



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 July 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:38 P.M., 23 July 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Animal Experiments

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[33344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to (a) prioritise and (b) progress on delivering the recommendations of the 2015 Innovate UK NAT Roadmap.

Amanda Solloway:

The recommendations in the Non-Animal Technologies (NATs) roadmap continue to be delivered. For example, the NC3Rs CRACK IT programme which is accelerating the development and commercialisation of NATs.

There is ongoing work led by the NC3Rs to review the impact of the £7m invested as part of the NATs programme for commercial feasibility and collaborative R&D projects. The findings of this review will be used to inform future activities in this area.

■ Electricity: Licensing

Peter Aldous:

[\[33898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he plans to take in response to Ofgem's July 2020 consultation, Supporting Retail Innovation, to provide derogations from standard licence conditions and grant supply licences for specific geographic areas or premises types; and whether Ofgem plans to progress its consideration of a local electricity supply licence.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The right to local energy supply already exists under the Electricity Act 1989. As the independent regulator, Ofgem has powers to award supply licenses that are restricted to specified geographical areas or premise types. In some circumstances, electricity suppliers can also apply to Ofgem for a derogation from a particular provision of their supply licence. If granted, those provisions of the supply licence will not apply.

In July 2020 Ofgem consulted on proposed changes to their approach to granting supply licences for specific geographical areas or premise types and to supply licence conditions relating to derogations, to support innovation in the retail energy market. The consultation closed on 12 October 2020, and we await Ofgem's announcement on any next steps.

■ Energy Supply

Peter Aldous: [\[33899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to Ofgem's July 2018 Call for Evidence on Future Supply Market Arrangements, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming the supplier hub model.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The December 2020 Energy White Paper committed the Government to review the overall retail market regulatory framework, including for energy supply, to make sure that it is fit for purpose in the future, and accommodates emerging and innovative business models that can best meet consumer needs and contribute to our net-zero ambitions. The Government will engage with industry and consumer groups this year to assess what market framework changes may be required, in advance of a formal consultation.

■ Fireworks

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[34017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact that fireworks may have on vulnerable residents.

Paul Scully:

The Government takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously and we understand the concerns that some people have about the potential for distress to be caused to vulnerable people. That is why there is a comprehensive regulatory framework in place for fireworks, that aims to reduce the risks and disturbances to both people and animals.

Through our public awareness campaign for the 2021 fireworks season, we will also be promoting the safe and considerate use of fireworks to the general public, to ensure that those using them do so safely and considerately.

■ Innovation: Small Businesses

Mick Whitley: [\[34058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the (a) financial and (b) logistical support available to small and medium-sized enterprises involved in the development of net-zero technologies.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Small and medium-sized businesses have a vital role in developing the technologies needed to deliver net zero. There is a wide range of financial and logistical support available to aid them in doing so.

The Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, a £1 billion fund announced in my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a green industrial revolution, aims to

accelerate the commercialisation of low-carbon technologies, systems and business models in power, buildings, and industry. Funding is available for projects across the UK for companies of all sizes. Within the portfolio, the 'Energy Entrepreneurs Fund' particularly aims to assist small and medium sized enterprises, including start-ups. Those companies that are selected will receive acceleration support.

More widely, Innovate UK (IUK) acts as the prime channel through which the Government incentivises business-led technology innovation. Its role is to fund business-led innovation through the allocation of competitively awarded grants, delivered through competitions. Through their Knowledge Transfer Network and Innovate UK EDGE, IUK help connect innovative businesses with the right partners, expertise, facilities, financiers and influencers to help them bring their ideas to market, grow and scale their companies, and build collaborations, partnerships and supply chains.

In addition, the Government established a network of Catapult Centres in 2011 to commercialise new and emerging technologies in areas where there are large global market opportunities and a critical mass of UK capability to take advantage of them. There are nine Catapults, across 40 locations throughout the UK, supporting a broad range of technologies. The Catapult Centres have supported in excess of 8000 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Between 2014 and the third quarter of 2020 a total of £160m has been invested into clean technology businesses by equity funds backed by the British Business Bank. The Bank crowds in additional private sector capital to support equity investment for small and medium sized enterprises, maximising the impact of government investment.

■ Natural Gas

Caroline Lucas:

[\[33888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Climate Change Committee's 2021 Progress Report to Parliament, if he will make it his policy ahead of COP26 to commit to phasing out unabated gas generation by 2035.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Following the Climate Change Committee's advised budget level does not mean that government is agreeing to their specific policy recommendations. We will bring forward our own policies to meet carbon budgets, and the Net Zero Strategy (to be published before COP26) will set out our own vision for transitioning to a net zero economy.

As we transition to net zero emissions by 2050, our record levels of investment in renewables will meet a large part of the increasing electricity demand, alongside technologies such as storage, demand side response, interconnection, CCUS-enabled generation and low carbon hydrogen. However, unabated natural gas generation will continue to provide a critical source of firm and dispatchable

electricity, ensuring security of supply whilst we develop and deploy low carbon alternatives that can replicate its role in the electricity system.

■ **Natural Gas: Carbon Emissions**

Mick Whitley:

[\[34057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 7th June 2021 to Question 7763, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential role that the GeoEngine technology being developed by Titan Electricity could play in meeting the decarbonisation targets laid out in the North Sea Transition deal.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS engineering officials have recently discussed with Titan Electricity at a meeting their geo-engine concept.

Technologies similar to the geo-engine could help achieve the ambitious decarbonisation targets set in the North Sea Transition Deal for offshore gas published by BEIS in March. This commits the UK offshore oil and gas sector to a carbon dioxide production emission reduction of 10% in 2025, 25% in 2027, and 50% in 2030 compared to a 2018 baseline.

■ **Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia**

Ruth Jones:

[\[34046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last discussed the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab with the Welsh Government.

Ruth Jones:

[\[34047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last discussed the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab with Cabinet colleagues.

Ruth Jones:

[\[34048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last discussed the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab with the leadership of Newport City Council.

Ruth Jones:

[\[34049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has carried out an impact assessment of the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab; and if he will make a statement.

Ruth Jones:

[\[34050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what representations (a) he and (b) other member of the Government have received from Chinese Government on the purchase of Newport Wafer Fab.

Paul Scully:

Ministers engage regularly with their colleagues on a range of issues, such as the takeover of Newport Wafer Fab. The Government does not comment on the content of these conversations.

The Government does not comment on the detail of commercial transactions or of national security assessments.

Postal Services: Fraud**Gareth Thomas:**[\[33105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the scale of fraud that Royal Mail alleges was committed by firms under declaring mail using its Printed Postage Impressions product in the period from May 2008 to May 2018; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas:[\[33106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the efficacy of the Royal Mail's Printed Postage Impressions IT system; and whether the Government was aware of any allegations of fraud by firms under declaring mail using Royal Mail's Printed Postage Impressions product prior to the privatisation of Royal Mail in 2013; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

Operational matters, which include matters relating to Royal's Printed Postage Impressions service, are the direct responsibility of Royal Mail. The Government does not get involved in the day-to-day operations of the company and does not play a role in handling or resolving issues in relation to postage fraud.

Royal Mail has a well-established process in place to deal with suspected postage fraud. This is handled by the Royal Mail Revenue Protection team, who would be best placed to answer any queries in relation to this issue."

Renewable Energy**Peter Aldous:**[\[33900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether, as part of the process of issuing a Strategy and Policy Statement to Ofgem as set out in the Energy White Paper, his Department plans to include guidance to Ofgem on steps to support community energy and to establish a right to local supply.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As set out in the Energy White Paper, the Government will consult on an energy sector Strategy and Policy Statement (SPS) for Ofgem during the course of 2021. The consultation will be a chance to engage with stakeholders from across the energy sector.

The SPS will reflect the strategic priorities and policy outcomes of the Government's energy policy and the roles of Government, Ofgem and other parties which are collectively responsible for delivering these outcomes.

Peter Aldous: [\[33901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the follow-up to the recent call for evidence on the electricity exemptions regime, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of modifying the exemptions regime to enable community or local supply.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The current electricity licence exemptions regime already provides a framework for small scale electricity supply without the need for a licence. For example, there is an exemption for those who do not at any time supply more electrical power than 5 megawatts of which not more than 2.5 megawatts is supplied to domestic consumers.

The recent call for evidence is part of a wider review of the exemptions regime. We are currently considering responses to the call for evidence and will issue a response in due course.

Peter Aldous: [\[33902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to issue a call for evidence or consult on community energy and local supply in advance of the publication of the Net Zero Strategy to inform its proposals.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government has ongoing discussions with Community Energy England and other community and local energy groups, and the views and evidence provided are being taken into account as we consider future plans for community energy in the Net Zero Strategy.

■ Renewable Energy: Finance

Dr Alan Whitehead: [\[33836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of allowing operational renewable projects access to the Contracts for Difference scheme on the accelerated deployment of renewables needed for the UK to attain its net-zero goal.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme is designed to encourage low carbon generation and is open to a wide range of eligible renewable technologies. Under current eligibility criteria, renewable projects are not eligible to receive CfD support if they have already commenced generating. In a Government Response to a consultation published in November 2020 the government clarified the eligibility of part-built projects, i.e. those which have begun construction but have not commenced generating, stating that these projects are eligible to compete in the 2021 allocation round. We consider this achieves the right balance between accelerating deployment

of renewables, whilst providing value for money for consumers by ensuring scheme costs are limited to what is necessary to legitimately stimulate deployment. We will keep this position under review.

■ Renewable Energy: Smart Export Guarantee

Peter Aldous:

[\[33903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when Ofgem plans to issue its first annual report on the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) scheme; whether that report will include the range, nature and uptake of SEG tariffs; when his Department plans to carry out its review of the effectiveness of that scheme; and what steps his Department is planning to take to improve the route to market for community energy generators.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Ofgem are required to publish a report on the SEG each calendar year, starting in 2021. Ofgem are currently in the process of collecting data from suppliers, with plans to publish the first report later this year. This will include information regarding available SEG tariffs, the size and technology of installations, the electricity exported, and the payments provided. BEIS will review the findings and consider whether any changes to the SEG are required in the future.

On route to market for community energy generators, our recent call for evidence, as part of a wider review of the licence exemptions regime for supply and generation, is designed to ensure licence exemptions are fit for purpose in the changing landscape. BEIS are currently considering responses and will issue a response in due course.

■ Sainsbury's and Tesco: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[34052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of Tesco and Sainsbury's continuing to ask shoppers to wear masks in their stores in England after 19 July 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

On Monday 5 July, my Rt hon Friend the Prime Minister set out the Covid-19 Response: Summer 2021 plan for living with Covid from 19 July. Lifting restrictions does not mean the risks from Covid-19 have disappeared. However, at this new phase of the pandemic response, we are moving to an approach that enables personal risk-based judgments. The Working Safely guidance is clear that wearing a face covering can still help to reduce risk of transmission of the virus. Therefore, we recommend people to continue to wear face coverings once the legal restrictions are lifted, particularly in crowded and enclosed places, when they are likely to come into contact with people they do not normally meet.

Businesses are free to determine their own face coverings policy based on a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks of Covid-19 in the workplace and identify

control measures to manage that risk. Businesses must take equalities law into account when determining their entry policies. Employees and customers who wish to wear a face covering should be supported to do so.

■ Subsidies

John Penrose: [\[33879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total (a) number and (b) value of subsidies awarded by public bodies that were below the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) transparency threshold was in each calendar year between 2015 and 2020.

John Penrose: [\[33880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will provide a breakdown of the main purposes of subsidies awarded by public bodies that were below the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) transparency threshold in each calendar year between 2015 and 2020.

Paul Scully:

Information on subsidies which were below the EU State aid transparency threshold was not required to be declared on the EU State Aid Transparency Public Search tool.

The information is also not held centrally by the Government and could therefore only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

John Penrose: [\[33881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to (a) assess and (b) monitor the effectiveness of subsidies made by public authorities falling below the transparency thresholds proposed in the Subsidy Control Bill; and whether those subsidies will be required to be reported to his Department by public authorities.

Paul Scully:

The new subsidy transparency rules will make the UK a world leader in subsidy transparency and will provide subsidy data for improving subsidy design across the UK.

Any financial support below £315,000 over three years does not require a public authority to check the subsidy against the principles, because it is exempt as Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA). This financial support does not need to be reported to the Government or uploaded to the transparency database. The Government does not intend to assess and monitor the effectiveness of financial support which is exempt from the subsidy control rules.

The subsidy transparency rules have been designed to balance the administrative burden of recording subsidies with the benefits of subsidy transparency for those subsidies most likely to distort competition. This is why the MFA threshold is set at £315,000 over three years.

Regardless of the transparency rules, public authorities have a responsibility to ensure that any public money they provide is spent appropriately. Nonetheless, the assessment of financial support which is exempt from the rules would reduce the effectiveness of the dataset generated by the subsidy control database. Any subsidy data analysis should focus on those subsidies subject to the rules of the regime.

■ Titan Electricity

Mick Whitley: [\[34059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if officials in his Department will meet representatives of Titan Electricity to discuss the Geo Engine and the potential role it could play in helping to meet national net-zero targets.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Officials from the Department met with Titan Electricity on the 5th July where they discussed the GeoEngine technology and the various BEIS energy innovation competitions that Titan would be eligible to apply for to get funding for further development of the concept. Officials would be pleased to meet with Titan again if they would find another meeting helpful, although for any live competitions Titan should engage through the standard process.

■ Wales Trade Union Congress

Ruth Jones: [\[34053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last met with representatives of the Wales Trades Union Congress.

Paul Scully:

The UK Government is committed to building back better from the pandemic as one United Kingdom. Ministers and officials from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy engage regularly with the trade unions on a variety of issues.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alan Brown: [\[33965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will set out a strategy for developing a UK based supply chain to support delivery of the target of deploying 1GW of floating offshore wind by 2030.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

One of the key priorities of this government is putting in place policies to support a significant growth of offshore wind to 2030 and beyond. Within this, we are committed to supporting the development of floating offshore wind, as reflected by our ambitious target of 1GW of floating wind by 2030 and ensuring the UK captures the economic benefits of deploying such technology.

Floating offshore wind projects will be eligible to bid in the next Contract for Difference allocation round, which will open in December 2021. We are committed to

developing a strong supply chain for floating offshore wind in parallel with growing deployment and are working with industry and other stakeholders on this. Our approach to the next CfD allocation round will provide the foundation for investment in a sustainable, competitive UK based supply chain from which we will learn to help plan our future approach and the feasible scale of ramp up of deployment, building on the success of fixed bottom wind, which has this year delivered supply chain investments in blades, monopiles and transition pieces, creating and safeguarding over 1,800 direct jobs by 2030.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Newport Wafer Fab: Nexperia

Ruth Jones: [\[34051\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister of the Cabinet Office, what his planned timetable is for the conclusion of Sir Stephen Lovegrove's review into the sale of Newport Wafer Fab.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government does not comment on national security matters.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Layla Moran: [\[34039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of days taken as sick leave by (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 due to covid-19 in (i) 2020, (ii) 2021 and (iii) to date.

James Heapey:

Whilst the Ministry of Defence records the medical employability and deployability of Service personnel, more specific information about the level of sickness absence in the Armed Forces is not held centrally. As at 1 June 2021, 98.6 per cent of the trained UK Armed Forces were fit to work.

Rachael Maskell: [\[34541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what (a) estimate he has made of the number of armed forces personnel who are currently self-isolating due to covid-19 and (b) assessment he has made of covid-19 isolation of armed forces personnel on the operational activity of the armed forces.

James Heapey:

As at 1 July 2021, 5,200 Regular and Reservist Armed Forces personnel were reported as absent from work because of COVID-19 self-isolation.

Defence has successfully maintained its core and most important outputs throughout the pandemic, reacting with agility and flexibility to mitigate the risks posed by COVID-19. While the need to undertake self-isolation and other measures have had an effect, they have not adversely affected our key operations.

■ LE TacCIS Programme

Mr Mark Francois: [\[33149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the scheduled initial operating capability is for the Morpheus Programme.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to the right hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Kevan Jones) on 2 July 2021 to Question 21158.

Attachments:

1. LE TacCIS Programme [\[UIN 21158.docx\]](#)

■ Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[34465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the end of service date for Crowsnest.

Jeremy Quin:

The planned out-of-service date for Crowsnest is 2029.

■ National Flagship

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[12260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the additional annual value of trade and investment that the new national flagship will bring into the UK economy.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The National Flagship will promote the UK's interests around the world over the course of its 30 year service. Exhibitions, trade fairs, conferences already contribute billions to the UK economy each year. The National Flagship will allow us to host more of these events more prominently around the world. The Government is currently considering the potential additional annual value of trade and investment that the National Flagship will bring into the UK economy.

■ National Flagship: Diplomatic Relations

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[13198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the average number of summits and other diplomatic talks that will be held on the new national flagship each year.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The National Flagship will be a visible demonstration of the UK's commitment to enhance and strengthen trade with our key export markets around the world. Given eight of the world's ten largest cities are located by the coast, the National Flagship will promote the UK's diplomatic and trading interests. It will provide a unique convening power to British exporters and a secure sovereign hub for many diplomatic events. The Government is currently considering the potential number of summits and diplomatic talks that the National Flagship will host.

■ **National Flagship: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[33134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the categorisation of the National Flagship as a (a) non-sensitive and (b) non-warlike material in respect of the UK's responsibility to the Agreement on Government Procurement .

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[33135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2021 to Question 28983 on the National Flagship and with reference to Item 47 of annex 4 of the UK schedule of the Agreement on Government Procurement, whether the Government plans to build the proposed National Flagship in the UK.

Mr Ben Wallace:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Construction of the National Flagship will be limited to the UK in order to protect the essential interests of national security. The procurement of the Flagship will be compliant with the UK's obligations under the WTO Government Procurement Agreement.

■ **Peacekeeping Operations**

John Healey: [\[34434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many armed forces personnel were deployed on UK-led peacekeeping missions in 2020.

James Heappey:

Throughout 2020, the UK maintained a United Nations peacekeeping deployment of a maximum of 600 personnel. This includes the deployment of contingent troops to UN Missions in Cyprus, Somalia, the drawdown from South Sudan, the commencement of operations in Mali, and the deployment of individual Military Staff Officers to seven UN Missions.

UN PEACEKEEPING MISSION	PLEGDED TROOP COMMITMENT	DURATION OF DEPLOYMENT IN 2020
United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)	c. 250	Jan - Dec

UN PEACEKEEPING MISSION	PLEGDED TROOP COMMITMENT	DURATION OF DEPLOYMENT IN 2020
United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS)	c. 10	Jan – Dec
United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)	c. 300	Jan – Mar
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	c. 300	Dec
Military Staff Officers	c. 30	Jan - Dec

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Email

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[35977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he or any of the Ministers in his Department use personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Caroline Dinenage:

Ministers will use a range of digital forms of communication for discussions in line with relevant guidance on information handling and security.

Ministers will have informal conversations from time to time, in person or remotely, and significant content relating to government business from such discussions is passed back to officials.

The Cabinet Office has previously published guidance on how information is held for the purposes of access to information, and how formal decisions are recorded for the official record. Ministers are also given advice on the security of electronic communications.

■ OnlyFans

Chi Onwurah:

[\[34488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if Ofcom will assess whether OnlyFans online platform and app is in breach of the Audio-Visual Media regulations.

Caroline Dinéage:

Ofcom has been the national regulator for the video-sharing platform (VSP) regime since the Audiovisual Media Services Regulations came into force on 1 November 2020. For the first time, these regulations require UK-established VSPs, such as OnlyFans, to comply with new rules around protecting users from harmful content. Throughout the implementation of this novel regulation, Ofcom has been actively engaging with OnlyFans and other VSPs to ensure they understand their regulatory obligations and the steps they may need to take to ensure compliance.

However, if Ofcom were to find a VSP provider in breach of the VSP requirements, it has the ability to investigate using its information gathering powers. Ofcom is also able to take robust enforcement action which can include imposing significant financial penalties and, in the most serious instances, issuing a direction to suspend or restrict a platform provider from providing a service.

■ Religious Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance**Stuart Anderson:****[36767]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what support is available to assist with the upkeep of places of worship to prevent the need for major remedial works.

Caroline Dinéage:

We recognise the importance of carrying out routine repairs and maintenance in order to reduce the need for major remedial works in places of worship, and the great challenge to raise funding to carry out this work, particularly at the present time. Listed places of worship represent some of the nation's finest heritage, and we support them through the DCMS run Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, which makes grants equal to the VAT paid on maintenance and repairs. The scheme will continue to benefit listed places of worship across the country, all of which have provided a much needed space for rest, contemplation and well-being during these difficult times, when they have been able to be open.

Listed places of worship may also benefit from the latest round of Cultural Recovery Funding with the £300 million package announced in June representing the latest and final tranche of funding for the CRF. The National Lottery Heritage Fund is distributing £40m in partnership with Historic England, based on criteria set by DCMS.

There are a number of sources of funding available for places of worship. The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports a broad range of projects that connect people and communities to the national, regional and local heritage of the UK. This includes historic buildings, monuments and the historic environment. This funding can be used for repairs and conservation.

■ Sports: Racial Discrimination

Catherine West:

[\[35818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, in the context of racist online abuse received by Sir Lewis Hamilton after winning the 2021 British Grand Prix, what steps he is taking with (a) social media companies and (b) sporting bodies and organisations to tackle racist online abuse of sportspeople.

Caroline Dinenage:

The racist abuse targeted at Sir Lewis Hamilton and other sportspeople is unacceptable. Under the draft Online Safety Bill, services in scope will need to minimise and remove illegal content. Major platforms will also need to address legal but harmful content for adults. The Bill has been published in draft for pre-legislative scrutiny. The process to formally set up the Joint Committee that will scrutinise the draft Bill has begun.

The Government's sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase diversity, and tackle racism and inequality in sport.

In addition, Sport England, UK Sport and the other home nations' sports councils recently published the results of a detailed, independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport. Each Council is now developing its own action plans to deliver on commitments relating to people; representation; investment; systems and insight.

EDUCATION

■ Academies: Religion

Crispin Blunt:

[\[33102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to protect the secular ethos of (a) non-faith and (a) community-ethos academies entering into mixed-multi academy trusts.

Nick Gibb:

Non-faith or community-ethos schools have different characteristics, particularly in relation to governance, compared to schools with a religious designation. Their secular character and ethos are protected regardless of which type of multi-academy trust they join.

The academy trust's charitable object is to recognise and support a school's individual ethos. This places an obligation on the trust and its board to ensure that a non-faith or community school's character is safeguarded in a mixed multi-academy trust.

The supplemental funding agreement, a contract between my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and academy trusts, has recently been updated to

include clauses to protect the local governance arrangements of a non-faith or community school joining a mixed multi-academy trust.

■ Faith Schools

Crispin Blunt: [\[33103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils with no reasonable choice other than to attend a faith school due to lack of secular provision in their area.

Crispin Blunt: [\[33104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils unable to access their nearest school because of religiously selective admissions.

Nick Gibb:

The majority of parents are offered a place at a school of their choice. In 2021, 98% of parents received an offer from one of their top three choices of primary school, while 93.4% received offers from one of their top three choices of secondary school.

The Department has not made an estimate of the number of pupils with no reasonable choice other than to attend a faith school due to a lack of secular provision in their area, or an estimate of the number of pupils unable to access their nearest school because of religiously selective admissions.

Local authorities have a duty to provide sufficient school places in their area. Faith schools have played an important role in our education system for many years. Faith schools are popular with parents and are more likely than other schools to be rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding.

Faith schools are allowed to give priority to children of their faith where they are oversubscribed. Of those that do, some choose to allocate only a certain percentage of their places with reference to faith, while others do not have faith admissions criteria at all.

■ Free School Meals: West Yorkshire

Jon Trickett: [\[34443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of pupils received free school meals in West Yorkshire in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Jon Trickett: [\[34444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools there were in West Yorkshire in (a) 2010 and (b) 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The most recent figures for pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals (FSM) are from the January 2021 school census, and are published in 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics', which is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

The publication includes an interactive table tool that can be used to create tables for different areas within England. The following shows FSM figures for pupils in local authorities within West Yorkshire: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/f9b0f73c-883b-4ac5-a3b0-38980e89fe84>.

School census data on the number of schools in England is also published annually in the 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics' release, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-and-pupil-numbers>.

The January 2021 publication includes an interactive table tool which can be used to create tables for different areas within England. A table showing the number of schools in local authorities within West Yorkshire is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/caab6075-50cd-4724-9934-5891e31ecea6>.

The January 2010 publication includes Excel tables showing data at local authority level, and Table 10a shows the number of schools.

■ Free Schools: Sports

Philip Davies: [\[33181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of free schools which do not yet have adequate sporting facilities.

Nick Gibb:

All free schools have indoor facilities for sport and are required to have suitable outdoor provision for physical education. This could be through sports facilities within the school grounds or through off-site arrangements.

■ Further Education: Finance

Daisy Cooper: [\[34610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what provision the Government is making for specialist post-16 institutions to access the Post-16 Capacity Fund.

Gillian Keegan:

£83 million was announced in the Spending Review for 2021-22 to ensure that post-16 providers can accommodate the upcoming demographic increase in 16 to 19-year-olds from 2022 and 2023. On 18 May, we launched a bidding round to which eligible providers could bid for funding. Providers eligible to bid for this funding were 16–19 academies, 16–19 free schools (inclusive of university technical colleges and maths schools), sixth form colleges and further education colleges. The bidding round closed on 21 June. Specialist post-16 institutions were not eligible to bid.

We are investing £300 million in 2021-22 via High Needs Provision Capital Allocations to support local authorities to deliver new school places and improve existing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities, almost four times the amount provided to local authorities in 2020-21. It is for local

authorities to determine how to best use this funding to address their local priorities, and in doing so they can work with any appropriate institution in their area, including specialist post-16 institutions.

■ Higher Education: Freedom of Speech

Stuart Anderson: [\[34590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what duties the Free Speech and Academic Freedom Champion will have to ensure adequate community engagement.

Michelle Donelan:

The Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom will be responsible for overseeing the performance of the Office for Students' (OfS) freedom of speech functions, including the monitoring and enforcement of freedom of speech registration conditions, the new complaints scheme and the new duties on students' unions under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill. Further details of the role will be available when the position is advertised in due course.

The OfS is anticipated to consult on regulatory changes, to develop the new complaints scheme and to draft guidance.

■ Science: Curriculum

Chi Onwurah: [\[34499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure the (a) primary, (b) secondary and (c) A Level science curriculum adequately educates pupils on future global challenges.

Nick Gibb:

Ensuring that pupils are taught about future global challenges, such as climate change, is an important part of their education. The current National Curriculum for science ensures pupils acquire the knowledge of the science underpinning climate change across Key Stages 1 to 4, allowing them to develop a thorough understanding of this challenge.

■ Special Educational Needs

Daisy Cooper: [\[34608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to provide SEND pupils with (a) respite, (b) social opportunities and (c) family support over the 2021 summer holiday.

Vicky Ford:

Respite care services (also known as 'short breaks') for disabled children are provided on the basis of an individual assessment of each child and family's needs. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have ensured that respite care services for disabled children and their families have been allowed to continue to operate. This applies to services which care for children in and away from home.

To support local areas, the government has given over £6 billion in un-ringfenced funding directly to councils to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 spending pressures, including children's services.

In addition to statutory services, we are providing £27.3 million to the Family Fund in the 2021-22 financial year to support over 60,000 families on low incomes raising children and young people with disabilities or serious illnesses. Grants can be used for a range of purposes, including family breaks.

We are also providing £200 million for all secondary schools, including specialist settings, to deliver face-to-face summer schools. Schools are being encouraged to target provision at pupils who are most likely to benefit from increased support, which may include disabled children and those with special educational needs.

This is alongside wider support funded through our Holiday Activities and Food Programme across the country which provides healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children. This has been expanded to every local authority across England this year – backed by up to £220 million. It builds on previous programmes, including last summer's, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 local authorities. Our guidance is clear that the provision should be inclusive and accessible.

■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[34609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to support SEND pupils with (a) educational skills catch-up and (b) health and wellbeing needs due to the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

Children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is a priority for this government. We are committed to helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in all education settings, make up education lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Since June 2020, we have announced more than £3 billion of additional funding to support education recovery in schools, colleges and early years settings – this will have a material impact in closing gaps that have emerged. Schools will continue to be able to access a package of support from September 2021. The package provides support to children aged 2-19 in schools, 16-19 providers and early years. It expands our reforms in two areas where the evidence is clear that our investment will have significant impact: high quality tutoring targeted at those that need it most and high-quality training for teachers. The one-off Recovery Premium for state-funded schools for 2021/22 will further help schools to provide their disadvantaged pupils with a boost to academic and pastoral support. This is in addition to the £650 million catch-up premium shared across state-funded schools over the 2020/21 academic year, to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. While education settings cannot provide specialist clinical care, the support schools and colleges are providing to their

pupils following the return to face-to-face education should include time devoted to supporting mental health and wellbeing, which will play a fundamental part in supporting recovery.

We have consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts both in the Catch-up Premium this academic year and the Recovery Premium for the next academic year, in recognition of the significantly higher per pupil costs they face. In addition, special schools will receive additional funding to ensure these settings can provide 1:1 tutoring for their pupils. Children will further benefit from additional funding to ensure that teachers in schools and early years settings are able to access high quality training and professional development. We know that high quality teaching is the best way to support all students, including those with SEND.

We are working with education settings, the relevant Royal Colleges and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure that health and wellbeing issues for SEND pupils are prioritised. DHSC have identified provision for children and young people with SEND in their NHS recovery planning. The COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan, published in March 2021, references various areas of support. £31 million will be used to address particular challenges faced by individuals, including £3 million for community respite services.

The Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme, which provides healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children, has been expanded to every local authority across England this year – backed by up to £220 million. Our guidance is clear that the provision should be inclusive and accessible. We will continue to support local authorities to deliver services that meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Education, health and care plan quality and timeliness is something we have been monitoring through the COVID-19 outbreak and continue to do so, and we provided £40.8 million for the Family Fund in 2020-21 to support over 90,000 families on low incomes raising children with disabilities or serious illnesses. This included £13.5 million to specifically respond to needs arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: EU Nationals

Hilary Benn:

[35508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of reduced numbers of EU citizens working on UK farms on crop yields in the first six months of 2021; and if he will make a comparative assessment of (a) the number of EU citizens working on UK farms and (b) crop yields in the first six months of 2020 and the first six months of 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra continues to work closely with the agriculture sector on its workforce requirements.

Defra makes use of all available information to understand labour demand and supply, considering both permanent and seasonal workforce requirements. This includes engaging closely with farmers, growers and industry bodies to consider the latest data and business intelligence.

In 2021 and beyond, agricultural businesses will continue to be able to rely on EU nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status and EU nationals who have settled status can continue to travel to the UK to do seasonal work in 2021.

Over 5.1 million EU citizens and their families have been granted settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). The application deadline was 30 June 2021 and where a person eligible under the EU Settlement Scheme has reasonable grounds for missing the deadline, they will be given a further opportunity to apply.

In addition to this, the Seasonal Workers Pilot has been expanded for 2021, from 10,000 to 30,000 visas, granted for workers to come to the UK, from EU or non-EU countries, for a period of up to six months to work in the edible horticulture sector.

Defra is also working across Government to ensure there is a long-term evidence-based strategy for the agricultural workforce beyond 2021.

Defra produces crop statistics annually as part of the Agriculture in the UK statistical release. This data does not break down the yields into periods of less than a year, so we do not have the data to respond to part (b).

■ Agriculture: Fruit and Vegetables**Jim Shannon:****[33920]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to raise awareness of more environmental ways of growing fruit and vegetables.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra supports environmentally friendly farming, including the growing of the UK's delicious fruits and vegetables, through numerous routes. This includes working with LEAF (Linking the Environment and Farming), the organic sector and CFE (Championing the Farmed Environment). 45% of all UK produced fruit and vegetables are LEAF Marqued, which means they are grown to high environmental standards using integrated farm management techniques.

We are introducing three schemes that reward the delivery of environmental benefits: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, the Local Nature Recovery scheme and the Landscape Recovery scheme. The schemes aim to pay land managers for the delivery of public goods as they undertake sustainable farming practices, improve

animal health and welfare, reduce carbon emissions, create and preserve habitat, and make landscape-scale environmental changes.

Our communications and engagement teams work in partnership to raise awareness of these new schemes, and encourage farmers to consider existing ones like Countryside Stewardship where appropriate. Our combined activity includes Q&A webinars, attendance and presentations at agricultural shows, our Future Farming blog, and physical communications products like our Farming is Changing leaflet.

■ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: Chilterns

Joy Morrissey: [\[34061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of potential merits of expanding the Chilterns Area of National Beauty to include the areas of Colne Valley Regional Park and Burnham Beeches.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England, the statutory advisor to the Government on landscape, announced in June 2021 an ambitious Landscape Designations Programme. This programme includes consideration of an extension of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The proposal submitted to Natural England for consideration to extend the Chilterns AONB includes Burnham Beeches. Before any technical designation assessments are carried out, an evidence-based area of search will be agreed with partners. The purpose of agreeing an area of search is to ensure areas that are considered likely to meet the designation criteria are included in the assessments. Inclusion of the Colne Valley would be considered at the time of determining the area of search.

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Kenny MacAskill: [\[33343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) role of the US Centre for Computational Toxicology in advancing the development of New Approach Methodologies and (b) potential benefits to the UK of establishing a counterpart.

Rebecca Pow:

We are not aware of the work that the US Center for Computational Toxicology (USCCT) is doing in advancing the development of New Approach Methodologies. We plan to get in touch with USCCT to find out more about its role in taking forward that work and how that links in with what we are doing on this issue.

■ Clean Air Zones: Bristol

Dr Liam Fox: [\[33843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data has been used to assess the western boundary of the Bristol Clean Air Zone, specifically the Portway and Brunel Bridge regional through route.

Rebecca Pow:

Bristol is introducing a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) to bring the roads in the city into compliance with NO₂ limits in the shortest possible time.

Bristol has proposed that the zone boundary should include the Portway and Brunel Bridge routes, and has carried out modelling to understand the traffic and air quality data to show the impact of removing these routes from the CAZ. This modelling indicated that removing these roads from within the zone boundary would delay the date by which roads in Bristol are compliant with legal limits for NO₂. The Government is currently considering this information as part of our review of Bristol's Full Business Case.

■ Flood Control: Property

Rachael Maskell: [\[33260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress he has made on assessing the effectiveness of arrangements for responsibility for the property level resilience programme following the meeting between the hon. Member for York Central and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for his Department on 2 February 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

In 2020, the joint Defra-industry Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Roundtable developed a code of practice which gives guidance and sets standards on delivery and scoping of PFR works. Further updates were published in February 2021.

The Environment Agency is updating its national PFR procurement framework, the update will embed the Code of Practice. This is expected to be published by early 2022.

The Environment Agency is also funding training for partners, including local authorities, to strengthen consistency and confidence of PFR.

Since February the Environment Agency have implemented several steps to help overcome delivery issues in York and to ensure that future PFR installations are delivered more efficiently. Installations have now been completed in 42 properties.

In February this year, we launched a Call for Evidence on local factors in managing flood and coastal erosion risk and property flood resilience to inform PFR policy, including looking key enablers such as incentives, standards, and skills, as well as roles and responsibilities. We also published a consultation on changes to the Flood Re scheme to accelerate PFR uptake which included discounted premiums and

increased claims to repair properties in a more resilient way. We will shortly publish a summary of responses to these documents.

■ **Green Belt: Environment Protection**

Joy Morrissey: [\[34060\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of special environmental protection for agricultural land in the Green Belt.

Joy Morrissey: [\[34063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that agricultural land on Green Belts is being preserved for agricultural purposes.

Victoria Prentis:

Farming efficiently and improving the environment will be rewarded through our future farming policy. The Government recognises the need to protect the natural assets which are essential to the production of food in this country.

We regularly assess the effectiveness of environmental protections and work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to ensure that planning supports agriculture and food production as well as protecting and enhancing the environment. This is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Framework requires local planning authorities to take into account all the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is shown to be necessary, planning authorities should seek to use poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

We are committed to protecting and enhancing the Green Belt, as set out in our manifesto, which is created by local authorities to prevent urban sprawl and the merging of settlements. Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that open land is an essential characteristic of Green Belt, and that most new buildings in a Green Belt are inappropriate and should be refused planning permission unless justified by very special circumstances.

■ **Marine Protected Areas: Fishing Vessels**

Caroline Lucas: [\[33201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's plan to introduce management measures in 40 English offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPA) over the next three years, what assessment his Department has made of the benefits to mobile fish stocks of banning supertrawlers from the offshore MPA network.

Victoria Prentis:

We are reviewing our policy on supertrawlers, and their impact on fish stocks, and this will be driven by evidence. We will need to consider how any measures fit with our obligations under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU.

Caroline Lucas:[\[33202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the blue carbon climate benefits of banning bottom trawling in Marine Protected Areas.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK recognises the important role that blue carbon habitats can play to prevent biodiversity loss and support adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside carbon sequestration benefits. The Government understands that marine carbon stores in sediments can be released due to human activities such as bottom trawling. However, the magnitude of change in these carbon stores following trawling impacts remains uncertain, and difficult to quantify accurately based on the current knowledge.

To support our work here, we recently published a [report](#) from Cefas scientists that provides us with the evidence base to help understand the carbon stocks and fluxes of marine blue carbon habitats in UK waters. We continue to build the evidence base on blue carbon habitats in the UK.

The UK Government has a clear, long-standing ambition to implement measures which protect the marine environment, both internationally and domestically. This is set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan, which includes commitments to protect the UK 'Blue Belt' network of Marine Protected Areas and to support the protection of 30% of the global ocean by 2030.

England already has 40% of our waters in Marine Protected Areas (MPA), covering the majority of saltmarsh and seagrass blue carbon habitats. 98 sites in our inshore waters now have management measures in place to protect sensitive features from bottom-towed fishing gears. All existing MPAs in our offshore waters will be protected from fishing activities which could prevent them achieving their conservation objectives through a three-year by-law programme being undertaken by the Marine Management Organisation.

■ Recycling**Rachael Maskell:**[\[33259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the recycling rate has been for (a) England and (b) York in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The national recycling rate for England and the local authority recycling rate for York City Council are shown below.

The recycling rate for England is on a “waste from household” basis. Local authority recycling rates are not available on this basis so the “Household” recycling rate for York has been shown below.

Recycling rates

	ENGLAND (WASTE FROM HOUSEHOLDS)	YORK CITY COUNCIL (HOUSEHOLD WASTE)
2015-16	44.4%	42.8%
2016-17	45.1%	42.5%
2017-18	44.8%	44.9%
2018-19	45.1%	43.6%
2019-20	45.5%	48.4%

Notes

i) Figures relate to the percentage of waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting, anaerobic digestion.

ii) “Waste from households” is a harmonised measure used for reporting headline England and UK recycling rates. It is narrower in scope than “Household waste” excluding waste types not considered to have come directly from households such as street bins, street sweepings, parks and grounds.

More detail on the difference between these two measures can be found in the Local authority waste statistics [publications](#).

Charlotte Nichols:

[33357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what comparative assessment he has made of having an all-in deposit return system and an on-the-go system in respect of the potential effects of those systems on (a) the climate and (b) healthy oceans.

Rebecca Pow:

It is estimated that 80% of man-made debris in the marine environment originated on land before being thrown, blown or washed into rivers, canals and the seas. Keep Britain Tidy surveys have found high levels of drinks related litter, including 52% of surveyed sites containing litter related to non-alcoholic drinks and 20% of litter on beaches demonstrated to be as a result of food and drinks packaging.

The Government believes that the introduction of a deposit return scheme will help reduce the impact of littered drinks containers on our environment. Our current impact assessment on the introduction of a deposit return scheme assumes that the scheme can reduce drinks containers being littered by an estimated 85%.

The impact assessment also suggests that the 'All-in' model has the potential to lead to carbon emissions savings worth £6 million by year 11 and the 'On-the-go' model has the potential to lead to carbon emissions savings worth £1 million by year 11.

We are currently analysing the responses to the recent consultation on the deposit return scheme for drinks with a view to publishing a government response and final impact assessment in due course. This will include a final decision on the scope and materials to be included in the scheme.

■ Waste: Exports

Alicia Kearns:

[\[33361\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to phase out exports of waste by 2030 in line with the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is working with the Department for International Trade on supporting the development of more recycling infrastructure within the UK to reduce the need to export wastes to other countries.

Our Environment Bill will enable us to significantly change the way that we manage our waste. We have recently concluded consultations on using powers in the Bill such as for a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme for packaging, and proposals for greater consistency in household and business recycling. These measures will increase the quality and quantity of wastes collected for recycling, drive up demand for recycled materials and provide an incentive for industry to invest in UK reprocessing infrastructure.

We are also taking action to reduce the volume of waste generated in the first place. Our approach is focused on encouraging greater uptake of reusable alternatives and increasing supply and demand for secondary materials to be recycled in the UK. The Resources and Waste Strategy also sets out the Government's plans to reduce, reuse, and recycle more than we do now.

Where the UK cannot currently recycle materials economically, exports can help ensure those materials are recycled rather than landfilled. Recycling one tonne of plastics reduces emissions by 1.1 - 3.0 tonnes of CO₂e, compared to producing the same tonne of plastics from virgin fossil feedstock.

The UK Government is committed to banning the export of plastic waste for recycling or disposal to countries that are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). We currently plan to consult before the end of 2022 on options to deliver the proposed ban.

■ Waste: Landfill**Alicia Kearns:**[\[33360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will bring forward to 2025 the ban on biodegradable waste being sent to landfill in line with the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee.

Rebecca Pow:

As set out in our Resources and Waste Strategy, we will continue to explore policies to work towards eliminating all biodegradable waste to landfill by 2030. Climate Change Committee advice is taken into account in policy development. We are also continuing to analyse expected future levels of municipal residual waste and infrastructure needs.

Our measures to introduce consistency in household and business recycling collections includes a requirement to collect separately food and garden waste from households that will, once implemented, help to achieve a reduction in the amount of biodegradable waste that is sent for disposal in landfill.

■ Waste: Recycling**Alicia Kearns:**[\[33362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will commit to setting a target for a 68 per cent recycling rate by 2030 covering all wastes in England in line with the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government has committed to recycle 65% of municipal waste by 2035, with less than 10% municipal waste going to landfill. We set out measures to achieve this target in our 2019 Resources and Waste Strategy and the Environment Bill.

From the combined impacts of consistent recycling collection, Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging and a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, we estimate that we will meet this commitment. These three reforms are estimated to deliver over 30 million tonnes of CO2 emissions savings between 2023-2035.

We have also published plans for monitoring and evaluating progress on the Resources and Waste Strategy and will publish annual statistics of recycling as now.

■ Water Supply: Housing**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[33309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy of the level of competition within the residential water management industry and (b) effect of that level of competition on the amount customers pay in water bills.

Rebecca Pow:

In November 2015, the UK Government asked Ofwat to assess the costs and benefits of extending retail competition to residential water customers in England. Ofwat's report did not indicate significant benefits for household customers and highlighted initial bill increases to fund the extension of the retail market.

The industry is regulated to protect customers. As part of the recent Price Review process for 2020-2025, Ofwat challenged companies on efficiency and set out a package that will enable water companies to deliver more for people today, invest for future generations and reduce the average household bill by 2025.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Politics and Government****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[34015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) support the Government has provided to Afghanistan in July 2021 and (b) recent discussions he has had with representatives of the Afghan Government.

Nigel Adams:

The UK Government remains committed to supporting Afghanistan through our diplomatic and development work and support to the security sector. We continue to be a substantial contributor to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and its role in continuing to provide primary health care and tackle Covid-19 and to educate children. We remain committed to providing financial support to sustain Afghan forces. We are working with the government of Afghanistan to tackle illicit finance and corruption. We are supporting the international efforts to energise an Afghan peace process.

UK Government ministers and officials have frequent discussions with representatives of the Afghan Government. Most recently on 16 July, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South Asia, discussed peace and security in Afghanistan with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar. The Prime Minister spoke to President Ghani on 17 June to reaffirm the UK's commitment to Afghanistan and that the UK would continue to support a negotiated peace settlement as the best path to peace in Afghanistan.

■ Conflict Resolution: Females**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[35877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the new International Development Strategy will support implementation of the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO is committed to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda through the National Action Plan. We look forward to engaging with partners and stakeholders over the coming months to ensure that the WPS agenda is appropriately supported by the International Development Strategy.

■ Developing Countries: Climate Change**Helen Hayes:**[\[36702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the reduction in the Overseas Aid Budget on lower income countries' ability to (a) reduce carbon emissions and (b) prepare for the effects of climate change.

James Duddridge:

The UK will spend more than £10 billion this year to tackle climate change, improve global health and fight poverty - making us one of the biggest aid donors in the G7. However the impact of the pandemic on the public finances has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions on how we spend taxpayers' money, including temporarily reducing the aid budget.

As set out in the Integrated Review, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is the UK's number one international priority in 2021 and beyond. We remain committed to our five-year pledge to spend £11.6 billion on international climate finance. This will support developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change and adopt clean growth pathways, reducing or avoiding carbon emissions.

■ Developing Countries: Food Supply**Martyn Day:**[\[35780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to scale up social protection in countries experiencing extreme levels of food insecurity.

James Duddridge:

FCDO recognises the vital role of social protection in boosting household food security and helping people to meet basic needs. We work with national governments to help them strengthen and scale up their social protection systems, including building systems that can flex to respond to shocks, to mitigate their impact on food security. For example, in Kenya the FCDO has routinely delivered cash transfers to nearly 600,000 people since 2013, and the programme is designed to scale up to an additional 1.62 million people during periods of drought. Since 2012, the Government of Kenya has co-financed these cash transfers.

The FCDO programme 'Better Assistance in Crises' is providing technical assistance and generating evidence on how social protection can help poor and vulnerable people better meet their basic needs in crises, including contexts of food insecurity. At the G7 meeting in May 2021, through the famine prevention and humanitarian

crises compact, we committed to work with the World Bank to support existing and shock-responsive social protection systems in the most vulnerable and conflict-affected countries.

■ Developing Countries: Remittances

Layla Moran: [\[34028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK is on target to reach UN Sustainable Development Goal 10C of reducing the transaction costs of migrant remittances to less than 3 per cent by 2030.

Nigel Adams:

According to the World Bank's data on remittances, the cost of sending £150 and £360 from the UK was 6.44% and 4.69% in Q1 2021. Transfer costs vary considerably depending on the recipient country and payment instrument. For example, the cost of sending £120 from the UK by debit/credit card was about half (4.88%) of the cost of using cash (9.54%) in 2020.

Significant barriers to reduce the transaction costs of sending remittances from the UK to reach the SDG target remain which is why we look to address these barriers collaboratively across-government and internationally to address the constraints in the UK and in recipient countries.

Layla Moran: [\[34029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reducing international remittance costs to support developing countries.

Nigel Adams:

According to the World Bank, cutting the cost of sending remittances by 5 percent could save senders and receivers up to \$16 billion a year. These are potential savings that can augment the benefits of remittances to households and recipient countries. For households, it can be used to supplement their income, financial inclusivity, education, health, and investments. At macro level, remittances can increase the volume of capital flowing to low- and middle- income countries, improve their credit worthiness and increase their liquidity.

■ Embassies: Wines

Mr Richard Holden: [\[35942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which UK missions (a) are and (b) are not stocking UK wine for use at receptions and events overseas.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The FCDO encourages all its UK and Overseas offices to use British produce and wine at UK-hosted events as far as possible, as we recognise the importance of showcasing British cuisine globally.

The FCDO does not hold data on British wine/food usage at receptions and events overseas centrally.

■ Eswatini: Demonstrations

Caroline Lucas: [\[33193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) King Mswati III and (b) the Government of Eswatini on (i) the death of Thabani Nkomonye in May 2020, (ii) reports that pro-democracy protests that have taken place since Mr Nkomonye's death have been met with violent retaliation by the Eswatini authorities, (iii) evidence from Amnesty International of violent retaliation by state security forces and (iv) the telecommunications ban in place since the start of the protests; and if he will call on the Eswatini authorities to (1) carry out an investigation into reports of use of excessive force, (2) investigate and conduct fair trials of anyone suspected to be responsible and (3) uphold human rights; and if he will make a statement.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned by the recent violent confrontations and civil unrest in Eswatini and we continue to monitor developments closely. Alongside the EU and US, the UK has made it absolutely clear to the Government of Eswatini that it must exercise restraint and respect the human rights of its people, including their right to peaceful protest, and called for all alleged incidents of police brutality and mishandling to be investigated. At the same time, the UK and our partners have stressed that protestors must voice their concerns via non-violent means, and desist from looting or the destruction of private property. The UK, welcomes the calling of a Sibaya which allows HM King Mswati III to address his people and presents an initial opportunity for citizens to express their views.

■ Fossil Fuels: Overseas Investment

Caroline Lucas: [\[35598\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he can provide a full list of fossil fuel projects in CDC Group's portfolio.

James Duddridge:

CDC has published its full energy portfolio, as at December 2019, on its website - <https://assets.cdcgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/11174306/Fossil-Fuels-and-Renewables-portfolio-as-at-31-December-2019-pdf.pdf>

Having published its 2020 Annual Review on the 6th July, CDC will publish its full energy portfolio, as at December 2020, on its website in due course.

■ Gambia: Charities**Alex Norris:** [\[34026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of access to aid spending for UK charities working in The Gambia.

James Duddridge:

The FCDO works with a wide range of partners to deliver our development assistance. As new programmes open, delivery partners can bid for new funding through open competition.

■ Gambia: Overseas Aid**Alex Norris:** [\[34025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what aid has been given by the UK to The Gambia in the financial year 2020-21.

James Duddridge:

The FCDO provided a total of £1.35 million in ODA to The Gambia in the financial year 2020-21. This included funding from both DFID and the FCO before the creation of the FCDO.

■ Humanitarian Aid**Sarah Champion:** [\[33933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the level of its humanitarian support that reaches the most vulnerable communities around the world.

James Cleverly:

Since 2015, the UK has provided over £11.1 billion in humanitarian funding reaching over 33.7 million people with life-saving humanitarian assistance, with people in need in Africa and MENA regions receiving the most support. The FCDO has committed to spend £906 million this financial year to support the world's most vulnerable communities suffering in crisis. The FCDO is also uniquely placed to bring together diplomatic clout and humanitarian expertise to drive more effective approaches to crisis prevention, preparedness and response, such as the first ever G7 Compact to tackle the drivers of famine or our ongoing work on Tigray.

■ India: Human Rights**Andrew Rosindell:** [\[33158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what upcoming discussions he has planned with his Indian counterpart on (a) the death of Friar Stan Swamy and (b) the treatment of other human rights activists in that country.

Nigel Adams:

I was saddened to hear of Father Swamy's passing on July 5, aged 84. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon raised Father Swamy's case with India's Foreign Secretary, Harsh Shringla, and India's Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kishan Reddy, on 15 March while in India. I also discussed Father Swamy's case with the Indian High Commissioner on 8 June. The British High Commission in New Delhi and Deputy High Commission in Mumbai had been following Father Swamy's case closely.

Human Rights Defenders make an essential contribution to the promotion of the rights of their fellow citizens. They face growing threats around the world and the UK works with international partners to support them through organisations like Lifeline and Frontline Defenders, and through our overseas network of embassies and high commissions. In June, the UK and India subscribed to the G7 2021 Open Societies Statement, which makes clear our countries' shared belief in the importance of human rights for all, and the role of human rights defenders in promoting fundamental freedoms.

In India we work with Union and State Government, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), to build capacity and exchange expertise on human rights issues. Human rights discussions will continue to form part of our broad and deep bilateral relationship.

■ Islamic State: Africa**Alexander Stafford:**[\[32559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his speech at the Global Coalition against Daesh ministerial meeting in Rome on 28 June 2021, what assessment he has made of the threat of Islamic State in Africa for African Christians and members of other religious minorities.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending FoRB for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities.

The UK Government condemns attacks by Daesh-affiliated terrorist groups across sub-Saharan Africa. Terrorist groups such as Daesh's affiliate group in West Africa continue to cause immense suffering to both Muslim and Christian communities.

They seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion or belief by indiscriminately attacking those of all faiths who do not subscribe to their extremist views. The UK remains absolutely committed to the lasting defeat of Daesh.

■ Jerusalem: Palestinians**Caroline Lucas:**[\[33890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his letter dated 9 July to the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, FCDO reference MC2021/03479, for what

reasons Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv did not raise the issue of human rights with the Israeli Ministry of Justice at the time of the Israeli efforts to evict Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in May 2021; and if he will make a statement.

James Cleverly:

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation. The UK regularly raises the issue of forced evictions from their homes, including in Sheikh Jarrah, with the Government of Israel, most recently with the Ministry of Justice on 12 July. On 8 May I publicly expressed concern over tensions in Jerusalem linked to the threatened eviction of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. We monitor the situation in East Jerusalem closely, and officials regularly visit areas at risk of demolition and eviction and attend related court hearings.

■ **Nauru: Detainees**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[36775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Australian counterparts on resettling the remaining detainees at Nauru detention centre away from that island.

James Duddridge:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has not had discussions with Australian counterparts on resettling detainees from Nauru.

■ **South Africa: Politics and Government**

Ruth Jones:

[\[34055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) political, (b) economic and (c) security situation 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 and the government's determination to restore calm. As a long-standing friend of South Africa, the UK partners closely with the South African Government, business and civil society on a shared agenda of security, health, economic and social issues.

■ **South Africa: Security**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[34073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the security situation in Durban, South Africa.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[34074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his South African counterpart on the security in Durban, South Africa.

James Duddridge:

The UK is concerned by the outbreak of violence and looting in the South African provinces of KwaZulu-Natal (home to Durban) and Gauteng in recent days, which has sadly resulted in loss of life, injuries, and substantial damage to buildings and businesses. We welcome the South African Government's determination to restore calm and strongly supports President Ramaphosa's emphasis on the importance of the rule of law. Our High Commission remain in regular contact with the South African authorities. As a long-standing friend of South Africa, the UK will continue to partner closely with the South African Government, business and civil society on a shared agenda of security, health, economic and social issues.

■ Tigray: Armed Conflict

Jim Shannon:

[\[33228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the UN to (a) investigate and (b) hold accountable the perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence in Tigray.

James Duddridge:

We are appalled at the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence in Tigray. We have raised this issue in a variety of multilateral fora, including the UNSC and G7. We welcome the joint Inquiry of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into human rights violations and abuses in Tigray, and continue to press for unfettered access to the region and victims. The UK is supporting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigation into atrocities in Tigray with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is independent, transparent and impartial and holds the parties to this conflict directly responsible for these unspeakable crimes.

The UK has recently allocated a further £16.7 million towards the crisis in Tigray. Part of this funding will be used to support survivors of sexual violence, through mobile health teams and by helping to re-start service delivery at health centres that were impacted by violence and looting. The UK has also deployed an individual from the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative to Tigray to complete a scoping mission to identify gaps and provide recommendations for the UK's response.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Jim Shannon:**[\[29044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK Rare Diseases Framework, what assessment he has made of the implications of the rejection of the first gene therapy that has proceeded through NICE's Standard Technology Appraisal process.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has already recommended a number of cell and gene therapies through its technology appraisal programme and these treatments are now available to National Health Service patients in line with NICE's recommendations.

NICE continues to develop guidance on several other gene therapies, including betibeglogene autotemcel for the treatment of transfusion-dependent beta-thalassaemia and published its draft guidance in February this year. The draft recommendations on betibeglogene autotemcel may be subject to change following public consultation. The next committee meeting for this technology appraisal is on 14 July, with an expected final publication date of 15 September 2021.

■ Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Misuse**Daisy Cooper:**[\[34597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the average caseload numbers for drug and alcohol addiction caseworkers.

Jo Churchill:

No recent estimate has been made.

■ Cancer: Health Services**Alex Norris:**[\[34021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will revise the cancer ambitions in NHS England's Long Term Plan to account for the cancer backlog and increasing cancer prevalence as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 7 July to Question 25916.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Mr William Wragg:**[\[25854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies research and analysis, Potential application of Air Cleaning devices and personal decontamination to manage transmission of COVID-19, 4

November 2020, whether his Department has received any independent validation that UV technology in standalone air cleaners provides any additional benefits to the benefits of a leakage free high-efficiency particulate absorbing filter in such a system would give.

Mr William Wragg: [25855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons his Department has not made an assessment of the potential benefits of professional air purification systems in indoor settings, such as hospitals where adequate ventilation, such as opening windows is not always possible or does not provide the required amount of ventilation.

Mr William Wragg: [25856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies research and analysis, Potential application of Air Cleaning devices and personal decontamination to manage transmission of COVID-19, 4 November 2020, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of the deployment of professional air purification systems.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 July 2021]: The Department has not received or commissioned any such independent validation and no further assessment has also been made of the potential merits for the deployment of air purification systems as the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for determining future policy and regulatory action.

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

Rachael Maskell: [29091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to support vulnerable people in public places who are anxious about the easing of covid-19 restrictions; and whether he plans to reinstate early opening hours in supermarkets to facilitate shopping for the clinically extremely vulnerable.

Jo Churchill:

As restrictions are eased from 19 July, clinically extremely vulnerable people will be able to follow the same rules as the rest of the population, although they may wish to take extra precautions to reduce their chance of catching COVID-19. The guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable will be updated ahead of 19 July.

All members of the public are encouraged to be respectful and considerate of those who may wish to take a more cautious approach as restrictions are lifted. The National Health Service has provided advice on dealing with related anxiety which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/tips-to-cope-with-anxiety-lockdown-lifting/>

There are no current plans to reinstate early opening hours in supermarkets for the clinically extremely vulnerable.

■ **Coronavirus: Medical Treatments**

Dan Jarvis: [\[35648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to publish bespoke clinical guidance for the treatment of people who are (a) immunocompromised or immunosuppressed and become infected with covid-19 reflecting recent innovations in the treatment of covid-19 and (b) ensure patients in this situation receive the same treatment opportunities across England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: Specific clinical guidance for the treatment of immunocompromised patients may be developed if research identifies effective treatments in the future. Immunocompromised patients are a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies, novel antivirals, and repurposed compounds.

The Department works closely with the National Health Service to ensure treatments are made available on an equitable basis.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Justin Madders: [\[25024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the data collected by the ZOE COVID Symptom Study which found that headaches, a sore throat and a runny nose are the most common symptoms of the Delta variant of covid-19, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of expanding the list of symptoms which trigger the need for a covid-19 test.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: 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.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Caroline Lucas: [\[32348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2021 to Question 25974 on Arthritis: Coronavirus, whether he plans to publish the results of the OCTAVE study on covid-19 vaccine response in people with impaired immune systems before Step 4 of the roadmap for lifting covid-19 restrictions; and if he will make a statement.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: We recognise the importance of this study. UK Research and Innovation, the Department and the OCTAVE study team are preparing a pre-print paper for publication shortly.

Rachael Maskell:[\[33269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of requiring covid-19 vaccinations in certain professions on participation in other vaccination programmes.

Jo Churchill:

We do not expect the requirement for COVID-19 vaccinations in certain professions to impact other vaccination programmes. The Green Book sets out recommendations for the vaccinations which health care workers should receive before commencing employment. It recommends that healthcare workers should be up to date with all their routine immunisations and also sets out additional vaccinations health care workers should receive, depending on their role, which include BCG, hepatitis B, influenza and Varicella. It is the role of the employer to provide their employees with this information which is done through the employer's occupational health service.

Holly Mumby-Croft:[\[33372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what health (a) support and (b) guidance is available for clinically vulnerable people who are unable to receive a covid-19 vaccine due to medical reasons.

Jo Churchill:

The guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people published on 12 July also applies to those who are unable to receive a COVID-19 vaccine due to medical reasons. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/19-july-guidance-on-protecting-people-who-are-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-from-covid-19>

If any individual is concerned about their physical or mental wellbeing, they should contact their general practitioner practice or specialist who can provide them with support and guidance on any further measures to further reduce their risk of infection.

Holly Mumby-Croft:[\[33373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will urgently publish health guidance for clinically vulnerable people who are unable to take the covid-19 vaccine due to medical reasons ahead of the removal of covid-19 lockdown restrictions on 19th July.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable people was published on 12 July and includes those who are unable to receive the COVID-19 vaccine for medical reasons. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/19-july-guidance-on-protecting-people-who-are-clinically-extremely-vulnerable-from-covid-19>

■ Food: Advertising

Andrew Rosindell:

[33165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect on UK-based food and drinks manufacturers of multinationals who employ less than 250 employees in the UK being able to continue advertising high fat, salt and sugar products as a result of the proposed exemption of those manufacturers from further advertising restrictions on those products.

Jo Churchill:

It is intended that the restrictions will not apply to businesses with 249 or fewer employees that make or sell less healthy food and drink products. The Government has taken care to ensure this exemption is only used by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The definition of an SME will be set out in secondary legislation. It is our intention to conduct a short consultation on the wording of these regulations in due course.

■ General Practitioners

Rachael Maskell:

[33973]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to assist GPs in tackling prioritisation and capacity challenges.

Jo Churchill:

To help expand general practice capacity, we have made an additional £270 million available from November 2020 until September 2021 to ensure general practitioners (GPs) and their teams continue to support all patients. This funding is ring-fenced exclusively for use in general practice, for priorities including increasing GP numbers and capacity, identifying and supporting patients with 'long' COVID-19 and clinically extremely vulnerable patients.

Practices are being asked to opt into the vaccine booster scheme only if they can deliver business as usual services at the same time. Local commissioners must be satisfied that practices can continue to deliver core services as well as administer COVID-19 vaccines.

■ Health: Screening

Paul Bristow:

[R] [33351]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to maintain the medical testing diagnostics infrastructure which has been established during the covid-19 outbreak to help in the early detection of other illnesses, including cancer and dementia.

Jo Churchill:

We plan to maintain the testing diagnostics infrastructure as part of the United Kingdom's diagnostic capability.

Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[35720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 20431 on Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme, for what reason providing breastmilk and establishing an attachment with a premature baby is classified as a family visit and not a medical reason for being in hospital under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance sets out the support and access for partners and parents of babies in neonatal critical care should be provided by National Health Service trusts. Parents of babies in neonatal critical care are partners in their baby's care and neonatal units should identify how to safely facilitate parental presence at all times of day.

Eligibility for the full or partial payment of NHS travel expenses depends upon being in receipt of a qualifying benefit, being named on an NHS Low Income Scheme and referral by a primary care provider to receive non-primary care services. If these criteria are met individuals would be recompensed for their travel costs. Additionally, trusts have discretion to make a payment if they deem it appropriate.

Long Covid: Liverpool West Derby**Ian Byrne:**[\[28363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) adults and (b) children have been diagnosed with long covid in Liverpool, West Derby constituency to date.

Ian Byrne:[\[28364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to provide additional support to people with long covid in (a) Liverpool, West Derby constituency and (b) Liverpool.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The data requested is not collected centrally at constituency or city level.

On 15 June, NHS England and NHS Improvement published a new 10-point plan and announced an additional £100 million expansion of care for patients with 'long' COVID-19 in England. This additional investment includes £70 million which will be used to expand National Health Service treatment and rehabilitation services and establish 15 paediatric hubs to coordinate care for children and young people. A 'long' COVID-19 clinic is available as part of Liverpool University Foundation Hospital

Trust, while one of the paediatric hubs will be set up within Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust. The remaining £30million will be used for an enhanced service for general practice to support care and enable consistent referrals.

Research is ongoing so we can better understand the virus and its long-term effects. Over £30million of funding has already been committed to research projects and a further £20million is available for a further research call which closed on 12 May. Successful applicants from this call will be announced in due course.

■ NHS: Software

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[33302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has issued guidance to the NHS on the use of the NHS Test and Trace app among its staff.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance on use of the COVID-19 app was issued to NHS England, healthcare organisations and stakeholders in October 2020.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Munira Wilson: [\[24355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with specific dietary requirements have access to appropriate food in covid-19 quarantine hotels.

Munira Wilson: [\[24357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance the Government is providing to covid-19 quarantine hotels on ensuring that they have adequate ventilation for such quarantine.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: The catering requirements for managed quarantine hotels must include a variety of meals to meet nutritional, dietary, religious and cultural needs.

The Government has given clear specifications to managed quarantine facilities on ventilation. Hotel rooms should have natural ventilation, for example windows, that open safely. However, mechanical ventilation systems can be used as long as they meet the guidelines as set out in the ventilation requirements agreed with Public Health England. We ensure these are being met as part of the initial site visit undertaken by Managed Quarantine Service staff and security prior to a hotel becoming a quarantine facility.

HOME OFFICE**■ Community Security Trust: Finance****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[33207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding the Government has allocated to the Community Security Trust for security at Jewish institutions in the 2021-22 financial year.

Victoria Atkins:

£14m has been set aside for the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant for the 2021-22 financial year. This grant provides funding for protective security measures at all Jewish state, free and independent schools, colleges, nurseries and some other Jewish community sites, including a number of synagogues.

■ Hassockfield Immigration Removal Centre: Staff**Kate Osborne:**[\[33347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether it is her policy that at least 60 per cent of staff in direct contact with women detainees will also be women at the new Hassockfield immigration removal centre in line with her Department's acceptance of that recommendation in the HM Inspectorate of Prisons' Yarl's Wood Service Improvement Plan, published on 12 August 2015.

Kate Osborne:[\[33348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the statement in her Department's Detention Services Order 06/2016: Women in the detention estate report, published in June 2016, that women detainees are entitled to ask to be examined by a female nurse or doctor, what her policy is on the proportion of healthcare staff at the new Hassockfield immigration removal centre that will be women.

Chris Philp:

The safety, health and welfare of individuals in immigration detention are considered with the upmost importance. The new Hassockfield (to be known as Derwentside) immigration removal centre (IRC) will be operated in line with Detention Centre Rules 2001, published operating standards for IRCs and Detention Services Orders; a framework which ensures the safety and security of those detained in our care.

The workforce requirements for the new Hassockfield IRC will reflect the lessons learned from detaining women at Yarl's Wood IRC and will include a ratio of female to male custodial staff that is appropriate for the specific needs of women in detention. It is our aim that around 60% of uniformed staff will be women.

Healthcare in IRCs in England is commissioned by NHS England, and the healthcare services at Hassockfield IRC will be provided by NHS England & NHS Improvement commissioned service providers and delivered in line with the national service specifications for healthcare services in IRCs. The healthcare provider will ensure that services within the IRC are delivered to meet the healthcare needs of women. As

set out in Detention Services Order 06/2016 'Women in the detention estate' women will be offered the option to choose to see a female healthcare professional wherever possible.

■ Identity Cards and Passports: EU Nationals

Tulip Siddiq:

[\[33998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing (a) EU school children entry to the UK on a collective passport scheme and (b) EU citizens to travel to the UK using an national ID Card from an EU country.

Kevin Foster:

The UK is a signatory to the 1961 Council of Europe treaty which provides for collective passports for young people. Continued acceptance of these passports from those who have ratified the treaty is current practice. The UK has not left the Council of Europe.

The UK has left the EU, ended free movement and is aligning the entry of EU and non-EU citizens. Citizens from outside the EU (and other EEA countries and Switzerland) cannot use national identity cards for travel to the UK and EEA national identity cards are, as a rule, less secure documents than national passports, hence they dominate the figures for document abuse detected at the border. Our assessment is therefore their continued use presents a risk to border security which we are no longer obliged to accept.

All visitors from outside the EU are expected to hold a passport (and visa where necessary) and those visiting from EU countries will be expected to do the same.

■ Immigration Controls: Coronavirus

Jim Shannon:

[\[33229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had to ensure that the correct (a) procedures are followed and (b) documents are checked at border controls at UK airports during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

The digital logic incorporated into the Passenger Locator Form (PLF) processes ensure the correct processes can only be completed once all tests are booked and other requirements are fulfilled.

Border Force officers are now able to check passengers have completed their online PLF when scanning their passport.

Our continual upgrade of e-Gates enables more passengers to use them and for the e-Gates to check a PLF, including test bookings, has been completed before the E-Gate allows the passenger entry or advises the passenger to seek assistance of staff at the control desk.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[33190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 20 May 2020 to Question 48558 on Immigration: EU Nationals, whether people who have completed the EU Settled Status application process will be able to use written notification of their immigration status as evidence of their status for all legal purposes.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[33191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Answer of 20 May 2020 to Question 48558 on Immigration: EU Nationals, whether people who have (a) completed the EU Settled Status application process and (b) received written notification of their immigration status will be able to request a replacement copy of that notification in case it is lost or stolen.

Kevin Foster:

EEA citizens who are granted settled or pre-settled status are issued with a document which is formal written notification of their leave. This is in the form of a letter sent by post or a PDF document sent by email, which sets out their immigration status in the UK.

They can retain the letter sent by post or print or electronically store the PDF document and keep it as confirmation of their status for their own personal records and for use when contacting the Home Office about their status.

If necessary, EEA citizens can show external organisations their written confirmation of status and it includes details of the view and prove service so the person checking their status can see there is an online service where they should check the individual's status.

The written notification is not itself sufficient proof of status for right to work or right to rent checks because it is not a biometric document and could be subject to fraud and abuse.

EEA citizens are able to request a replacement written notification if they have lost or deleted their letter and cannot print out a replacement.

■ Members: Correspondence**John Spellar:** [\[33111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Warley of 17 May 2021 regarding Mr Hassan.

Chris Philp:

I apologise for the delay. UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team responded on 15 July 2021.

■ Migrants

Jess Phillips: [\[33949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish an update on her Department's review into data-sharing practices between the police and immigration enforcement and measures to establish a firewall.

Jess Phillips: [\[33950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to tackle the fear of reporting to the police faced by victims of domestic abuse with insecure immigration status, including through the establishment of a firewall.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office are currently undertaking a review into data sharing arrangements concerning migrant victims and witnesses of crime with insecure immigration status, acting upon the recommendation within HMICFRS's super-complaint report 'Safe to Share?'. The review will consider initiatives that seek to encourage the reporting of crime by migrant victims and witnesses with insecure immigration status, including the further consideration of a mechanism for establishing a firewall between police and immigration enforcement services. The outcome of the review is to establish safe reporting mechanisms for victims and witnesses of crime. The review is being developed in close consultation with migrant victims representative organisations to inform and shape review conclusions. As set out in [legislation](#), the review will be published by no later than 29 December 2021.

■ Visas: Educational Visits

Daisy Cooper: [\[34599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will assess the potential merits of allowing under-18s travelling as part of an organised trip lasting less than two weeks to enter the UK without visas.

Kevin Foster:

Citizens of some countries are required to obtain a visa before travelling to the UK. This list is set out in the Immigration Rules Appendix Visitor: Visa national list:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-visa-national-list>

The visa requirement is based on nationality rather than the purpose of travel or age of the applicant.

The UK's immigration system is global and applies to all regardless of nationality. All those visiting the UK, including on school visits or exchanges, are assessed against the same immigration rules which are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor> .

There are no plans to change our approach to under 18s travelling as part of an organised group.

JUSTICE**■ Crown Court: Standards****Mr David Lammy:****[35485]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will publish the backlog of outstanding cases at the start of July for each year since 2010 in every Crown Court open in England and Wales.

Chris Philp:

The number of outstanding cases by Crown Court for each year since 2014 is currently published as part of the National Statistics publication 'Criminal Court Statistics Quarterly' in the 'Crown Court cases received, disposed, outstanding tool'. The published data for the second quarters of these years reflects the outstanding caseload in Crown Courts at the end of June of those respective years. The most recent data can be found in Criminal Statistics Quarterly January to March 2021 linked below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/criminal-court-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021>

and the received, disposed and outstanding tool can be accessed here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/996073/cc_rdos_tool.xlsx

This data is only available split by individual Crown Court back to 2014.

■ Magistrates' Courts: Hartlepool**Alex Cunningham:****[35631]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to re-open Hartlepool Magistrates Court.

Chris Philp:

There are no plans to re-open this court and we are working with the local council to find an alternative use for the former court property.

Hartlepool Magistrates' and County Court closed in 2017 following a full public consultation and workloads were successfully transferred to Teesside Magistrates' Court and Middlesbrough County Court.

We will continue to keep our court and tribunal estate under close review to make sure it meets our operational requirements.

■ Prison Officers: Disciplinary Proceedings**Mr David Lammy:****[35488]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prison officers have been (a) reprimanded, (b) dismissed and (c) convicted for being in possession of prohibited items including drugs while on duty in each of the last 10 years.

Alex Chalk:

The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. To answer this accurately each individual personnel file held on each prison officer in post over the last 10 years would need to be examined. Most older personnel files are still held in hard copy format and would need to be brought back from storage.

■ **Prisoners****Philip Davies:** [\[33876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to paragraph 2 on page 5 of the Female Offender Strategy, published in June 2018, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) male and b) female prisoners who have experienced chaotic lifestyles.

Alex Chalk:

It is important to understand the personal circumstances and needs of offenders who receive custody and community disposals, if we are to effectively support their rehabilitation.

Information on the criminogenic and responsivity needs of offenders is captured through the Offender Assessment System (OASyS). The most recent figures were published on 18 July 2019 in the 'Identified needs of offenders in custody and the community from OASyS,' based on a snapshot as at 30 June 2018.

These figures show that females assessed in custody had a higher average number of needs per person (5.05) than males in custody (4.88), and higher than both females (3.81) and males (3.72) in the community.

Females in custody had a higher prevalence of relationship needs (80%) than males in custody (69%), as well as accommodation (64% compared to 56%), drugs (50% compared to 45%), alcohol (22% compared to 17%) and employability needs (66% compared to 62%).

■ **Prisoners: Foreign Nationals****Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[33185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Maidstone: For reporting year March 2020 – February 2021, published on 13 July 2021, what steps he is taking to support effective collaboration between the HM Prison and Probation Service and Home Office Immigration Enforcement to (a) improve communication and end-of-sentence management for foreign national prisoners, (b) reduce the number of detainees held under IS91 provisions and (c) ensure that those detainees held under IS91 provisions are no longer held in closed prisons.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[33186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Maidstone: For reporting year March 2020 –

February 2021, published on 13 July 2021, what steps he is taking in collaboration with the Home Secretary to ensure that Home Office Immigration Enforcement documents required to be signed by foreign national prisoners and detainees are provided in languages that those prisoners and detainees can fully understand.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[33187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Maidstone: For reporting year March 2020 – February 2021, published on 13 July 2021, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of the lack of provision of appropriately translated Home Office documents referred to on page 17 of that report with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[33188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Maidstone: For reporting year March 2020 – February 2021, published on 13 July 2021, what steps he is taking to support the restoration of local governor control of that establishment.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[33189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Maidstone: For reporting year March 2020 – February 2021, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is adequate funding for appropriate technology services for Independent Monitoring Boards.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice welcomes the findings of IMB's report and takes the concerns raised seriously. The Board found positive practices during their visit, but we recognise that the establishment still has a way to go. Some of the issues raised have been exacerbated or delayed by the impact of Covid-19 and are expected to improve as regime restrictions are lifted.

33185

HMPPS and the Home Office hold regular bilateral meetings to support the management of FNOs. HMP Maidstone have an embedded Immigration Prison Team who run daily appointments for FNOs to seek advice on their case and better manage the expectations of FNOs prior to their removal. Covid-19 has hampered efforts to remove FNOs due to a significant decrease in available flights, however, efforts have continued to remove FNOs via removal schemes throughout the pandemic.

Individuals who are risk assessed as suitable for transfer to an Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) will be placed on a waiting list, operated by the Home Office, but will remain in prison accommodation pending that transfer. Transfers will take place as soon as reasonably and operationally practicable. When an individual is deemed unsuitable for a transfer to the immigration removal estate, their circumstances continue to be regularly reviewed. Changes in circumstance can impact this decision and individuals may, on re-assessment, be then considered suitable and accepted for transfer into an IRC.

During the pandemic, covid safe measures such as single occupancy and reverse cohorting (where new intake is separated from the general population) across the IRC estate has resulted in a slower flow of time served foreign national offenders suitable for the estate being transferred, however, where such moves can be operationally set up and space allows, the Home Office have continued to move such individuals and continue to do so.

33186 & 33187

As part of the Home Office's response to the Stephen Shaw's follow-up report in 2018, an internal review of the quality of interpreter services in IRCs was undertaken. The review findings have helped to inform the development of a new Detention Services Order (DSO) on interpretation services and translation devices, which includes guidance on the translation of documentation. The Home Office aims to publish this DSO by the Autumn. As part of this work HMPPS and the Home Office will review the provision of translated documents to individuals held under immigration powers in prison.

33188

In March 2020 HMPPS stood up COVID-19 Gold Command to stand alongside the normal incident Gold arrangements, as a direct response to the emerging global pandemic. The aim of the introduction of this function, was to help and support prison group directors and governors in managing COVID-19, offering guidance as to managing a new and complicated set of factors. COVID-19 Gold drew senior HMPPS leaders together with experts from other related fields such as Public Health England/Wales. Our COVID-19 operational guidance team drafted and published a set of Exceptional Delivery Models, drawing on experience from experts, which were set as templates for establishments, upon which to base their safe delivery. Gold command have processed and authorised these delivery models, when establishments have evidenced it is safe for them to enhance their regime provision.

Whilst HMPPS have effectively been operating in 'Command Mode' since March 2020, governors and prison group directors have still maintained a degree of autonomy over the day-to-day running of their establishments, therefore governors have never had their control removed.

33189

The IMB receive an annual budget from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to support all essential activities and any necessary transformation for the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with the financial controls in place across the Civil Service and the MoJ, including those mandated by HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office. The IMB Report for Maidstone was published on 13 July, and issues raised within it are currently being assessed by the Department.

■ Prisoners: Rehabilitation

Philip Davies:

[\[33872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will commit to developing a rehabilitation strategy for male prisoners that is in line with the Female Offender Strategy.

Alex Chalk:

Evidence shows that a gender-specific approach for women is the most effective way to address the often multiple and complex issues that underly women's offending behaviour. That is why we launched the Female Offender Strategy in 2018 to improve outcomes for women at all points of the justice system by taking a gender and trauma informed approach.

A wide range of work is underway to help rehabilitate both male and female offenders. We know that having somewhere to live, a job, a healthy lifestyle and helping the individual address their underlying and often complex needs are essential to reducing their likelihood of reoffending. This enables them to make a positive contribution to society.

That is why we are strengthening rehabilitation in prisons by creating a Prisoner Education Service focussed on work-based training and skills to improve employment outcomes for offenders on release. The HMPPS New Futures Network also continues to broker partnerships between prisons and employers, which can result in work opportunities for serving prisoners, through prison industries workshops and workplace Release on Temporary Licence. We are also improving employment outcomes by increasing the number of DWP Prison Work Coaches across the estate, which means that prior to release, prisoners can access advice and support on employment and benefits.

In January, this Government announced a £70 million package on tackling some of the key drivers of reoffending, and £80 million on expanding drug treatment services in England to address offenders' substance misuse issues, divert them on to effective community sentences and reduce drug-related crime and deaths. The £70 million package includes launching transitional accommodation for those leaving prison who would otherwise be homeless in five probation regions and working collaboratively with 16 prisons to test new innovative approaches to ensure offenders resettle back into the community and turn their backs on crime.

On the 26 June we successfully implemented our reforms to create a unified Probation Service. We have retained a key role for the private and voluntary sectors by awarding contracts worth nearly £200m over the next 3 years to a range of organisations to deliver vital rehabilitative services such as accommodation support, education, training and employment, and support to address other issues such as access to mental health services and additional support to meet the specific needs of female offenders.

We are committed to providing all offenders with an opportunity to turn their backs on crime. However, this is not something the Ministry of Justice can do in isolation, it

needs to be a combined effort across government and local partners in order to make a significant and lasting change. That is why we are leading work across Government to address the complex issues that increase the likelihood of reoffending when a prisoner is released. There are no plans to develop a distinct rehabilitation strategy for male prisoners.

■ Prisons: Gender Recognition

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 22 April 2021 to Question 183091 on Prisons: Gender Recognition, how many biologically (a) male, and (b) female prisoners have obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate while incarcerated in each of the last five years.

Alex Chalk:

No data is held centrally on the number of prisoners with Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs) in English and Welsh prisons. Nobody is obliged to disclose that they have a GRC.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and the Ministry of Justice are actively pursuing ways to improve data relating to gender and gender identity, whilst also continuing to respect the rights and privacy of those who hold GRCs. This year's transgender annual data collection exercise will, for the first time, collect anonymised information on the number of prisoners known to hold GRCs in the prison estate and this information will be published within the Offender Annual Equalities Report in the autumn.

■ Prisons: Mental Health Services

Philip Davies:

[\[33873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of offenders of the Offender Personality Disorder pathway programme are (a) male and (b) female.

Alex Chalk:

The Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) pathway is a clinically led joint initiative with the NHS. It is not a single intervention rather a series of different interventions tailored for individuals based on clinical need.

The number and proportions of men and women in custody and in the community who had been screened into the OPD pathway as of 30 June 2021 is displayed in the table below. The figures relate to all those within the Probation Service caseload who are identified as being eligible for OPD services. Being screened into the programme does not mean an individual will automatically receive intervention. This is an administrative process to identify those who may fit the programme criteria. Intervention pathways are determined through further assessment and sentence planning.

GENDER	PEOPLE MANAGED BY THE PROBATION SERVICE SCREENED INTO THE OPD PATHWAY (AS OF 30/06/21)	PROPORTION OF ALL PEOPLE MANAGED BY THE PROBATION SERVICE WHO HAD BEEN SCREENED INTO THE OPD PATHWAY (AS OF 30/06/21)
Male	33,757	94.0%
Female	2,164	6.0%

Although care is taken when processing and analysing the data, the details are subject to inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale case management system and is the best data that is available. The data may differ slightly to that of the published statistics where data was run on a different date.

■ Rape: Sentencing

Mr David Lammy:

[\[35486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many persons convicted of rape have received a sentence of less than (a) five, (b) seven and (c) 10 years imprisonment in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for rape and offences in England and Wales, up to December 2020, available in the 'Outcomes by Offence' data tool, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987715/outcomes-by-offence-2020.xlsx

In order to isolate rape offences, type 'rape' into the 'Offence' filter and select all results that appear (19C-19H). Rows 55 to 77 will display a range of values based on sentence lengths.

Rape and sexual violence are devastating crimes that have a long-lasting impact on victims. Provisions in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, currently before Parliament, will ensure that all serious sexual offenders, including those convicted of rape, will be required to serve two-thirds of their sentence in prison if given a standard determinate sentence of more than 4 years.

It is regrettable that you voted against this.

■ Remote Hearings: Hearing Impairment

Maria Eagle:

[\[35513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) needs of hearing impaired Court users, (b) functioning of live captioning and (c) challenges experienced by those people when participating in remote hearings; when and by whom that assessment was made; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Eagle:

[\[35514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in the context of needing to make reasonable adjustments for hearing impaired users to access remote hearings, how the (a) availability and (b) allocation of court rooms for attended hearings is made.

Chris Philp:

Remote participation in hearings provides an alternative method for conducting a hearing. However, attending a hearing remotely will not always be appropriate. The option to hold a remote hearing is at the discretion of a judge, who will decide if it is appropriate and in the interests of justice to do so taking into account the needs of the parties involved. The allocation of court facilities will be provided accordingly.

HMCTS is committed to ensuring that remote hearings are accessible to all users including those with hearing loss. At the start of the pandemic HMCTS considered its public sector equality duty and completed an Equality Impact Assessment. This is regularly reviewed and updated.

The technology used to facilitate video hearings has the functionality to effectively support those with hearing loss. A range of adjustments can be provided, including speech to text reporters if live captioning was required and sign language interpreters. Additional support is also offered, such as regular breaks in a hearing.

Court and tribunal users are encouraged to get in touch before any type of hearing to discuss any particular adjustments they may need so that people are not treated less favourably because of their disability.

HMCTS staff have access to reasonable adjustment guidance and training. All guidance raises awareness of the issues people may face, and the reasonable adjustments which may help them to fully participate in hearings.

The Judicial College ensures judicial training promotes equal treatment by weaving equality issues and case studies into training material. The judiciary have access to the Equal Treatment Bench Book (ETBB), and learning materials which provide explicit guidance on working with diverse individuals such as those who are hard of hearing.

■ Sentencing: Costs

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[34474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of (a) the initial cost of implementing the Short Sentence Function across all Probation Service Regions in England and Wales, and (b) the additional annual running cost for HMPPS resulting from Short Sentence Function implementation.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[35588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the impact on (a) cohorts in receipt of short sentences, (b) the Probation Service and (c) prisons of the Short Sentence Function implemented in Wales as an early adopter in August 2020.

Alex Chalk:

Following the unification of the Probation Service on 26 June 2021, short sentence functions will be established in all Probation Service regions to provide a responsive, multi-agency approach for all people in prison serving short prison sentences.

The short sentence function was implemented in Wales in August 2020 as an early adopter region. The remaining Probation Regions have started the planning process to introduce within all Probation Service Regions over the next 12 months.

We have begun evaluating the Short Term Sentence Team model in Wales since it went live in August 2020 and will be evaluating 2 further early adopter regions in Yorkshire and the Humber and the North West. This research will primarily focus on process evaluation but we will monitor recall rates and reoffending in order to assess the longer-term impact, aiming to publish interim process evaluation findings and then the final report including findings on impact by summer 2023.

At this stage, we are piloting these teams within existing resource by reorganising current probation resource in the community, so that we can focus efforts on this cohort and grow expertise within teams.

In the longer-term, as part of our annual £155m investment in probation in 2019-20 and in this year, recruitment of additional probation practitioners means that we expect resource in resettlement and in community sentence management teams to increase, and this would include the resource focused on this group of offenders.

■ Sexual Offences: Convictions and Prosecutions**Mr David Lammy:****[35484]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide a breakdown of the most recent (a) rape and (b) sexual assault (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction statistics by the ethnicity of the alleged victim or victims.

Kit Malthouse:

Due to a lack of data collected on victim characteristics, we do not have any rape or sexual assault statistics available on prosecutions or convictions by victim ethnicity.

However, I am able to provide data on the estimated prevalence rates of rape and sexual assault by victim ethnicity. This can be found at [Sexual offences prevalence and victim characteristics, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-in-the-uk/crime-and-justice/articles-and-features/sexual-offences-prevalence-and-victim-characteristics-england-and-wales-2019-2020).

Information on the ethnicity of the alleged victim or victims of rape and sexual assault offences is not centrally held within the court proceedings database. Overall information on prosecutions and convictions for rape and sexual assault offences in England and Wales, up to December 2020, is available in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool, which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987731/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020.xlsx

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ UK Community Renewal Fund: Northern Ireland**

Louise Haigh: [\[35770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how (a) many bids the Government received to and (b) much funding the Government dispersed under the Community Renewal Fund in Northern Ireland since that fund's introduction.

Mr Robin Walker:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: Assessment of bids to the Community Renewal Fund is underway and we hope to announce successful applicants later this summer. In Northern Ireland, £11m will be invested in projects that will boost local businesses, support communities and help people to develop skills and move into employment.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh: [\[35769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, which body will be the managing authority for the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund as it relates to Northern Ireland.

Mr Robin Walker:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The UK Government intends to work with both the devolved administrations and local communities to ensure that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund supports citizens across the UK.

We have confirmed that the devolved administrations will be represented on the governance structures for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will target people and places most in need across the UK.

It is important that voices across Northern Ireland are listened to during the design and development of the Fund, and that is why we continue to engage the NI Executive and local partners as we develop the UKSPF investment framework.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Climate Change**

Jeff Smith: [\[35743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to incorporate in the Government's forthcoming Aviation Plan the Climate Change Committee (CCC) recommendations of December 2020 to (a) limit the growth in air passenger numbers to 25 per cent or less by 2050, in line with the CCC's recommended Balanced Net Zero Pathway and (b) introduce a moratorium on airport expansions unless or until the aviation sector has developed low-carbon technologies that are compatible with achieving the Government's net zero emissions target.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the critical role that the aviation sector must play in delivering the UK's net zero commitment. Last week, we published the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the Jet Zero Consultation which set out our vision for the aviation sector to reach net zero by 2050.

Our consultation includes scenarios that achieve our net zero target with a similar level of residual aviation emissions in 2050 as within the CCC's Balanced Pathway, and do so by focussing on new fuels and technology rather than seeking to limit demand for a crucial industry.

The Government is clear that the expansion of any airport must meet our climate change obligations. We are proposing to review our Jet Zero Strategy every five years to ensure the aviation sector is on track to achieve net zero by 2050.

Aviation: Coronavirus**Seema Malhotra:**[\[35662\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to review the powers of the Civil Aviation Authority in response to the impact of covid-19 on the aviation sector.

Robert Courts:

We continue to work with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) supporting the response to the pandemic across a range of areas. We have no plans for a comprehensive review of the CAA's powers. However, there are areas where the pandemic has required changes to the role of the CAA, and others where the Government will keep policy under review. For example, the Government will be consulting later this year on more flexible and modern tools to protect consumers whilst travelling by air, including reforming the CAA's enforcement powers where airlines breach consumer rights.

Bus Services**Mr Jonathan Lord:**[\[35625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve bus services in England.

Rachel Maclean:

On 15 March we launched England's long-term National Bus Strategy, setting out a bold vision for bus services across the country. Backed by £3 billion of transformational funding over the current Parliament, the Strategy will make buses more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper.

Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), which we expect local authorities to produce by the end of October, will need to set out ambitious visions for travel by bus, meeting the goals and expectations in the strategy. BSIPs will influence the share of the £3 billion funding that each authority receives.

■ Bus Services: Disability Aids

Daisy Cooper:

[\[34069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the June 2018 report entitled Bus Services Act 2017: Consultation on Accessible Information, what steps he has taken to introduce Accessible Information Regulations that would make audio and visual information available on all local bus services.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government wants disabled people to travel easily, confidently and at no additional cost, just like everyone else. In 2018 we consulted on Accessible Information Regulations with plans to require the provision of accessible on-board information on local bus services throughout Great Britain.

In the 2021 National Bus Strategy for England 'Bus Back Better', we announced, subject to final analysis, that we will introduce regulations by Summer 2022 requiring bus companies to provide audible and visual announcements onboard their services in Great Britain.

We have also pledged to provide £3.5 million of targeted funding to support smaller operators to provide audio and visible information, ensuring passengers benefit from it soon as possible.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Catherine West:

[\[35812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to increase the number of charging points for electric cars to help meet the Climate Change Committee's recommendation of 150,000 such points to be introduced by 2025.

Rachel Maclean:

The UK has been a global front-runner in supporting provision of charging infrastructure along with private sector investment. Our vision is to have one of the best infrastructure networks in the world for electric vehicles (EVs), and we want chargepoints to be accessible, affordable and secure.

We will invest £1.3 billion in accelerating the roll out of charging infrastructure over the next four years, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major roads, and installing more on-street chargepoints near homes and workplaces, to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. Later this year, we will introduce new regulations under the Automated Electric Vehicles Act (2018) to improve the consumer experience of public charging. We will also be publishing an EV Infrastructure Strategy to set out the vision and action plan for charging infrastructure rollout needed to achieve the 2030/35 phase out successfully. This will set expected roles for different stakeholders and how government will intervene to address the gaps between the current market status and our vision.

The Government has not set an overall target for the number of chargepoints because doing so risks assuming technology stands still and creating a uniform

approach to charging mixes and needs across the country. We keep all our policies under review.

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[35908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with motorway service station operators to ensure adequate and workable electric car charging provision at their sites.

Rachel Maclean:

By 2023, the Government expects to see six high-powered chargers at every motorway service area in England, installed by the private sector. The Government has regular engagement with motorway service area operators to ensure that this charging provision is in place ahead of customer demand. This includes a quarterly questionnaire to monitor progress against this target, and ad hoc bilateral engagement to discuss plans to help support early adoption of electric vehicles and remove range anxiety concerns for drivers on long journeys. Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Rachel Maclean held a roundtable on 20th July 2021 with motorway service area operators from across England to discuss their participation of Ofgem's Green Recovery Scheme, under which funding is released to allow distribution network operators to upgrade network capacity in order to facilitate electric vehicle charging.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[36804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to increase the number of electric car charging points; and if he will make it his policy to ensure that charging points are universal so that they are compatible with all electric vehicles.

Rachel Maclean:

The UK has been a global front-runner in supporting provision of charging infrastructure along with private sector investment. Our vision is to have one of the best infrastructure networks in the world for electric vehicles, and we want chargepoints to be accessible, affordable and secure.

We will invest £1.3 billion in accelerating the roll out of charging infrastructure over the next four years, targeting support on rapid chargepoints on motorways and major roads, and installing more on-street chargepoints near homes and workplaces, to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car. Later this year, we will publish our Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and introduce new regulations under the Automated Electric Vehicles Act (2018) to improve the consumer experience of public charging.

We are seeing a natural progression towards Combined Charging System (CCS) connectors for rapid charging. All new EV models use Type 2 connectors for slower charging. Under the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulations 2017 (AFIR) all public chargepoints are required to have at minimum a Type 2 connector, and, for rapid charging, a CCS connector. Over 96% of rapid chargepoints also have a CHAdeMO connector installed in addition to the required CCS.

■ Electric Vehicles: Grants

Catherine West:

[\[35811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his policy is on introducing grants to members of the public to assist with the (a) purchase and (b) maintenance of electric cars.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government has put in place various grant funding schemes to assist members of the public to reduce the up-front purchase price of electric vehicles. The Office for Zero Emission Vehicles provides a plug-in car grant of £2,500 towards eligible cars costing less than £35,000 and a plug-in van grant with small vans receiving up to £3,000 and large vans up to £6,000. Alongside cars and vans, the plug-in taxi grant gives licensed taxi drivers up to £7,500 off the price of a new vehicle and eligible zero emission mopeds and motorcycles can receive a grant of up to £1,500. In November 2020, Government announced more funding for the plug in vehicle grants. Including funding committed at Budget 2020, this brings a total of £582m for cars, vans, motorcycles and taxis to 2022/23. The March 2020 Budget included the extension of favourable benefit in kind tax rates for zero emission vehicles out to 2025; company car tax is only 1% for this financial year 2021/22 and 2% in 2022/23 through to 2024/25

The Government does not provide grants to assist with the maintenance of electric vehicles. Electric vehicles already have significantly cheaper running costs than petrol or diesel vehicles and all zero emission cars are exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED).

■ Electric Vehicles: Recycling

Catherine West:

[\[35817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to introduce recycling centres specifically designed to recycle materials from electric cars.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is keen to create a circular economy for all electric vehicle batteries. That is why we are supporting the innovation, infrastructure and regulatory environment for a UK battery recycling industry. The Government's £330 million Faraday Battery Challenge is playing a leading role in promoting the reuse and recycling of battery components. The 2009 Waste Batteries and Accumulators Regulations bans the disposal of EV batteries to landfill or incineration. Battery producers are obligated to take back EV batteries free-of-charge and treat them at approved facilities. The Government is providing grant funding support through the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) to a ground-breaking project (RECOVAS) to create a new circular end-of-life supply chain for the electric vehicle industry. RECOVAS will develop the UK's first commercial scale recycling facility for automotive battery packs.

■ Heathrow Airport: Fees and Charges

Seema Malhotra:

[\[35663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of updating the pricing principles underpinning the economic regulation of Heathrow Airport.

Robert Courts:

Economic regulation of Heathrow Airport is carried out by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), independently of the Secretary of State for Transport, in accordance with the Civil Aviation Act 2012.

In line with s.19 of that act, the licence granted to Heathrow Airport by the CAA regulates the prices that the Airport may charge to its airline customers. It does this by setting a 'cap' on the total revenue the Airport may levy against its customers, expressed on a per passenger basis.

The CAA may include whatever conditions it deems necessary or expedient to guard against the risk of the Airport exploiting its significant market power. My Department has no reason to believe that the price control principles of the Act, and the powers granted to the CAA, are inadequate to enable the CAA to satisfy that aim and carry out its functions in line with its duties (as laid out in s.1 of the Act).

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Exhaust Emissions

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[35791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of providing the transport industry with assistance towards investment in greener trucks.

Rachel Maclean:

Decarbonising transport is a key priority for the government and we have just published our world-leading plan, "*Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain*" which outlines our commitments to decarbonise transport, including the road freight sector, and achieve net zero by 2050.

We are supporting the transport industry to invest in greener trucks through a wide range of measures. This includes £20m this year to develop Zero Emission Road Freight Trials which will support UK industry to develop cost-effective, zero-emission HGVs and their refuelling infrastructure in the UK. Trials will invest in research, innovation and construction of zero emission HGVs by UK based business and SMEs to support the development of cutting-edge HGV technology, breaking down barriers to adoption and speeding up the decarbonisation of our road freight sector.

Government supports transport industry investment in low emission trucks through the £23 million Hydrogen for Transport Programme, which funds the deployment of hydrogen vehicles and refuelling stations. The £20m Future Fuels for Flight and Freight Competition matched capital funding to projects that produced low carbon

waste-based fuels to be used in aeroplanes and HGVs and the £20 million Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial supported industry-led R&D projects trialing low-emission technologies for freight.

Finally, Government is providing £582 million to continue the plug-in grants.

The plug-in truck grant (PiTG) encourages the uptake of cutting-edge, zero emission HGVs by reducing the purchase price of zero emission commercial vehicles. From March 2021 the PiTG was increased to 20% of the purchase price, up to a maximum of £25,000, for large trucks greater than 12 tonnes. The grant rate was increased in recognition of the higher upfront cost of these vehicles.

■ **Parking: Pedestrian Areas**

Taiwo Owatemi: [\[34070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the result of the Government's consultation on pavement parking is planned to be published.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department received over 15,000 responses to the consultation. We are carefully considering the consultation findings and the results will inform our policy decisions. We will be publishing a response when we have completed this work, which is a priority.

■ **Public Transport: Coronavirus**

Justin Madders: [\[35712\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with local transport providers on regulations to make face coverings mandatory on public transport in the context of the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

The success of the vaccination rollout has paved the way for the gradual lifting of restrictions. Since 19 July, many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed through the pandemic have been lifted, including the requirement to wear face coverings on public transport. However, cautious guidance will remain. The Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas. This includes public transport but also other settings which are busy. By practising key behaviours, people can continue to protect themselves and others. Employees and customers who wish to wear a face covering should be supported to do so. If transport operators wish to set their own policy on face coverings, that is a matter for them to consider, as long as they meet existing legal obligations including under equalities law.

■ Public Transport: Social Distancing

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[33955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to monitor the implementation of his Department's Safer Transport Guidance for Operators, particularly with regard to social distancing on public transport; how the public can report non-implementation of that guidance by public transport providers; and what the sanctions are for public transport providers that do not adequately implement that guidance.

Rachel Maclean:

The success of vaccine deployment has paved the way for the gradual lifting of restrictions and this marks a new phase in the pandemic response where people manage the risks to themselves and others as the country learns to live with the virus. The Safer Transport Guidance for Operators contains non-statutory guidance that does not supersede any legal obligations relating to health and safety, employment or equalities and it is important that operators continue to comply with existing obligations and conduct risk assessments to identify any specific actions they need to take.

At step 4, social distancing rules were lifted, and the public will no longer need to stay 2 metres apart from people they do not live with. Guidance also sets out that the Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport. It will be open for individual operators to consider developing their own face covering policies if they wish to do so. We will continue to work with operators to support passenger safety by ensuring service levels are high, asking passengers to plan ahead for their journeys, making hand sanitiser available and supporting ventilation where possible.

■ Railways: Environment Protection

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[35855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of adding rail as an eleventh point to the ten point Green Industrial Plan.

Rachel Maclean:

Rail plays a key role in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. In the section on 'Green Public Transport, Cycling and Walking', the plan included commitments to: invest tens of billions of pounds in enhancements and renewals of the rail network; electrify more railway lines; end the complicated franchising model and create a simpler, more effective system; expand rail routes around our big regional cities; restore many of the rail links removed in the Beeching era; and progress the Midlands Rail Hub scheme in Birmingham and improvements in Manchester and Leeds, alongside Northern Powerhouse Rail to improve east-west links across the Pennines.

TREASURY**■ Help to Buy Scheme****Ben Lake:****[33304]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 28292, whether his Department made an assessment of changes to average house prices when reviewing the Help to Buy ISA price cap for eligible properties.

Ben Lake:**[33305]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 28292, what assessment he has made of the effect of the change to house prices on the adequacy of the Help to Buy ISA price cap of £250,000 for properties outside London.

John Glen:

The Help to Buy: ISA scheme aims to help those struggling to save enough to get onto the housing ladder and includes a property price cap of £250,000 anywhere in the UK and a higher property value cap of £450,000 for properties in London.

The Government believes that this price cap is appropriate to focus our support on those that need it most, with the aim of providing support to the majority of first-time buyers across the UK.

The Government's ambition is to provide the opportunity for first-time buyers to enter the market and has a number of policies in place to support this. In designing the Help to Buy: ISA scheme the Government had to balance the need to control public expenditure with helping those most in need of assistance, and keeps all aspects of savings policy under review.

■ Wales Trade Union Congress**Ruth Jones:****[34054]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he last met with representatives of the Wales Trades Union Congress.

Steve Barclay:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Defibrillators

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[17794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) install additional defibrillators in public spaces including parks and (b) raise awareness of how to use defibrillators.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 22 June 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out that a national network of community first responders and automated external defibrillators (AEDs) will help save up to 4,000 lives each year by 2028. Many community defibrillators have been provided in public locations through national lottery funding, community fundraising schemes, workplace funding or by charities. From May ~~2020~~,**2019**, the Government has required all contractors refurbishing or building new schools through centrally delivered programmes, to provide at least one AED.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are procuring a partner to co-ordinate skills development over the next two years which will significantly increase the use of AEDs by individuals in community settings supported by confident cardiopulmonary resuscitation skills.