to the pandemic. We have now extended this temporary scheme for a final time with an additional £160 million in funding between 21 June and 30 September, taking total funding under the scheme to £429 million. This brings the end date for this scheme past the lifting of restrictions, supporting families who might need additional help to get back on their feet as the vaccine rollout continues and our economy recovers. This scheme recognises that Local Authorities are best placed to understand needs in their area.

This year, we are also investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children will benefit from a range of support, including a healthy and nutritious meal that takes into account dietary needs as well as fun and engaging activities and it is for the Local Authority who delivers the programme in their area to give due consideration to their duties under the Equality Act and other relevant legislation.

■ Industrial Health and Safety

Marion Fellows:

[\[33257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department holds on the number of employers that have had action taken against them as a result of not providing a covid-19 secure workplace for clinically extremely vulnerable employees.

Mims Davies:

Since the start of the pandemic, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has carried out more than 300,000 interventions to check how businesses are implementing measures to reduce transmission of covid-19 at their sites. This includes carrying out 282,745 covid-19 spot checks, responding to 22,486 workplace covid-19 concerns and 712 covid-19 outbreaks.

Specific data relating to which of these interventions relates to the provision of Covid-secure workplaces for clinically extremely vulnerable employees, is not collated centrally. However, I can confirm that where inspectors identify that dutyholders have not provided a covid-19 secure workplace, including for clinically extremely vulnerable workers, they will take action to ensure compliance, either by providing verbal advice, issuing written correspondence or serving an enforcement notice

As at 16 July 2021, in relation to all covid-19 matters, inspectors have taken action against dutyholders in 13,483 cases, including 11,063 cases resulting in verbal advice, 2,113 in written correspondence and 307 in notices.

Note: Figures were obtained from HSE's live operational database and are subject to change, e.g., as there can be a delay of up to ten working days before information is uploaded onto the system .

■ Industrial Health and Safety: Coronavirus

Marion Fellows:

[\[33255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that employers (a) follow the latest covid-19 guidelines for workplaces and (b) ensure that workplaces are safe for extremely clinically vulnerable employees.

Marion Fellows:

[\[33256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance her Department provides to employers to make them aware of their legal requirements to protect employees who are extremely clinically vulnerable.

Mims Davies:

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

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

Employers' health and safety responsibilities include taking reasonable steps to protect all workers and others from the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in connection with their work activities. As these control measures apply to all workers, regardless of their relative levels of vulnerability or the potential outcome, there are

no expectations of additional control measures for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) workers or the need for individual risk assessments.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advises employers to have individual discussions with their CEV employees about any workplace concerns and understand what is in place to protect them. There is specific guidance on the HSE website to support employers to do this <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/protect-people.htm>

■ Kickstart Scheme

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[34458]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what methodology she uses to evaluate the effectiveness of the Kickstart scheme across the regions and nations of the UK.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions will be monitoring and evaluating the Kickstart Scheme throughout and after its implementation, and will continue to evaluate the longer term outcomes for Kickstart participants after they have completed their six-month job placements.

The evaluation will include large scale surveys to capture the views and experiences of Kickstart participants and of employers and gateway organisations. The evaluation will consider how experiences and outcomes from the scheme vary and examine how participants' and employers' characteristics, local context and local approaches to delivery affect experiences. Qualitative case-studies will provide a detailed understanding of how different aspects of the scheme interact and we will draw on available data and insights.

We will publish the findings of the evaluation once complete.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Mary Glendon:

[32392]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many disabled people who first claimed personal independence payment in 2020 are waiting for their claim to be processed.

Justin Tomlinson:

Data to 30th July 2021 will be published on 14th September 2021, as part of the next scheduled release of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Official Statistics.

At 30th April 2021 (the latest available data) 59,000 initial claims for Personal Independence Payment registered in 2020 were awaiting clearance. This includes both new claims to PIP and reassessments from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to PIP and is 10% of the 614,000 initial claims for PIP registered in 2020.

We are committed to ensuring that people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment (PIP) 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.

Notes

Data Source: PIP Atomic Data Store (ADS)

- The number and proportion of PIP claims registered in 2020 and awaiting clearance at 30 th April 2021 is unpublished. It should be used with caution and it may be subject to future revision.
- Data is based on initial clearances only (prior to any reconsideration and appeal action).
- Data provided is for Great Britain only.

■ Poverty: Children and Families

Sir Alan Campbell:

[\[32285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of self-isolation as a result of covid-19 on levels of poverty among children and families; and if she will make a statement.

Will Quince:

No assessment has been made. It is not possible to measure the impact of self-isolating in the data that we use to measure poverty.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2020/21. This included around £7.4 billion of Covid-related welfare policy measures.

The Government through the Department for Health and Social Care introduced the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme which provides financial support to people on low incomes who have to self-isolate, if they are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result. Eligible individuals are able to access a payment of £500. The government has released £176 million of funding for the scheme so far.

■ Social Security Benefits: Hemsworth

Jon Trickett:

[\[34452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in Hemsworth constituency are in receipt of any type of welfare payment as at 16 July 2021.

Will Quince:

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

The Department does publish Experimental Statistics on Benefit Combinations and the latest available statistics to November 2020, which can be broken down by parliamentary constituency, are available on the Department's Stat-Xplore website:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users of Stat-Xplore is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

Statistics for a majority of the individual benefits administered by the Department are available at:

[Statistics at DWP - Department for Work and Pensions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/statistics-at-dwp)

Most of these statistics are available by parliamentary constituency on the Stat-Xplore website.

The Department also publishes annual benefit expenditure tables and the latest publication by parliamentary constituency is for 2019/20 and available at:

[Benefit expenditure and caseload tables 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/benefit-expenditure-caseload-tables-2020)

■ State Retirement Pensions

Damien Moore:

[32505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department will take to implement its commitments on the triple lock for state pensions.

Guy Opperman:

As a result of the Triple Lock, the full yearly basic State Pension is now over £2,050 higher than in 2010 in cash terms.

Decisions on the rates for State Pensions are made each Autumn as part of the Up-rating review by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

We are committed to ensuring that older people are able to live with the dignity and respect they deserve; the State Pension is the foundation of support for older people

■ Universal Credit

Alex Norris:

[32500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of (a) the potential merits of excluding mandatory travel to work expenditure from income for universal credit purposes and (b) the effect of the inclusion of that expenditure as income for universal credit purposes on the ability of claimants to seek further employment.

Will Quince:

No such assessment has been done.

Universal Credit provides support for everyday living expenses. Any earnings an employee receives would normally be expected to cover the costs of travel to and from work, irrespective of whether or not the employee was also claiming Universal Credit.

To keep Universal Credit as simple as possible, the definition of earnings aligns very closely to the rules in tax legislation (Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 (ITEPA)), so that rules across tax and benefits are aligned where possible. Any

allowable expenses which are wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred as part of the duties of employment are not counted as employed earnings and would be excluded from the calculation of a Universal Credit Award. Travel from home to a permanent workplace is not an allowable expense for tax purposes.

The Flexible Support Fund is a discretionary fund and can be used by staff to remove barriers when a claimant is starting work for example it can cover the first 3 months travel costs. Where there are difficulties with public transport work coaches can consider funding for pedal cycles and e bikes to allow people to get to their place of employment. Discussion s should be held with their work coach in the first instance around this type of support.

Stephen Morgan: **[33319]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claimants had a managed payment to landlord arrangement in place in England in (a) January 2020 and (b) June 2021.

Will Quince:

Monthly statistics on the number of Households on Universal Credit, including those that make use of a Managed Payment to Landlord Arrangement, are published, and a breakdown by country to February 2021 can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ Universal Credit: Overpayments

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: **[33312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to prevent (a) universal credit overpayments and (b) the subsequent debt caused by those overpayments.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: **[33313]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the adequacy of the support available to those required to repay overpayments of universal credit.

Will Quince:

DWP recognises that stopping fraud and error before it happens and preventing debt is the best approach, both for Government and claimants alike, and it should be noted that, during a period when we have faced the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19, fraud and error in the benefits system remains low, with 95% of benefits, worth more than £200 billion, paid correctly in 2020/21.

We continue to invest in fraud and error prevention, with the Chancellor announcing £44m at the Spring Budget to support the expansion of both our Integrated Risk and

Intelligence Service and our new Enhanced Checking Service and the development of Transaction Risking as a means of identifying high risk claims.

Our Annual Report and Accounts published 15 July 2021 provides more information on what we are doing to prevent overpayments occurring –

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021>

Where an overpayment does occur, the Department has a responsibility to recover the money without creating undue financial hardship. In Universal Credit, all overpayments are recoverable. Where recovery is made by deduction from Universal Credit, there is a limit placed on the overall amount that can be deducted. Formerly 40% of the Universal Credit Standard Allowance, this was reduced from 30% to 25% in April 2021.

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

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

DWP is also committed to HM Treasury’s Breathing Space policy, which provides citizens with problem debt the right to legal protections from creditor action for a period of time in order to enable them to receive debt advice and enter into an appropriate debt solution.

■ Universal Credit: Restart Programme

Jonathan Reynolds:

[34480]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants are eligible for support through the Restart scheme.

Mims Davies:

Over the course of 3 years of referrals, the Restart Scheme will provide intensive, tailored employment support to help over 1 million Universal Credit claimants back towards sustained employment.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Housing Revenue Accounts

Helen Hayes:

[33987]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 29857 on Housing Revenue Accounts, what assessment he has made of the impact of (a) fire safety remediation works and (b) carbon reduction retrofitting on the levels of debt of housing revenue accounts.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Christopher Pincher:

The Government has made a series of funds available to local authorities in support of necessary fire safety remediation works. This includes the £400 million Social Sector Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) Cladding Remediation Fund, to fully fund the remediation of unsafe ACM cladding on social sector residential buildings over 18 million in height, including council-owned blocks. ~~All eligible publicly owned buildings have started remediation and 69% have completed.~~ **Remediation has either completed or started on 157 social sector residential buildings (98% of social sector buildings, equating to 100% of buildings identified at 31 December 2019).**

The Government has also provided support for local authorities carrying out important and necessary carbon reduction retrofitting, including the £3.8 billion Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), to support local authorities and housing associations to improve the energy performance of social rented homes. In addition, there will be around £160 million total funding for the first wave of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund programme in 2021/22, to make further progress towards delivering the government's commitment to invest in the energy performance of homes.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Use of the Industrial Development Act 1982 for Coronavirus related assistance

Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully): [\[HCWS222\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Hon. Members to bring to their attention spend under the Industrial Development Act 1982. In addition to the obligation to report on spend under the Industrial Development Act annually, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a new quarterly reporting requirement for spend which has been designated as coronavirus-related under the Coronavirus Act. This statement fulfils that purpose.

The statement also includes a report of the movement in contingent liability during the quarter. Hon. Members will wish to note that measures such as Local Authority grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and tax measures such as the suspension of Business Rates are not provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 and hence are not included below.

This report covers the first quarter of 2021, from 1 January to 31 March 2021, in accordance with the Coronavirus Act.

The Written Ministerial Statement covering the fourth quarter of 2020 was published on May 17th, 2021.

Spend under the Coronavirus Act 2020

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay before Parliament details of the amount of assistance designated as Coronavirus related provided in each relevant quarter. In the period from 1 January to 31 March 2021, the following expenditures were incurred:

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2021	£ 1,058,687,252
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All expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 25 March 2020	£ 2,699,037,690
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Expenditure by Department

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF ASSISTANCE FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2021 PROVIDED BY:	
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	£ 968,013,744

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF ASSISTANCE FROM 1
JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2021 PROVIDED BY:

Department for Transport	£ 86,925,000
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs,	£ 3,748,507

Contingent liability under the Coronavirus Act 2020

CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2021	£ 5,666,529,651
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All contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020 £ 66,855,181,895

CABINET OFFICE

■ **Notification to Parliament of a Contingent Liability: Indemnification to UNFCCC**

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove):

[\[HCWS223\]](#)

I am writing to notify Parliament of a contingent liability that will be created when the government signs the Host Country Agreement for hosting the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), known as COP26. The Host Country Agreement (HCA) will be signed in October 2021, ahead of the conference taking place in Glasgow in November. The HCA includes a standard liability clause, which commits the host country to indemnify the UN or its personnel against any successful claim in respect of the Conference

To mitigate against HMG being liable for covering incidents outside of our control, we have asked the UNFCCC to take out an insurance policy to cover claims arising from misconduct or negligence on the part of UNFCCC or its personnel, which they are willing to do and have done for previous COPs. We believe it is appropriate to provide this indemnity to the UN as it is a mandatory requirement for host countries of COP. Although the liability is technically uncapped, my officials have reviewed incidents at previous COPs, and have assessed that the risk of the indemnity being called upon is low.

■ **Response to the 2021 Senior Salaries Review Body Report**

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove):

[\[HCWS231\]](#)

I am today announcing the Government's decision on pay for the senior civil service, senior military, senior managers in the NHS and the judiciary.

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services, including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against COVID-19.

The Government received the Senior Salary Review Body's report on 2021 pay for the senior civil service, senior military, senior managers in the NHS, and the judiciary on 28 June 2021. This will be presented to Parliament and published on GOV.UK.

The Government welcomes the Senior Salary Review Body's report and is grateful to the Chair and members for their valuable advice, observations and strategic recommendations outlined within it.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies, whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented government spending on the response to COVID-19.

In line with this, the Senior Salary Review Body was not asked to make any recommendations for consolidated pay increases for its remit group this year.

This is the first year the Senior Salary Review Body's remit group has been expanded to include all Very Senior Managers (VSMs) within the NHS and Executive Senior Managers (ESMs) within the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) arms-length bodies. They were asked to make observations on the current levels of pay for this group to use as a baseline for future years. The Government is pleased that the Senior Salary Review Body agrees that existing pay levels are appropriate and that their observations broadly reflect existing themes within the development of a new pay framework for VSMs within the NHS.

The Senior Salary Review Body made no specific pay recommendations for the 2021/22 pay year for the Senior Civil Service and judiciary and made two recommendations for the senior military.

The Government accepts the Senior Salary Review Body's recommendation to change the annual Incremental Progression date for senior military officers from 1 April to the anniversary of the date of promotion for senior military officers of 2-star rank and above.

The Government accepts the Senior Salary Review Body's recommendation to maintain the current pay differentials for senior medical and dental officers.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Update on the Government response to the loot box call for evidence**

Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Caroline Dinenage): [\[HCWS224\]](#)

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to respond to the loot box call for evidence. The call for evidence received over 30,000 responses which clearly reflects the immense amount of interest in the issue.

The Government takes concerns about potential harms relating to loot boxes in video games seriously. That is why we are continuing to thoroughly evaluate the evidence received to determine solutions that are both robust and proportionate in response to the issues identified from the evidence received. This will be set out in the government response which will be published in the coming months.

Ensuring that video game players are protected is also a responsibility that the Government shares jointly with the games industry. In recent months, we have continued to engage heavily with many in the industry about loot box concerns to determine the most effective solutions to issues identified from the evidence. This includes holding a ministerial roundtable with a number of games companies. Following the call for evidence we commissioned an external rapid evidence review and we are evaluating the findings of this alongside the evidence received from responses.

EDUCATION**■ Teachers Update**

The Secretary of State for Education (Gavin Williamson): [\[HCWS232\]](#)

The 31st report of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is being published today. Its recommendations cover the remit issued in December 2020, regarding the pay award for teachers that is due to be implemented from September 2021. The report will be presented to Parliament and published on Gov.uk.

The government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services, including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against Covid-19. I am extremely grateful to all teachers and leaders for the dedication they have shown in enabling schools to remain open and supporting pupils with remote education throughout the pandemic, to ensure pupils get the best possible education.

The government values the independent expertise and insight of the STRB and takes on board the useful advice and principles set out in response to the government's recommendations outlined in the report.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings

growth and increased redundancies, whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented government spending on the response to Covid-19.

My remit letter to the STRB welcomed views on uplifts for those Unqualified Teachers, earning below £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent).

The STRB has recommended a pay award of £250 for all teachers earning less than £24,000 (or the recommended equivalent value for teachers in the London pay areas). Their report outlines recommendations for how to implement this, including adjustments for London.

The STRB has also recommended that advisory pay points are reintroduced on the Unqualified Teacher pay range, as was the case for classroom teachers on the Main Pay Range and Upper Pay Range last year.

I am today confirming my proposed response is to accept these recommendations in full.

A full list of the recommendations and my proposed approach for implementation is attached as an annex.

I would like to reiterate that the £250 award should be paid to all eligible teachers, whether located on a published pay point or not, and that the pause on pay will apply to headline pay uplifts only. Teachers earning below the maximum of their pay range may be eligible for performance-related pay progression and teachers can also continue to apply for promotion. Academies, as usual, have the freedom to set their own pay policies.

Finally, this pay award will be affordable within school budgets due to this government's three-year investment package announced at the 2019 Spending Round. We are increasing core schools funding by £2.2 billion in the 2021-22 financial year, compared to 2020-21 – the second year of the three year school funding settlement from the 2019 Spending Round – and will increase it by a further £2.4 billion, to £52.2 billion in 2022-23 overall. As previously set out, the funding schools have previously received through the teachers' pay and pension grants will be part of schools' core funding allocations as determined by the schools national funding formula from 2021-22, and there will be no increase to these grants in respect of this year's pay award.

My officials will write to all of the statutory consultees of the STRB to invite them to contribute to a consultation on the Government's response to these recommendations and on a revised School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and Pay Order. The consultation will last for eight weeks.

Attachments:

1. Full list of STRB recommendations and response [210721 Teachers Update.docx]

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ DHSC update****Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):****[\[HCWS233\]](#)**

I am responding on behalf of my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister to both the 34th Report of the NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) and to the 49th Report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB). I am grateful to both Chairs and the members of both review bodies for their reports.

At the 2020 Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that pay uplifts in the public sector would be paused this year due to the challenging fiscal and economic context, but, given the unique impact of Covid-19 on the health service, and despite the challenging economic context, the Chancellor committed to continue to provide for pay rises for over 1 million NHS workers.

It is within this context and after careful consideration of both reports that we have chosen to accept the recommendations of both PRBs for 2021/22. In doing so, we have committed to uplifting the salaries of staff within the remit groups by 3% on a consolidated basis. This is expected to be a real-terms increase and nurses will receive an average increase of around £1,000. Overall, the awards amount to a cost to the NHS of £1.9bn for the Agenda for Change workforce and £0.3bn for Consultants.

This is not without its challenges given the economic and fiscal context.

This is an annual process and as is always the case, decisions about future awards will be considered in light of the fiscal context and ensuring awards are affordable and fair.

Investing in the NHS to ensure patients get the care they need as quickly as possible is also a key priority for this Government. We are delivering on our historic long-term settlement for the NHS, which will see NHS funding increase by £33.9 billion by 2023-24. To recognise the unprecedented pressure facing the NHS, the Government is providing £3bn of additional funding to the NHS in 2021/22 to support its recovery from the impacts of Covid.

The DDRB were asked not to make a pay recommendation for contractor General Medical Practitioners (GMPs), doctors and dentists in training or Specialty and Associate Specialist doctors moving onto new contracts as those groups are within multi-year deals. For doctors and dentists in training the multi-year deal will mean all junior doctor pay scales will have increased by 8.2% by the end of the deal, and in addition circa £90 million is being invested to reform the contract, including to create a new, higher pay point to recognise the most experienced doctors in training.

The Government is also committed to delivering 50,000 more nurses in the NHS by the end of this Parliament and this pay award will help us to ensure we can continue to recruit and retain the nurses we need to reach this target. The number of NHS nurses currently employed in CCGs and NHS Trusts is at the highest recorded level in England, and the latest published NHS Digital provisional data for April 2021 shows 303,800 FTE nurses in NHS Trusts and CCG's, almost 9,000 FTE more than April 2020.

Salaried GMPs

For salaried GMPs the minimum and maximum pay range set out in the model terms and conditions will be uplifted. As self-employed contractors to the NHS, it is for GMP practices to determine uplifts in pay for their employees.

Clinical Excellence Awards

The Government also acknowledges the DDRB's comments on Clinical Excellence Awards and their reasons for not recommending an increase in their value. With this in mind, we will progress our plans to reform these awards with a view to introducing new arrangements from 2022.

General Dental Practitioners

For General Dental Practitioners, there will be a 3% general uplift in the pay element of their contract backdated to April 2021.

The Government recognises the significant impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on NHS dentistry, as discussed within the DDRB report. In response to these challenges, the government has ensured that dentists receive their full contract value, minus deductions which are pre-agreed, in exchange for a reduced threshold of activity.

■ **Government Responses to the CQC 'Out of Sight - Who Cares?' Report and to Baroness Hollins' Interim Report on Seclusion and Restrictive Practice for People with a Learning Disability and Autistic People**

Minister of State for Care (Helen Whately):

[\[HCWS227\]](#)

Today we have published two formal responses to independent reports that the then Secretary of State for Health and Social Care commissioned to address and reduce the use of restrictive practice in the care of people with a learning disability or autistic people. The first response is to the recommendations made by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in its report 'Out of Sight – who cares?' published on 22 October 2020. The second response is to the independent interim report by Baroness Hollins reviewing the care and treatment of people with a learning disability or autistic people in long term segregation. A copy of these responses will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

We welcome these reports and strongly support their recommendations. It is our priority to ensure that the rights of people with a learning disability or autistic people are protected and that where needed they receive high-quality care in the least restrictive settings possible.

We have carefully considered these recommendations and are accepting in full or in principle the vast majority, including:

- Developing a pilot for a Senior Intervenor role, which will be focused on reducing the length of time people with a learning disability or autistic people remain unnecessarily in inpatient care in segregation. The pilot will be funded as part of a wider package of £31m to support learning disability and autism services, to address the diagnostic backlog as a result of the pandemic, and support

intervention to prevent children and young people with learning disability, autism or both escalating into crisis.

- Working with the Royal College of Psychiatrists to define good practice with respect to admission and discharge protocols, including the development of a clinical contract for admissions.
- Supporting the continuation of an independent review process which provides necessary scrutiny in the care and treatment of people who are subject to segregation. The reviews, chaired by independent experts, are aimed at developing bespoke recommendations, offering advice on implementing person-centred care plans and, where appropriate, moving the individual to less restrictive settings.
- Working with the CQC to ensure more transparent reporting about the use of restrictive interventions in order to improve practice and minimise all types of force used on patients so that it is genuinely only ever used as a last resort.

Our goal is to ensure that care for people with a learning disability and autistic people is therapeutic and beneficial and that the presumption is always that, individuals can be supported to live fulfilling lives in the community. We remain committed to delivering on the Government's manifesto commitment to improve how people with a learning disability and autistic people are treated in law and to make it easier for them to be discharged from hospital. The steps we are taking in responding to these recommendations support this commitment and are part of our wider work on Building the Right Support and the Mental Health Act White Paper.

■ **Publication of the Government response to the Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (IMMDS Review)**

Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health) (Ms Nadine Dorries): [\[HCWS225\]](#)

The Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review (IMMDS Review) was published on 8 July 2020.

On 11 January, I updated the House on the [government's progress in responding to the recommendations of the IMMDS Review](#).

I am pleased to today announce to the House the publication of the government's full response to the IMMDS review. We have accepted four of the nine strategic recommendations in full, one in principle and two in part. We have also accepted 46 of the 50 Actions for Improvement in full or in principle, one in part and one remains under consideration. We do not accept two of the Actions for Improvement.

This response sets out an ambitious programme of change, which at its core is about improving patient safety by:

- improving how the system listens to and responds to concerns raised by patients by putting patient voice at the centre of patient safety;

- strengthening the evidence base on which decisions are made, including through making sure the right data is collected and used; and
- improving the safety of medicines and devices, and embracing the new opportunities following the UK's departure from the European Union to reform regulatory frameworks.

Recommendation 1: the government should immediately issue a fulsome apology on behalf of the healthcare system to the families affected by Primodos, sodium valproate and pelvic mesh.

The government accepts recommendation 1.

In July 2020, the government apologised in full on behalf of the healthcare system to all the families affected by report for the time it has taken to listen and respond to their concerns. I salute their courage and persistence in coming forward to make these concerns heard; without their bravery, the review would not have been possible.

Listening to patients

The Review was commissioned because the government recognised and accepted that the system had taken too long to listen to patients. One of the key conclusions from the Report was that 'the system has not been listening as it should'. The government recognised the need for effective patient engagement to rebuild trust and ensure that patient voice was embedded in work to develop the full government response to the Report. We were pleased to announce in January that we had accepted the second part of the Report's ninth recommendation, for the establishment of a Patient Reference Group (the 'Group').

The purpose of the Group was to provide challenge, advice and scrutiny to the work to develop the government's response to the Report's recommendations. The Group represented a diverse range of experiences, and members include individuals who have been affected by or have an interest in pelvic mesh, sodium valproate, and Hormone Pregnancy Tests (HPTs), those who have been affected by or have an interest in other medicines or medical devices, and also those with a wider interest in patient safety. The Group met regularly and worked closely with officials to discuss the Report's recommendations in great detail. I met with the Group in June to listen to their feedback directly.

We are extremely grateful to the Group for their insight and honesty. The government response has undoubtedly been strengthened through listening to and learning from group members' experiences, knowledge and expertise. I am very pleased that the final report of the Patient Reference Group has been published alongside the government response today.

Recommendation 2: the appointment of a Patient Safety Commissioner who would be an independent public leader with a statutory responsibility. The commissioner would champion the value of listening to patients and promoting users' perspectives in seeking improvements to patient safety around the use of medicines and medical devices.

The government accepts recommendation 2.

Patient safety is a top priority for the healthcare system; we want to make the NHS the safest healthcare system in the world, and we must retain an absolute focus on achieving this goal.

As Members will know, the central recommendation in the Report is for the establishment of an independent Patient Safety Commissioner.

The government has accepted this recommendation, and we have already legislated for a Patient Safety Commissioner through the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 (MMD Act).

It is integral that patients are listened to in our healthcare system and the Commissioner will help to make sure patient voices are heard, as envisaged in the Report of the IMMDS Review.

The core role of the Commissioner will be to promote the safety of patients in the context of the use of medicines and medical devices and to promote the importance of the views of patients and other members of the public in relation to the safety of medicines and medical devices.

A public consultation is currently open seeking views on the proposed legislative details on the appointment and operation of the Commissioner. The consultation closes on 5 August 2021. After the consultation has closed, responses will be carefully considered and reviewed, and will feed into the drafting of the regulations on the appointment and operation of the Commissioner.

We plan to have the first Patient Safety Commissioner in post in the first half of 2022.

Recommendation 3: a new independent Redress Agency for those harmed by medicines and medical devices should be created based on models operating effectively in other countries. The Redress Agency will administer decisions using a non-adversarial process with determinations based on avoidable harm looking at systemic failings, rather than blaming individuals.

The government does not accept recommendation 3

As set out in the January statement, we have no current plans for a redress agency, as set out in recommendation 3.

We do not believe it is necessary to create a new agency for redress as it is already possible for the government and others to provide redress for specific issues where that is considered necessary. Neither do we believe that creating an agency would succeed in making products safer as the report suggests, or that grouping existing redress schemes through a single front door would add value for harmed patients.

Recommendation 4: separate schemes should be set up for each intervention – hormone pregnancy tests (HPTs), valproate and pelvic mesh – to meet the cost of providing additional care and support to those who have experienced avoidable harm and are eligible to claim.

The government does not accept recommendation 4.

While the government is sympathetic to the experiences of those patients who gave evidence to the report, our priority is to improve the future safety of medicines and medical devices. This includes not just the products themselves but also ensuring they are used in line with the latest evidence of best practice – in ways that are both effective and safe for patients. This means we will continue to focus our work on direct support for future safety, improve how the system listens to patients, and support and monitor the safety of clinical practice where medicines and devices are concerned. The MMD Act delivers further on our commitments to patient safety, embedding reform through legislation and delivering an ambitious programme of improvements medicines and medical devices.

Recommendation 5: networks of specialist centres should be set up to provide comprehensive treatment, care and advice for those affected by implanted mesh; and separately for those adversely affected by medications taken during pregnancy.

The government accepts recommendation 5 in part.

The government accepts the first part of recommendation 5; specialist centres for those adversely affected by implanted mesh.

Much progress has been made to establish the specialist mesh services, led by NHS England and Improvement. These services became operational on 1 April 2021, and there are now 8 specialist centres in operation across England. Good progress is being made towards the establishment of a ninth regional service with a South West provider, to ensure patients across the country can access these vital services. It is important that women have choice over their surgeon where possible and I am happy to confirm that when patients request treatment for mesh complications, they can exercise patient choice and be referred to another centre if they wish.

The Report of the IMMDS Review highlights the importance of the specialist services working together re-enforced the need for the commissioned mesh services to network across providers to ensure each service provides comprehensive treatment, care and advice services. I am pleased to confirm that the providers of specialised services for women with complications of mesh will meet annually from 2021 at a Clinical Summit to discuss data and outcomes.

Recognising the need for enhanced data collection on pelvic mesh, the government in 2018 announced the provision of £1.1m for the development of a comprehensive database of urogynaecological procedures, including vaginal mesh, to treat pelvic organ prolapse and stress urinary incontinence. I can update the House that the pelvic floor information system has started to receive live data, including historical data from July 2017 onwards, with an initial focus on supporting specialist services to report every pelvic floor and comparative procedure to this national database.

The Report of the IMMDS Review also recommends that the information system is accompanied by a retrospective audit of mesh procedures, and by the development of a patient reported outcome measure (PROM) or patient reported experience measure (PREM). I am pleased to announce to the House today that the government accepts both

these recommendations. NHS Digital has been commissioned to scope and deliver the retrospective audit. Subject to receiving high quality research bids, a new validated PROM for pelvic mesh procedures will be commissioned through the National Institute of Health Research in 2022. Additionally, earlier this year a £440,000 research study into ‘[Experiences of Urogynaecological services](#)’ was commissioned by the NIHR to feed into this vital work to develop a new PROM.

The government does not accept the second part of recommendation 5, specialist centres for those adversely affected by medications taken during pregnancy.

We recognise the underlying issue that there is a need to improve the care and support for the individuals and families affected by a range of medicines used in pregnancy, including valproate exposure. However, our view is that a network of new specialist centres is not the most effective way forward. We will instead take forward work to improve the care pathways for children and families affected by medicines in pregnancy, within existing services. This will include strengthening care pathways and tackling the variation in access to services across NHS regions.

Currently, services for all children with neurodevelopmental disorders are primarily managed by multidisciplinary teams within Child Development Centres, which are commissioned locally. These are then supported by regional clinical networks, and specialised neuroscience centres. A limited number of specialist centres focussed only on those affected by medications in pregnancy would not be able to provide the whole range of services that patients need, for example coordinating provision across local health, education and social care systems. It is important that patients who need ongoing care can access services as conveniently as possible, and many of these services are better delivered at a local level. Additionally, a new network of specialist centres could divert clinical expertise and potentially result in a reduced service for all the patient groups involved.

We will also continue work to improve the safety of medicines in pregnancy more widely, and to ensure that valproate is only prescribed where clinically appropriate.

Sodium Valproate

The Report of the IMMDS Review discusses sodium valproate (valproate) in much detail and contains a number of actions for improvement related to valproate. For this reason, we have dedicated a chapter in the government response to valproate.

The January statement updated on the significant work underway to ensure valproate is only used where clinically appropriate, and to improve patient safety for women and girls for whom there is no alternative medicine. The government does not however support calls to eliminate the use of valproate completely; for some women, it is the only drug which is able to control their epilepsy, and it is vital that women are able to access effective treatments.

I am pleased to update the House that much progress continues to be made. The first [report from the valproate registry](#) was published on 11 February 2021, and a second is planned for September 2021. The first report presents an important step to improving our

ability to monitor implementation and compliance with the Pregnancy Prevention Programme. There are plans to extend the registry to the whole of the UK and to expand it to include other anti-epileptic drugs later this year, as recommended by the Report. As recommended by the Report, NHS England and Improvement have recently sent a letter to all women of childbearing age who are prescribed valproate, including important safety reminders in relation to contraception, pregnancy and regular prescribing reviews.

I have also heard from patients that measures to reduce valproate prescribing and support women to make informed choices must be holistic and wide-ranging. I am pleased to announce that the MHRA is planning to consult on an amendment to the Human Medicines regulations which would require pharmacists to supply sodium valproate in the manufacturers original pack with a patient informational leaflet. This will ensure that prescriptions for valproate are dispensed with a patient information leaflet and information on risk minimisation measures.

Recommendation 6: the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) needs substantial revision particularly in relation to adverse event reporting and medical device regulation. It needs to ensure that it engages more with patients and their outcomes. It needs to raise awareness of its public protection roles and to ensure that patients have an integral role in its work.

The government accepts recommendation 6.

In the January Statement the government announced that the MHRA initiated a substantial programme of work to improve how it listens and responds to patients and the public, to develop a more responsive system for reporting adverse incidents, and to strengthen the evidence to support timely and robust decisions that protect patient safety

This is set out in detail in the MHRA's corporate delivery plan for 2021-23, '[Putting patients first – a new era for our Agency](#)', which was published on 4 July. This sets out the MHRA's future plans, which centre on: putting patients first; becoming a truly world-leading, enabling regulator; and protecting public health through excellence in regulation and science.

A key strand of this work is improving how the MHRA engages with patients, and ensures patients have an integral role in its work. In May this year, the MHRA published its draft [Patient and Public Involvement Strategy](#) for public consultation. This sets out how the Agency will deliver a step change in its involvement and engagement with patients. Following the consultation, the MHRA will publish the final strategy later this year.

I am pleased to confirm to the House that the MHRA's newly appointed Chief Safety Officer will lead the MHRA's ongoing implementation of the recommendations from the Report. This will help to ensure that the MHRA continues delivering on their commitment to keep patients safe. The post holder will oversee the development of a revitalised approach to vigilance of both medicines and medical devices.

Recommendation 7: a central patient-identifiable database should be created by collecting key details of the implantation of all devices at the time of the operation. This can then be linked to specifically created registers to research and audit the

outcomes both in terms of the device safety and patient reported outcomes measures.

The government accepts recommendation 7.

The government has legislated for a patient identifiable database in the MMD Act, which creates a power for the Secretary of State to regulate for the establishment of a UK-wide Medical Device Information System (MDIS)

The Report of the IMMDS Review rightly identifies the need for the healthcare system to centralise and standardise the collection, retention and analysis of data for monitoring the safety and effectiveness of implantable medical devices. In order to close the gap identified in the collection and analysis of this data, it is essential that the UK has a comprehensive system to ensure that implantable devices are effectively monitored and any issues affecting patient safety are responded to appropriately. As required by the MMD Act, the government is planning to hold public consultation on the MDIS regulations. Formal public consultation on the MDIS regulations will begin later this year with the aim of laying the regulations in 2022.

Alongside developing regulations, I can announce that over £11m has been set-aside for a package of work in 2021/22, involving partners across the healthcare system to scope, test and cost options for MDIS and other medical devices patient safety workstreams.

Recommendation 8: transparency of payments made to clinicians needs to improve. The register of the General Medical Council (GMC) should be expanded to include a list of financial and non-pecuniary interests for all doctors, as well as doctors' particular clinical interests and their recognised and accredited specialisms. In addition, there should be mandatory reporting for the pharmaceutical and medical device industries of payments made to teaching hospitals, research institutions and individual clinicians.

The government accepts recommendation 8 in principle.

The government accepts in principle the first part of recommendation 8, for greater transparency of doctors' interest.

We agree that lists of doctors' interests should be publicly available, but we do not think that the GMC register is the best place to hold this information. It is absolutely crucial that any published list of interests is meaningful and accessible to patients. Our approach is therefore for publications of interests to be held by healthcare providers at the local level, because patients know where healthcare professionals work, and are more likely to seek information from the organisation that provides their treatment and care. Additionally, at the local level healthcare providers can ensure patients have the necessary support to understand the relevant information

We also believe that it is not just doctors who must declare their interests, but rather all registered healthcare professionals. That is why we are going further than the recommendation, and we will make it a regulatory requirement that all registered healthcare professionals must declare their relevant interests. Registered healthcare professionals will be required to declare their relevant interests to their employer,

contractor, or the organisation where they are providing services. All healthcare providers will be required to collect, monitor, and publish a list of their employee's relevant interests. At the local level, healthcare providers must ensure that all declarations of interest are publicly available for patients to access, and providers can then ensure there is meaningful oversight of publications of interests.

These changes build on current NHS guidance, which states that all staff should declare interests and organisations should publish the interests of decision making on their website. These changes will also extend publication of declarations of interest to the private sector. We will continue to work with healthcare organisations across the NHS and independent sector, as well as regulators, to ensure there is appropriate implementation, governance, and enforcement of this approach.

The government also accepts in principle the second part of recommendation 8, for mandatory reporting of payments from the pharmaceutical and medical device industry.

The government agrees that transparency of medicine and medical device industry payments to clinicians and organisations is an important part of ensuring patient confidence. As with doctors' interests, it is important that this information is published and easily accessible for patients.

Regarding medicines, the government has listened to stakeholder concerns that the existing industry scheme is voluntary, and that more could be done to achieve consistent transparency in reporting of payments. We have listened to concerns from patient groups and others that a mandatory scheme is needed. We are exploring options to expand and reinforce current industry schemes, including making reporting mandatory through legislation.

Regarding medical devices, we recognise that the sector does not have any formal scheme for reporting payments. We have listened to stakeholder concerns that the current situation means that patients lack crucial information on a highly important area of clinical decision-making. We will work with the devices industry and other stakeholders on the options for introducing reporting of payments for the medical device sector, including making reporting mandatory through legislation.

Recommendation 9: the government should immediately set up a task force to implement this review's recommendations. Its first task should be to set out a timeline for their implementation.

The government accepts recommendation 9 in part.

As set out in the Statement of 11 January, the government has no plans to establish an independent taskforce to implement the Report's recommendations. As is convention with independent reports and inquiries, conclusions and recommendations are passed to government for consideration.

The government has considered the Report's recommendations carefully, and our response sets out an ambitious programme of change. We have accepted the majority of the Report's 9 strategic recommendations and 50 Actions for Improvement.

The actions set out in this response are a combination of well-established programmes of work and new initiatives. The government is committed to making rapid progress on all the areas set out in this response. To ensure that Parliament and patients can continue to hold the government to account, we will publish an update on progress to implement the government response in 12 months' time.

Conclusion

The Report of the IMMDS Review is a powerful call to action, and we are determined to deliver meaningful change through the government response.

I would like to once again thank the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP and the Rt Hon Theresa May MP for commissioning this landmark review, and to thank Baroness Cumberlege and the Review team for their diligence and dedication in conducting this review.

Above all, I would like to once again recognise and thank the women and their families, who fought to bring these issues to light and to have their stories heard.

The Report highlights a stark inequality in the healthcare system. We cannot ignore the fact that the Report of the IMMDS Review is one of several independent reports and inquiries to have concluded that our healthcare system disproportionately fails to listen to women and keep them safe. This government is determined to change this, not least through our work to develop the first ever Women's Health Strategy for England later this year.

I am depositing a copy of the Government Response and the Independent Report of the Patient Reference Group in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Publication of the national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid): [\[HCWS226\]](#)

Today I am announcing the publication of 'The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026'. The strategy is aimed at significantly improving the lives of autistic people in England.

This strategy builds on improvements made over the decade since the inception of the Autism Act in 2009. The Autism Act was enacted to tackle the multiple disadvantages that autistic people face. It is estimated that around 560,000 people in England are autistic and that autistic people die on average 16 years earlier than the general population. They experience poorer overall health outcomes and face substantial health inequalities in comparison to non-autistic people.

Since the Act's introduction, there have been two strategies, which have resulted in improved availability of services for autistic people, including diagnostic services, and significantly improved public awareness of what autism is. I want to pay particular tribute to our late colleague, my Rt Honourable Friend Dame Cheryl Gillan DBE MP, who was so instrumental in bringing forward this Act in 2009. She worked tirelessly to improve autistic people and their families' access to services through her role as Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA).

Today, I am delighted to announce the publication of the third iteration of the autism strategy, which sets out our vision for how we will make further progress on improving the lives of autistic people over the next 5 years. We have worked with my colleague Vicky Ford MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families on this new strategy, which extends to children and young people for the first time. This is in recognition of the importance of supporting autistic people throughout their lives, from the early years of childhood and through adulthood. We have also worked in partnership with other government departments to ensure the strategy addresses the wide range of issues that affect autistic people's whole lives.

The focus of this new strategy and the actions we are committing to have been informed by evidence including our National Call for Evidence undertaken in 2019, which received 2,745 responses from autistic people, their families and unpaid carers as well as organisations. We also involved self-advocates and family members in the development of the new strategy through our Autism Strategy Executive Group. In addition, the strategy was informed by the APPGA's 'The Autism Act, Ten Years On' report and independent research we commissioned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on autistic people, both of which involved autistic people and their families. I know the pandemic has created new challenges and exacerbated problems many autistic people already faced, including higher levels of loneliness and social isolation.

Today we also publish our response to the CQC's 'Out of sight – who cares?' report and our response to Baroness Hollins' and the independent Oversight Panel's recommendations regarding independent reviews for people with a learning disability and autistic people detained in long term segregation.

The new autism strategy is supported by an implementation plan for 2021 to 2022, which sets out actions we will take forward in the first year of the strategy. We will publish further implementation plans for subsequent years of the strategy, in line with future spending review rounds. The strategy sets out our vision for what we want autistic people and their families' lives to be like in 2026 across 6 priority areas, and the specific steps we, local government, the NHS and others will take to this end in this first year:

- Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society. To ensure that autistic people can take part in their communities without fear or judgment, just like everyone else, we are funding the development of and will test an autism public understanding initiative.
- Improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood. To enable children and young people to access the right support, we are providing funding to train education staff in autism, and we are strengthening and promoting pathways to employment, such as Supported Internships, traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Supporting more autistic people into employment. We will continue with our efforts to make Jobcentres more autism-inclusive, improve employer awareness and promote better access to employment support programmes for autistic people.

- Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people. To tackle these inequalities, we are investing £13 million to begin reducing diagnosis waiting times for children and young people, as well as adults, in line with the NHS Long Term Plan and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Recovery Action Plan.
- Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care. To make progress towards our targets of reducing the number of autistic people and people with a learning disability in inpatient mental health settings, we will take a number of actions. We are proposing to change the detention criteria in the Mental Health Act (1983) to prevent autistic people without a co-occurring mental health condition from being detained for treatment under section 3 of the Act. In addition, we are investing £40 million to improve community support, over £18 million to drive improvements in the quality of inpatient care and providing £21 million as part of the Community Discharge Grant to speed up discharges.
- Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems. To improve autistic people's experience with the criminal and youth justice systems, we will develop a training toolkit for frontline staff on neurodiversity and the additional support people might need. We will also take a number of steps to improve staff awareness and understanding of autism and improve people's access to adjustments.

Over the next 5 years, we will work together to create a society that truly understands and includes autistic people in all aspects of life; one in which autistic people of all ages, backgrounds and across the country have equal opportunities to play a full part in their communities and to have better access to the services they need throughout their lives.

HOME OFFICE

■ NCA Remuneration Review Body Report 2021

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel):

[\[HCWS229\]](#)

I am today announcing the government's decision on pay for the National Crime Agency (NCA) for 2021-22.

The government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services, including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against Covid-19.

The government received the NCA Remuneration Review Body (NCARRB) report on 2021 pay for the NCA on 2 July. This will be laid before Parliament today (CP 467) and published on Gov.uk.

I would like to thank the Chair and members of the Review Body for their work on gathering evidence from the NCA, the Home Office, HM Treasury and the Trade Unions, resulting in their detailed, comprehensive report. The government values the independent expertise and insight of NCARRB and takes on board the useful advice and principles set out in response to my remit letter of 14 January 2021.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies, whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (Full Time Equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented government spending on the response to Covid-19.

My remit letter informed NCARRB that I would not be seeking a recommendation for pay uplifts in the remit group for 2021/22, in the light of the public sector pay pause but invited views on areas including the operational context in which the Agency is operating, its ongoing pay strategy and longer-term plans for its workforce. NCARRB was also invited to comment on how the £250 uplift is best implemented so as to avoid leapfrogging. The NCA has considered options to avoid leapfrogging, including the impacts on its pay strategy, and considers the most effective way to remediate this is by paying a percentage uplift to those who are at risk of being leap-frogged, which is applicable to those earning less than £24,000.

The government accepts the NCARRB observations in full and the awards will be fully funded within the NCA's existing budget.

■ Police Pay

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS230\]](#)

The seventh report of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) was published today. The Body considered the pay and allowances for police officers up to and including the chief officer ranks in England and Wales. The Government appreciates and values the independent, expert advice and contribution that the PRRB makes and thanks the Chair and members for their detailed considerations and observations.

We absolutely recognise the bravery, commitment and professionalism of our police who work night and day to keep us safe and we will continue to give them the resources, tools and powers they need to protect the public.

The Government recognises that public sector workers play a vital role in the running of our public services, including in their remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the continuing fight against Covid-19.

As set out at the Spending Review (2020), there will be a pause to headline pay rises for the majority of public sector workforces in 2021-22. This is in order to ensure fairness between public and private sector wage growth, as the private sector was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the form of reduced hours, suppressed earnings growth and increased redundancies, whilst the public sector was largely shielded from these effects. This approach will protect public sector jobs and investment in public services, prioritising the lowest paid, with those earning less than £24,000 (full-time

equivalent) receiving a minimum £250 increase. The pause ensures we can get the public finances back onto a sustainable path after unprecedented Government spending on the response to Covid-19.

The PRRB recommended that the minimum rates for Police Constable Degree Apprentice starting pay and pay point 0 of the constable scale should be uplifted by £250, and that all officers with a basic salary above these minima but below £24,000 (on a full-time equivalent basis) should receive a consolidated pay award of £250. The Government has accepted the PRRB's recommendation in full.

The pay award will take effect from 1 September 2021. Officers who have not reached the top of their pay band will also continue to receive incremental progression pay worth at least 2% of salary, subject to satisfactory performance.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ HOUSING UPDATE

Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick): [\[HCWS228\]](#)

Today marks the next major step on our path towards a robust, but proportionate, building safety regime. We seek a regime that delivers high standards of safety for people's homes, particularly those which are high-rise and therefore somewhat higher risk whilst providing reassurance to leaseholders, residents and the market that the overwhelming majority of homes are safe.

The Grenfell Tower tragedy and subsequent independent review of Building Regulations led by Dame Judith Hackitt, exposed serious issues in the regulatory system and construction of some high-rise buildings: developers cladding buildings in combustible materials that should never have been used; construction product manufacturers ignoring safety rules, gaming the system and rigging the results of safety tests; building owners failing to take responsibility for ensuring the safety of their residents; and the Government's regulatory system lacking the strength and oversight to identify these failings and enforce standards.

That is why, as a Government, we have taken a safety first approach in our response to buildings that we know to be higher risk – those over 18m. We have:

- Engaged Fire and Rescue Services to survey all buildings over 18m to assess their safety;
- Targeted Government funding at the buildings we know to be at greatest risk if a fire spreads - those over 18m with unsafe cladding – investing over £5 billion to make those buildings safe as quickly as possible;
- Banned the use of combustible materials in new buildings over 18m, providing industry with a clear standard for the construction of new builds;

- Incentivised the installation of central alarm systems in high-rise buildings with a waking watch through our Waking Watch Relief Fund; and
- Today, we have reached Second Reading of the Building Safety Bill, our landmark legislation that brings forward the biggest improvements in building safety in a generation. The Bill introduces an enhanced safety regime for higher-risk buildings, defined as those over 18m (or seven storeys) - we have enshrined this scope on the face of the Bill.

The Fire Safety Act, which received Royal Assent in April will also ensure that the external walls of buildings are considered as part of routine fire risk assessments for all multi-occupied residential buildings.

We are making good progress in bringing those high-rise buildings with unsafe cladding up to an acceptable standard of safety:

- Over 95% of buildings with 'Grenfell type' cladding identified at the beginning of last year have been fully remediated or have workers on site. By the end of the year, I expect works to have started on all buildings barring a handful of cases where ACM cladding has only recently been identified or where remediation works are especially complex. This means around 16,000 homes have been fully remediated of unsafe ACM cladding – an increase of around 4000 since the end of last year.
- Despite many buildings owners failing to provide adequate basic information, almost 700 buildings, with estimated remediation costs of £2.5 billion are proceeding with a full application to the Building Safety Fund. We have already allocated £540 million which means owners of over 60,000 homes and properties within high-rise blocks are covered by Building Safety Fund applications and can be reassured that unsafe non-ACM cladding on their blocks will be replaced. 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 18m and over in England. We currently forecast that works of some form will be supported by the Building Safety Fund on over 1,000 high-rise buildings.
- 191 buildings are already benefitting from the £30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund. More buildings will benefit from the fund as final decisions are made on applications. Leaseholders are expected to save on average £137 per month, or over £1,600 a year, on Waking Watch costs.

It is right that we have taken a safety first approach and safety will always continue to be our priority and inform the decisions we make. However, it is also thankfully the case that fires in homes in England are extremely rare in all dwellings and I have become concerned to hear from leasehold residents feeling trapped in blocks of flats, particularly those lower than 18m in height. In many cases these residents have been held back from selling their homes and moving on with their lives because of excessive caution in the

lending, surveying and fire risk assessment market. Understandably, this has caused some residents worry over safety and unnecessary costs due to a failure, on the part of many parties, to adequately explain the true nature of risk which statistics demonstrate is very low. I want to be clear – the vast majority of residents in all homes, including blocks of flats, should not feel unsafe in their homes. Residents need to be urgently reassured and the evidence presented clearly to them. And, other market participants need to exercise their professional judgement and not perpetuate this climate of extreme caution.

Driven by these concerns for leasehold residents, earlier this year I asked a small group of experts on fire safety to consider the evidence and advise me on steps that should be taken to ensure that a more risk-proportionate approach is taken to fire safety in blocks of flats. An approach through which genuine life safety risks are tackled swiftly, and where all blocks of flats meet statutory requirements on life safety, but where excessive caution and unnecessary costs are avoided.

The experts I commissioned were:

- Dame Judith Hackitt, Chair of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety
- Sir Ken Knight, Chair of the Independent Expert Advisory Panel on building safety following the Grenfell Tower Fire
- Ron Dobson, former London Fire Commissioner
- Roy Wilsher, adviser on fire reform, former Chief Fire Officer

The key finding of this advice is clear – there is no evidence of systemic risk of fire in blocks of flats:

- Dwelling fires are at an all-time low since comparable statistics started to be collected in 1981/82. This is despite the fact that, in 2020, people spent significantly greater amount of time in their homes as a result of Covid restrictions.
- The vast majority of fires (91%) were in houses, bungalows, converted or low rise (three storeys or lower) flats or other properties, while only 9% were in blocks of flats of four storeys or more.
- Very few fires spread from the room where they start. In 2019/20, 7% of fires spread beyond the room of origin in blocks of flats over four storeys, compared with 9% in blocks below four storeys and 14% in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other dwellings.
- Any death in a fire is tragic, thankfully only a small proportion of fires resulted in a fire-related fatality in 2020: 176 people in total lost their lives in dwelling fires (down from 257 just a decade earlier), of which only 10 fatalities were in blocks of flats of four or more storeys. This is the lowest number of fatalities from fire since comparable statistics began to be collected forty years ago. I thank the Fire and Rescue Services for all that they do to keep us safe.

On this basis, the expert advice, which I have published today on gov.uk, reaches five recommendations to correct the disproportionate reaction we have seen in some parts of the market:

- EWS1 forms should not be a requirement on buildings below 18m.
- In the small number of cases where there are known to be concerns these should be addressed primarily through risk management and mitigation.
- There should be a clear route for residents/leaseholders to challenge costly remediation work and seek assurance that proposals are proportionate and cost effective.
- Government should work with the shadow Building Safety Regulator to consider how to implement an audit process to check that fire risk assessments are following guidelines, not perpetuating the risk aversion we are witnessing, in some instances, at the present time.
- Fire risk assessors, and lenders should not presume that there is significant risk to life unless there is evidence to support this. This would ensure that they respond only to the evidence and adopt a far more proportionate and balanced approach.

Having carefully considered these recommendations the Government will support and act upon them.

Delivering real change for leaseholders requires a concerted effort from all participants in the market including, Government, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), lenders and fire experts, and we have been working intensively with these groups.

As Government, we are clear that we support the expert advice and the position that EWS1s should not be needed for buildings less than 18m. This position is a significant step and one supported by the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Institute of Fire Engineers.

Government will work with the Health and Safety Executive and others to explore ways to deliver an effective fire risk assessment audit process that ensures assessments are carried out in a risk-proportionate manner and do not recommend unnecessary and costly remediation works where they are not genuinely needed. We will also rapidly progress exploration of options to provide a clear route for residents and leaseholders to challenge costly remediation work.

It is crucial that all market participants show the necessary leadership to help end the nightmare that has impacted the lives of many leaseholders. I thank everyone for coming to the table and supporting the Government's efforts.

I am pleased that all major lenders have welcomed this advice. HSBC UK, Barclays, Lloyds Banking Group and others have said that the expert advice, and our clear response, paves the way for EWS1 forms to no longer be required for buildings below 18m and will help further unlock the housing market. I hope and expect other lenders to follow suit swiftly. I am very grateful to these organisations for their constructive work with

Government on this critical issue - I appreciate that it is a complex and some parties have further work to do in which the Government will support them.

Through concerted, cross-market action I believe we can help open up the housing market, allowing thousands to buy, sell or re-mortgage their homes.

This work will be progressed alongside existing steps we are taking to ensure a proportionate response to risk, this includes:

- Development of a new more risk-proportionate guidelines for fire risk assessors, including PAS9980. The Consolidated Advice Note, the product of the need for reliable safety information in the period following the Grenfell Tragedy will shortly be retired.
- Launching a Government-backed professional indemnity insurance scheme for qualified professionals conducting external wall system assessments. This is aimed at supporting those qualified professionals to complete EWS1 forms, where genuinely needed, in a risk-proportionate manner and will help ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the market to allow EWS1 forms to be completed quickly, helping people to buy, sell and re-mortgage their homes. With the comfort Government backing provides, professionals must exercise their judgement in a proportionate manner and refrain from proposing works that are not strictly necessary to achieve an acceptable standard of fire safety - and risk management and mitigation should always be considered before costly remediation.
- Working with the National Fire Chiefs Council to re-emphasise the scope of the simultaneous evacuation guidance, the temporary nature of waking watches and the alternative proportionate fire safety interventions to be considered before implementing a waking watch, particularly in buildings below 18m.

Latest indications are that the number of residential blocks between 11m and 18m in height are 61,000. Data from one major lender suggests that 7% of flats in buildings up to 6 storeys currently require an EWS1 assessment and in a majority of these cases EWS1s are found to already be held, leading to requests for an EWS1 form on approximately 5% of flats. Of these buildings, the vast majority do not need any remediation work at all. This is reinforced by initial results of surveys of medium rise blocks of flats indicating that the vast majority are free from serious safety risks associated with combustible cladding requiring remediation, and from any associated costs. If the market reacts as we would hope to the expert advice these numbers should reduce yet further and hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be able to get on with buying, selling or re-mortgaging their homes. To reiterate, the Government sees no reason why an EWS1 form, or equivalent, should be requested on buildings below 18m. For the very small number where works are required, the presumption in favour of mitigation should also reduce remediation costs.

It is my expectation that these actions will significantly ease the challenges faced by the vast majority of leaseholders looking to buy or sell flats in high-rise buildings and ensure that leaseholders do not face huge bills for unnecessary remediation works. In the very small minority of cases where remediation works are identified in 11m – 18m buildings as part of the normal statutory requirement for buildings to have an up to date fire risk

assessment, I can reaffirm that leaseholders will be protected from unaffordable costs by a generous financing scheme through which their monthly cladding repayment costs will not exceed £50.