



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 18 August 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:18 P.M., 18 August 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

■ ACAS

Stuart Anderson: [\[34591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of services delivered by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service.

Paul Scully:

BEIS officials review Acas' performance on a regular basis as set out in the 'Acas Framework Document'. This document sets out the broad framework within which Acas operates including the performance expectations for the services they deliver.

■ Agency Workers: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper: [\[36772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether periods when schools are closed to all but vulnerable pupils and children of key workers during the covid-19 outbreak are counted as pauses under the Agency Workers Regulation.

Paul Scully:

An agency worker can qualify for equal treatment after working for 12 weeks in the same role with the same hirer.

The working patterns of agency workers can be irregular. The regulations set out the effect of different types of absence or breaks on the 12-week qualifying period and provide for several circumstances in which breaks do not prevent agency workers from completing the qualifying period or cause the qualifying clock to pause.

The qualifying clock will pause if there is a break in service for any reason, where the break is no longer than six calendar weeks and the agency worker returns to the same role with the same hirer.

■ Business: Ethics

Rachael Maskell: [\[35767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of the Good Business Foundation's proposed Good Business Charter.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the importance of many of the issues covered by the Good Business Charter. This includes employee well-being, environmental responsibility, diversity and inclusion. We encourage business to use voluntary

approaches where helpful to meet the specifics of their business model and supply chains, rather than simply taking a 'tick box' approach to comply with legislation.

Large companies and groups already report on environmental, social, and employee matters as well as respect for human rights. Many UK companies already provide high quality reporting in this area. We intend to build on this in areas such as sustainability disclosures, audit and diversity.

■ Business: Newcastle Upon Tyne Central

Chi Onwurah:

[34491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the total amount received from the (a) Bounce Back Loan Scheme and (b) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme has been in Newcastle upon Tyne Central, broken down by (i) loan type and (ii) constituency average.

Paul Scully:

The analysis of final Coronavirus loan scheme data was published on July 6, 2021 on the British Business Bank website.[1]

Under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, 136 loans were delivered in the Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency, to the sum of £47,292,585. The average value of loan was £347,739.59.

Under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, 2,635 loans were delivered in the Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency to the sum of £81,819,93. The average value of loan was £3,105.12.

[1] <https://www.british-business-bank.co.uk/analysis-of-final-coronavirus-loan-scheme-data-shows-79-3bn-of-loans-to-1-67m-businesses-evenly-distributed-across-whole-of-the-uk/>

■ Business: Newcastle upon Tyne Central

Chi Onwurah:

[34497]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of staff being told to self-isolate after the easing of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021 on businesses in Newcastle upon Tyne Central constituency where infection rates are higher than national average.

Paul Scully:

On Monday 5 July, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister set out the details of the final stage of the roadmap and our approach for managing Covid as we learn to live with the virus. The 'Working Safely' [guidance](#) was updated on 14 July in advance of moving to step 4. Isolation remains the most important action people can take to stop the spread of the virus. It is crucial people isolate immediately when they are told to do so. Businesses should be supporting employees to self-isolate.

From 16 August, those who are fully vaccinated will no longer be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of a positive case. Instead, they will be advised to

take a PCR test. Until these changes come into effect, it is essential that everyone continues to observe the rules to protect those who are not yet fully vaccinated or are clinically vulnerable. Anyone who tests positive will still need to self-isolate regardless of their vaccination status.

In order to protect the delivery of public services, a very limited number of named critical workers will be informed that they are considered to have reasonable excuse to leave self-isolation if they are contacts. This will only apply to workers who are fully vaccinated (someone who is 14 days post-second dose) and is solely for the purpose of going to work.

This is a small and targeted intervention, enabling individuals to attend work where not doing so would lead to major detrimental impact on the availability, integrity or delivery of essential services – including services whose integrity, if compromised, could result in significant loss of life or casualties, and/or attend work where not doing so would result in significant impact on national security, defence, or the functioning of the state.

■ Carbon Emissions

Alexander Stafford: [\[35968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce a framework to support local authorities to deliver on net zero in the upcoming Net Zero Strategy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

We will set out our future plans in the Net Zero Strategy which is currently under development.

■ Company Law

Jon Trickett: [\[34440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department holds any information on companies where the Directors have made major decisions while not having quoracy.

Paul Scully:

Companies House does not hold any information on companies where the directors have made major decisions while not having quoracy.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Holiday Leave

Daisy Cooper: [\[36773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what rights furloughed workers have to the accrual of holiday pay.

Paul Scully:

Employment rights remain unchanged under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS). Therefore, all workers' right to holiday accrues to the extent and in the same

way it did prior to being placed on to furlough under the CJRS, as provided by the individual's statutory and contractual rights.

If a furloughed worker takes holiday, the employer should pay them their full holiday pay, calculated in accordance with BEIS guidance. Employers will be obliged to fund any additional amounts over the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) grant.

Further guidance to help employers manage holiday pay during Coronavirus is available on GOV.UK.

■ Courier Services: Conditions of Employment

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if his Department will take steps to improve the workplace treatment of app-based courier drivers.

Paul Scully:

The UK has one of the best employment rights records in the world. We have made good progress in bringing forward measures that add flexibility for workers while ensuring the protection of employment rights, such as banning the use of exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts.

An individual's entitlement to rights at work is determined by their employment status, employee, worker or self-employed. App-based courier service workers can be classed under any of these depending on their employment relationship. Employees are entitled to all rights including unfair dismissal (subject to qualifying periods) and have responsibilities towards their employer. So-called "limb (b) workers" are only entitled to some rights such as the National Minimum Wage but have increased flexibility and fewer obligations to their employer. The self-employed generally have no employment rights but have complete flexibility in their work.

We understand the importance of clarity around employment status and to ensure that individuals and businesses in the gig economy are aware of their rights and responsibilities. The Government is currently considering options to improve clarity around employment status, and we are working with stakeholders and cross-Government on how best to address it in a post-Covid scenario.

The Health and Safety Executive recently updated its guidance to cover gig economy, agency and temporary workers, which can be found here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/vulnerable-workers/gig-agency-temporary-workers/index.htm>.

For health and safety purposes, gig economy workers should be treated no differently to other workers.

■ Courier Services: Dismissal

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the prevalence of app-based courier services

dismissing their couriers as a result of (a) technical issues, (b) traffic delays and (c) app malfunctions.

Paul Scully:

The UK has one of the best employment rights records in the world. We have made good progress in bringing forward measures that add flexibility for workers while ensuring the protection of employment rights, such as banning the use of exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts.

An individual's entitlement to rights at work is determined by their employment status, employee, worker or self-employed. App-based courier service workers can be classed under any of these depending on their employment relationship. Employees are entitled to all rights including being protected against unfair dismissal (subject to qualifying periods) and have responsibilities towards their employer.

An employer needs to have a valid reason and take appropriate steps if they are to dismiss an employee. Employees who consider that their dismissal was unfair can complain to an employment tribunal, generally subject to a qualifying period of continuous service. While this does not go into details, the Government publishes quarterly tribunal statistics, including on unfair dismissal claims.

■ **Electric Vehicles**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[34592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what incentives are being put in place to encourage the transition to electric vehicles.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government had already committed £1.5 billion to support the early market and remove barriers to ZEV ownership. Alongside the new phase out dates for new petrol and diesel cars and vans, we pledged a further £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles. This includes up to £1 billion to support the electrification of UK vehicles and their supply chains.

The Government will provide £1.3 billion to support the continued roll-out of chargepoint infrastructure at homes, workplaces, residential streets and across the wider roads network, to provide motorists with confidence to purchase an EV. Government and industry have already supported the installation of nearly 25,000 public charging devices. This includes more than 4,500 rapid devices – one of the largest networks in Europe.

Government grants for plug in vehicles continue to be available to help reduce the up-front purchase price of electric vehicles, with total money committed at £582 million 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 1% in 2021/22 and 2% in 2022/23 through to 2024/25; and all zero emission cars are exempt from vehicle excise duty (VED).

Local Authorities may also provide additional incentives such as free parking and exemption from the congestion charge.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Wolverhampton**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[36768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps are being taken to improve the availability of electric vehicle charge points in Wolverhampton.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government's On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) is available to all UK local authorities to provide public chargepoints for their residents without access to private parking. In 2021/22, £20 million is available under the scheme to ensure more local authorities and residents can benefit. Amendments have been made to the ORCS to encourage ambitious local authority projects, and improve access to the funding for local authorities in areas of limited electrical capacity.

Local authorities in England can also take advantage of Energy Saving Trust's Local Government Support Programme, fully funded by the Department for Transport, which offers support to help authorities develop and deliver EV strategies, and programmes to increase adoption of ultra-low emission vehicles. This includes support with the roll out of charging infrastructure through applying for ORCS funding.

In addition, Government is investing almost £40 million in projects to support innovation in wireless and on-street charging technology to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles.

■ **Energy Supply: Costs**

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[35690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment (a) his Department and (b) Ofgem has made of the potential disproportionate effect on (i) vulnerable and (ii) less-able-to-pay consumers of the mutualisation of costs from energy supplier failures.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Keeping down bills and protecting vulnerable consumers remains a key focus for Government and Ofgem. For example, the Government's Warm Home Discount and Energy Company Obligation schemes are focussed on reducing bills for vulnerable households.

When a supplier fails and Ofgem appoints A Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR), they carefully consider the ability of the incoming supplier to effectively serve the new customers, including those in vulnerable circumstances. Very rarely does the appointment of a SoLR involve mutualisation of the costs of onboarding the customers.

Mutualisation of unpaid supplier bills under the Renewables Obligations support scheme, is now less likely to occur. The Government recently restored the link between the threshold at which mutualisation occurs and the annual cost of the scheme, making the threshold much higher. We will also be consulting soon on the wider matter of supplier payment default under the Renewables Obligation, which will consider both regulatory and legislative approaches.

Margaret Ferrier:

[35691]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps (a) his Department and (b) Ofgem has taken to avoid the risk of mutualisation of the cost of customer credit balances in the event of energy supplier failure.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Ofgem have strengthened checks at market entry to ensure that suppliers understand their obligations and have the appropriate arrangements in place to operate in the retail energy market (introduced from July 2019).

In January this year Ofgem introduced a suite of new rules to ensure that suppliers act in a financially responsible manner and do not take actions that may result in their competitors and consumers facing increased costs should they fail. Ofgem are currently consulting on further measures that would require suppliers to automatically refund customers' credit balances every year, and protect any amounts they hold above a certain threshold.

Margaret Ferrier:

[35693]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many energy suppliers have been investigated by Ofgem for the purpose of Ofgem undertaking its financial responsibility to protect customers against mutualisation of costs in the event of energy supplier failure.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Ofgem closely monitors suppliers' ability to meet their customer service and financial obligations. Ofgem are actively implementing the new rules in relation to financial responsibility, and will take action where there is a risk of consumer detriment. A range of tools is available to tackle poor behaviour, including enforcement action.

Mutualisation mechanisms play an important role in supporting the effective functioning of the energy market. Ofgem aims to ensure that suppliers do not behave in a manner that increases the likelihood or scale of costs to be mutualised across their competitors, and ultimately consumers, if and when they fail.

Margaret Ferrier:

[35694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the extent of the risks to consumers of energy suppliers failing in the context of recent increases in wholesale energy costs.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

When an energy supplier becomes insolvent, for whatever reason, Ofgem revokes the supplier's licence, and appoints another supplier to quickly take over serving the customers, via the Supplier of Last Resort (SoLR) process. Customer credit balances are protected under this process, nearly always without recourse to the Last Resort Supply levy, which allows for the mutualisation of certain costs of onboarding the new customers.

In the unlikely event where the use of SoLR powers would not be practicable, the Government has put in place a Special Administration Regime, whereby my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State may seek the appointment of an administrator, whose primary objective is to ensure continuity of energy supply at the lowest practical cost.

■ Energy: Prices**Margaret Ferrier:**[\[35692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of energy suppliers using customer credit balances to fund low-cost acquisition tariffs.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Deliberately collecting more credit than is required to service customers, in order to fund acquisition tariffs, would be unreasonable and unsustainable.

In January this year, Ofgem introduced a suite of new rules to ensure that suppliers act in a financially responsible manner and do not take actions that may result in their competitors and consumers facing increased costs should they fail.

We await the outcome of Ofgem's recent consultation on further measures that would require suppliers to automatically refund customers' credit balances every year, and protect any amounts they hold above a certain threshold.

■ Greenhouse Gas Emissions**Sarah Jones:**[\[35847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the G7 Climate and Environment: Ministers' Communiqué, published on 21 May 2021, when the long-term strategy for the UK's pathway to zero greenhouse emissions by 2050 will be published.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Net Zero Strategy will be published before COP26, and will build on my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. This will be our Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in our information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding that accompanied the UK's new nationally determined contribution back in December.

A number of sector strategies are also being published this year, as well as the Net Zero Strategy, including the Heat and Buildings Strategy and the Hydrogen Strategy.

We have also recently published the Transport Decarbonisation Plan – the first such Plan in the world – setting transport on the path to net zero by 2050.

Sarah Jones:

[\[35848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what policies his Department (a) has proposed and (b) plans to propose to help the Government meet the 2050 net zero target.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has set out his Ten Point Plan for the UK to lead the world into a Green Industrial Revolution. This innovative programme sets out ambitious policies and £12 billion government investment to support up to 250,000 green jobs, accelerate our path to reaching net zero by 2050 and lay the foundations for our green recovery by building back greener from COVID-19.

The Energy White Paper sets out our plans for the transformation of our energy system, including actions to fully decarbonise electricity generation by 2050. This drives forward the Ten Point Plan commitments, reaffirming how clean energy means jobs and economic growth for the whole country, moving on from COVID-19 to build back better, support green jobs, and accelerate our path to net zero.

In March this year we published the Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, the first by a major economy which sets out how industry can decarbonise in line with net zero while remaining competitive and without pushing emissions abroad. The strategy includes ambitions and expectations such as emissions in industry needing to fall by around two thirds by 2035, as well as policy priorities for the next ten years and seeks to provide industry with the long-term certainty it needs to invest in decarbonisation. We also recently published the Transport Decarbonisation Plan – the first such Plan in the world – setting transport on the path to net zero by 2050.

Through the above plans, we have set out the concrete steps that we will take to build back greener from the pandemic and reach net zero emissions by 2050. Ahead of COP26, we will bring forward further bold proposals, including a Net Zero Strategy, to cut emissions and create new jobs and industries across the whole country.

We are also publishing a number of sector strategies this year, as well as the Net Zero Strategy, including the Heat and Buildings Strategy and a Hydrogen Strategy.

Helen Hayes:

[\[36707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the feasibility that UK reaches net zero emissions sooner than 2050.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The UK was the first major economy to legislate for a net zero target. This target was set in line with advice from our independent expert advisers, the Climate Change

Committee (CCC), that 2050 was the earliest feasible date for achieving this. The CCC made clear in their advice on the 6th Carbon Budget, published in December 2020, that net zero in 2050 remains the right target for the UK.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions

Alexander Stafford:

[\[35967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what role he plans for local authorities to have in delivering greener homes.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is funding several schemes as part of its commitment to retrofit homes to cut energy bills for households and to make them greener on the path to Net Zero.

The Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD), which supports projects to install energy efficiency measures such as various types of insulation, and low-carbon heating systems for low-income households, has already provided £500million to Local Authorities for upgrades to low-income households across England, and is being delivered up to December 2021.

On 16th June 2021, the Government launched the Sustainable Warmth Competition enabling Local Authorities to apply for further funding under the £200million Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 scheme and from an initial allocation of £150million for the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 scheme, for delivery up to March 2023.

In addition, the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Demonstrator has awarded £62million of funding to social landlords across England and Scotland to test innovative approaches to retrofitting at scale, seeing over 2300 social homes improved to at least EPC band C. The Government has announced around a further £160million for the first wave of the £3.8bn manifesto commitment in financial year 21/22, delivering up to March 2023.

The Government announced in the Sustainable Warmth Strategy a four-year, £4 billion successor scheme to ECO, to accelerate our efforts to improve homes to meet fuel poverty targets. In our recently published consultation, we propose that up to 50% of the scheme can be delivered through referrals by Local Authorities and energy suppliers, to help accelerate our efforts to improve homes to meet fuel poverty targets. ECO will continue to be an obligation on suppliers.

As part of the Local Energy Programme, five Local Energy Hubs across England have so far received £13 million of funding. Each Hub is hosted by a lead local authority and works with LEPs and local authorities to increase their capacity to identify and deliver local energy projects and undertake the initial stages of project development up to the point where they can attract investment. Hubs have already supported over £60m of commissioned energy projects and are working on a pipeline of over £3bn of projects.

The Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD), which supports projects to install energy efficiency measures such as various types of insulation, and low-carbon heating systems for low-income households, has already provided £500million to Local Authorities for upgrades to low-income households across England, and is being delivered by the Local Energy Hubs up to December 2021.

■ Housing: Insulation

Stuart Anderson:

[35894]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that people can easily access advice on home insulation measures and services.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The [Simple Energy Advice Service](#) (SEA) provides impartial and tailored advice to help people improve their household's energy efficiency and make their homes greener. SEA consists of an easy-to-use website supported by a call centre and the website has been accessed by over 1.5 million users. The Government is currently undertaking user research into improving the service.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) also published an [EPC Action Plan](#) detailing a series of commitments to engage consumers to support policy and drive action. The Government is also working with Local Authorities through the [Local Energy Programme](#) to develop support for retrofit programmes by addressing local barriers to clean growth activity.

■ Infrastructure: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Sarah Jones:

[36730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Green Alliance's report entitled Getting the building blocks right Infrastructure priorities for a green recovery, published on 11 November 2020, whether the Government has made an assessment of whether there is an investment gap as cited in that report in helping the Government to reach its net-zero target; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Delivering net zero requires the deep decarbonisation of all sectors – with the CCC estimating that low carbon investment should reach [£50 billion a year](#) by 2050. Financial services will be a critical enabler of green investment at the pace and scale required – and that is why green finance is a key priority for this Government. Our approach has seen the UK power sector attract over £93 billion of green investment since 2010.

Spanning clean energy, buildings, transport, nature and innovative technologies, the 10 Point Plan has committed £12 billion of government investment and will unlock three times as much from the private sector by 2030. The Government has also recently launched a new infrastructure bank for the UK which will co-invest alongside

private sector investors and accelerate our ambitions for tackling climate change and levelling up. The UK Infrastructure Bank will have an initial £12 billion of capital to deploy and will be able to issue £10 billion of government guarantees, helping to unlock more than £40 billion of overall investment. This year the Government will also issue its first Sovereign Green Bond - subject to market conditions – helping to finance projects that will tackle climate change.

■ Land Registry

Ben Lake:

[35846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of (a) the average time taken by HM Land Registry to decide on an application and (b) trends in that time so taken in the last three years.

Paul Scully:

HM Land Registry (HMLR) processed over 70,000 requests to search or change the Land Register every day in 2020/21.

Searches constitute approximately 80% of requests. Over 90% of these are delivered instantly via digital services, with almost all of the remainder delivered within three days.

Applications to change the Register make up the other 20% of requests and vary widely in type and complexity. Over the last quarter, on average, across all applications, changes took less than 5 weeks to be processed. Over a third are completed within a week. However, the most complex applications (around 1.5% of cases) took around 26 weeks on average.

Precise comparisons with three years ago are not straightforward due to differences in processes for customers and categorisation of case type. Overall, average processing times are trending higher than the last three years, partly due to COVID-19 restrictions, and partly because HMLR has chosen to rebalance its resources to prevent waiting times for complex applications increasing further. Whilst this has increased the overall average waiting time for all applications to change the Register, HMLR believes that this is the right balance to ensure it is serving all its customer needs.

Because applications to change the Register occur after the transaction is completed, the time taken to process them should not impact a property sale. However, if this is not the case, customers can ask for their application to be fast tracked and processed within 10 working days for no extra charge. HMLR reported in its 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts that it is processing nearly four times as many requests to fast track applications for its customers as it did prior to the pandemic, reflecting the unique circumstances facing the organisation and the property market overall.

HM Land Registry is making significant investment in long-term transformation to significantly improve customer waiting times in the future through greater digitisation and automation, and building more expert land registration capacity.

■ Large Goods Vehicles

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[35788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the waiting time for industrial trucks.

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[35789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the waiting time for specialised transport vehicles.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We recognise the ongoing challenges facing industrialised truck and specialised vehicle manufacturing as a result of Covid-19. The Government has been supporting the economy through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and grants for research and development.

The Government regularly engages with manufacturers and manufacturing trade associations on opportunities to support the growth and competitiveness of manufacturing sectors in the UK.

■ Natural Gas: Carbon Emissions

Mick Whitley: [\[34593\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Climate Change and Corporate Responsibility of 11 March 2021, Official Report, column HL 1803, what assessment his Department has made of the potential role that the GeoEngine technology being developed by Titan Electricity could play in decarbonising the process of sour and acid natural gas extraction.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS engineering experts met with Titan Electricity at a meeting on the 5th July to discuss their geo-engine concept and its use in removing hydrogen sulphide and carbon dioxide from sour and acid natural gas.

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.

The Department does not specify the equipment used on gas rigs however, this being a matter solely for the individual scheme developers.

■ Natural Gas: Housing

Daisy Cooper:

[34594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to reduce the cost to people of disconnecting from gas supplies as part of decarbonising their homes.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government is planning to publish a Heat and Buildings Strategy in due course, which will set out the immediate actions we will take for reducing emissions from buildings. In the meantime, BEIS believes in a strong independent economic regulatory environment and support Ofgem in the core priority (amongst others) to help achieve Net Zero emissions by 2050 while maximising value for money for consumers.

As part of our commitment to the Future Homes Standard, which will ensure new build homes are future-proofed with low carbon heating and world leading levels of energy efficiency, we will consult on the feasibility of ending connections to the gas grid in new build homes.

We need to ensure the right legislation is in place to support the heating market through the transition to net zero. We will, therefore, review the overarching regulatory framework set out in the Gas Act 1995 to ensure the appropriate powers and responsibilities are in place to facilitate a decarbonised gas future that does not risk our energy security or lead to disproportionate impacts on consumers across the UK.

■ Re-employment

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[34553]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 21 May 2021 to Question 1169, whether he has (a) considered that evidence from Acas' fact finding exercise and (b) drawn any conclusions from that evidence.

Paul Scully:

Last year, we asked the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) to collect evidence into how fire and rehire is being used by employers. This report was published on 8 June and is available from <https://www.acas.org.uk/fire-and-rehire-report>.

The Government has considered the findings of the report. We remain clear that we expect all employers to treat their employees fairly and in the spirit of partnership. Using threats about firing and rehiring as a negotiation tactic is unacceptable. We expect employers and employees to negotiate new terms and conditions and there are laws around how this must be done, and protections in place when firms are considering redundancies.

This is clearly a complex area for both businesses and workers. That is why we have asked Acas to produce better, more comprehensive, clearer guidance to help employers explore all the options before considering “fire and rehire” and encourage good employment relations practice.

■ **Sharing Economy: Conditions of Employment**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[36733]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the workplace treatment of (a) app-based courier drivers and (b) other gig economy workers.

Paul Scully:

The UK has one of the best employment rights records in the world. We have made good progress in bringing forward measures that add flexibility for workers while ensuring the protection of employment rights, such as banning the use of exclusivity clauses in zero hours contracts.

An individual's entitlement to rights at work is determined by their employment status, employee, worker or self-employed. App-based courier service workers can be classed under any of these depending on their employment relationship. Employees are entitled to all rights including unfair dismissal (subject to qualifying periods) and have responsibilities towards their employer. So-called “limb (b) workers” are only entitled to some rights such as the National Minimum Wage but have increased flexibility and fewer obligations to their employer. The self-employed generally have no employment rights but have complete flexibility in their work.

We understand the importance of clarity around employment status and to ensure that individuals and businesses in the gig economy are aware of their rights and responsibilities. The Government is currently considering options to improve clarity around employment status, and we are working with stakeholders and cross-Government on how best to address it in a post-Covid scenario.

The Health and Safety Executive recently updated its guidance to cover gig economy, agency and temporary workers, which can be found here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/vulnerable-workers/gig-agency-temporary-workers/index.htm>.

For health and safety purposes, gig economy workers should be treated no differently to other workers.

■ **Solar Power**

Jim Shannon:

[36631]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of solar farms in the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government publishes figures on all solar photovoltaic capacity in the United Kingdom, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/solar->

[photovoltaics-deployment](#). The figures show that there are currently 1,340 operational ground mount and stand-alone solar projects.^[1]

[1] This comprises ground mount and stand- alone solar PV projects supported under the Renewables Obligation, Feed in Tariff and Contract for Difference schemes.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[35906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the purpose of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to replace the European Structural and Investment Funds programme.

Paul Scully:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will help to level up and create opportunity across the UK in places most in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns, and rural and coastal communities, and for people who face labour market barriers.

Spending Review 2020 set out the main strategic elements of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in the Heads of Terms. The Government will publish a UK-wide investment framework later this year and confirm its funding profile at the next Spending Review.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is the domestic successor to the EU Structural Fund programme. It will maximise the benefits of leaving the EU through quicker delivery of funding, better targeting, better alignment with domestic priorities and by cutting burdensome EU bureaucracy.

■ University of Bristol: Contracts

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[36583\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to take into account the conduct of Professor David Miller in the future letting of contracts to Bristol University.

Dr Andrew Murrison:

[\[36584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential impact of Professor David Miller's research at Bristol University on that university's ratings under the Research Excellence Framework.

Amanda Solloway:

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses the quality of research from the submissions of UK higher education institutions, not individuals. The primary outcome of the REF is an overall quality profile for each submission, which will show the proportions of research activity judged to meet each of four starred quality levels. Alongside the quality profile, the funding bodies will publish the output, impact and environment sub-profiles that were combined to produce the overall quality profile for each submission. The HE funding bodies do not publish the scores for individual outputs or impact case studies. REF results inform future Quality-related (QR)

research funding allocations from HE funding bodies, which are, also awarded at institutional level by the HE funding bodies, and not to individual researchers.

HE providers are independent and autonomous organisations, responsible for the management of their own affairs and for meeting their duties under the law, including those relating to freedom of expression and equalities. All HE providers should discharge their responsibilities fully and have robust policies and procedures in place to comply with the law, to investigate and swiftly address hate crime, including any antisemitic incidents that are reported.

Grant funding provided by HE Funding bodies, UK Research & Innovation and Office for Students is all subject to terms and conditions of funding set by the funder with which providers must comply. If a provider does not meet these, funding can be withdrawn or reclaimed by the relevant funder. For research grant funding this includes expectations concerning academic rigour, research integrity, open research, etc.

■ **Viro: Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme**

Alan Brown: [\[34521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department holds information on how many Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) awards have been made for biomass boilers installed by the company VIRO.

Alan Brown: [\[34522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department hold information on how many Renewable Heat Incentive contracts have been terminated for biomass boilers installed by the company VIRO.

Alan Brown: [\[34523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department holds information on how many Renewable Heat Incentive applications have been rejected for biomass boilers installed by the company VIRO.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Ofgem, as the scheme administrator hold data on how many applications to the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive have been awarded, terminated and rejected for biomass boilers installed by VIRO. This data is not held for applications to the Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive.

CABINET OFFICE

■ 11 Downing Street: Repairs and Maintenance

Cat Smith: [35734]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to publish the contract awards and invoices for the most recent refurbishment and renovation of the Prime Minister's residence in Downing Street.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 3021](#) on 25 May 2021.

■ 9 Downing Street: Facilities

Cat Smith: [35733]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what purpose the rooms within 9 Downing Street are used.

Julia Lopez:

No.9 Downing Street is the south wing of 70 Whitehall and forms part of the Cabinet Office Estate.

The rooms are used for offices, storage and also the Broadcast Suite. The space is occupied and used by Cabinet Office and its immediate suppliers.

■ Cabinet Office: Energy

Ruth Jones: [25146]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of his Department's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Ruth Jones: [25927]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of Number 10 Downing Street's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Julia Lopez:

The cost to the public purse of Cabinet Office's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 is shown below:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22*
£820,820	£837,439	£837,616

* Estimated.

This information mainly covers the buildings that are part of the Affiliates Cluster and where the Cabinet Office is the major occupier -

Dover House

Admiralty House

70 Whitehall

10 Downing Street

35 Great Smith Street

Information for buildings where the Cabinet Office is a minor occupier is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ **Cabinet Office: Lord Feldman**

Angela Rayner: **[31418]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Lord Feldman (a) made any expense claims and (b) had private office resources allocated to him during his capacity as an unpaid advisor to his Department.

Julia Lopez:

Appointments made by the Department of Health and Social Care are a matter for the Department of Health and Social Care.

■ **Cabinet Office: Written Questions**

Jack Dromey: **[35593]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to answer Question 27109 on Chambers of Commerce: Essex, tabled on 5 June 2021 by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 27109](#) on 02 August 2021.

Angela Rayner: **[35679]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to reply to (a) Question 24213 tabled on 29 June 2021 and (b) Question 27175 tabled on 5 July 2021 by the hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to the answers given to [PQ 24213](#) on 27 July 2021 and [PQ 27175](#) on 27 July 2021.

■ **Chambers of Commerce: Essex**

Jack Dromey: **[27109]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 July to Question 13907 on Chambers of Commerce: Essex, who the contact involved with the Essex Chambers of Commerce was; and what offer was made.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the letter dated 13 May 2020 from the Department for Health and Social Care to the Rt Hon Member for Witham. I am placing a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

Committee on Standards in Public Life: Public Appointments**Angela Rayner:**[\[35678\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many applicants were considered for the position of independent member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life; and what criteria were used in making the final decision on the most recent appointment to that position on that Committee.

Chloe Smith:

173 applications were received by the campaign which closed in April 2021 for two independent member vacancies on the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

In line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, an Advisory Assessment Panel, that included an independent member, carefully considered all applications against the criteria set out in the candidate pack, which is published on the Government's Public Appointments website. The panel was chaired by Lord Evans, the Chair of the Committee.

The Panel interviewed shortlisted candidates and made recommendations to the Prime Minister on which candidates they found appointable against those criteria. The two applicants who have been appointed by the Prime Minister to take up post on 1 August 2021 were both found appointable by the Panel.

Coronavirus: Death**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[36691\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what proportion of deaths with covid-19 noted as a cause since 1 July 2021 have been in people with underlying health conditions.

Andrea Jenkyns:[\[36692\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what percentage of deaths with covid-19 noted as a cause since 1st July 2021 have been in those who have not received a dose of a covid-19 vaccine.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ36691-2 [\[UKSA's final response to PQ36691.pdf\]](#)

Andrea Jenkyns:

[36693]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of people who have died since 1 July 2021 with covid-19 listed as a cause of death on their death certificate have also had other causes of death listed.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. Response-to-PQs-36691-36692-36693 [[Response-to-PQs-36691-36692-36693.pdf](#)]

■ **Coronavirus: Disease Control**

Rachael Maskell:

[34527]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to rising UK cases of covid-19 and the effects of that matter on (a) workers in the health and care sector and (b) the workforce more widely, if he will review his decision to ease covid-19 lockdown measures on 19 July 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

England moved to step 4 of the roadmap on 19 July following a full assessment of the data against the four tests for easing restrictions. Moving to step 4 on 19 July means that the easing of restrictions coincides with the end of the school term, takes place over the summer when more activities can take place outdoors, and pressures on the NHS are less than in the autumn and winter months.

The Government will retain contingency measures to respond to unexpected events, while accepting that further cases, hospitalisations and deaths will occur as the country learns to live with COVID-19. The Government will continue to monitor the data on a regular basis to ensure there is no danger of the NHS facing unsustainable pressure; work with local authorities and provide national support to local areas that need an enhanced response to COVID-19; and maintain contingency plans for reimposing economic and social restrictions at a local, regional or national level if evidence suggests they are necessary to suppress or manage a dangerous variant. Such measures would only be reintroduced as a last resort to prevent unsustainable pressure on the NHS.

Rachael Maskell:

[34532]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision by the Netherlands to reintroduce covid-19 restrictions.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the [statement](#) given by the Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment on 22 July 2021.

Seema Malhotra:

[\[35660\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of not consulting business or trade union on the Government guidance entitled Coronavirus: how to stay safe and help prevent the spread, updated on 19 March 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

Step 4 policy and guidance was developed in collaboration with departments and stakeholders including businesses and unions. The Government continuously reviews and updates the guidance available in light of emerging information and feedback from the public, working to ensure the guidance is clear and accessible.

We discussed the development of guidance with stakeholders, including businesses and unions, however this did not happen under a formal consultation process, largely due to the need to react and make decisions swiftly at Ministerial level, given the circumstances during the pandemic.

■ Customs: Holyhead

Hywel Williams:

[\[33856\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions has he had with the Welsh Government regarding the establishment of a Border Control Post at Parc Cybi.

Hywel Williams:

[\[33857\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of Warrington Inland Border Facility's capacity to undertake sanitary and phytosanitary checks in the event that a Border Control Post at Parc Cybi is not operational by January 2022.

Penny Mordaunt:

There has been engagement with Welsh Government counterparts - as well as weekly engagement at official level - about the inland border sites in North Wales. Provision of Border Control Posts for SPS checks is a devolved matter. However, Defra, HMRC, Wales Office, and Welsh Government are working constructively to define an appropriate control regime for customs and biosecurity checks to be in place and operational at the sites in Parc Cybi from 1 January.

The Warrington Inland Border Facility has been operational since January 2021 and has the capacity to handle more than 700 goods vehicle movements per day for customs checks. Together with other inland border facilities, such as Birmingham and Sevington, there is more than adequate capacity to accommodate any shortfall capacity at Welsh ports and inland sites in January 2022, should this be needed.

■ **Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance (and associated schemes) in Government Review**

Angela Rayner: [24213]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Review into the Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance being led by Nigel Boardman will report to the Prime Minister by the end of June 2021.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the Rt Hon Member to my [written statement](#) of 22 July 2021.

■ **Development and Use of Supply Chain Finance (And Associated Schemes) in Government Review**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [35827]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons Mr Nigel Boardman originally rejected the representations of Lord Heywood's widow in his review into government procurement activity.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the hon. Member to my written statement of 22 July 2021. As the written statement notes, where actions have been attributed to individuals, some of which could be read as critical, the individuals concerned or their personal representative, where applicable, were given the opportunity ahead of the report being finalised to make representations on those sections of the report that could be perceived as criticisms to correct factual inaccuracies.

Lady Heywood has had access to papers that Lord Heywood would have been shown and, representing her late husband, has been treated on equivalent terms to others involved in the review.

During the course of the Review, Lady Heywood made representations to Mr Boardman about the process. Mr Boardman listened to these representations and agreed to undertake additional engagement with Lady Heywood prior to finalising his report.

■ **Douglas Smith**

Angela Rayner: [36656]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what role Douglas Smith holds in his office.

Chloe Smith:

An updated list of Government special advisers was published on GOV.UK on 15 July.

As has been the case under successive administrations, staff employed in the No.10 Political Office are a matter for the governing party.

■ Electronic Surveillance: Mobile Phones

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[35744]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the extent of the use of Pegasus project spyware in the UK; and whether any UK citizen has been targeted by the software.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the reply Lord True gave to Lord Clement-Jones on [21 July, Official Report, column 256](#).

■ Ewen Fergusson

Angela Rayner:

[35677]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what interests were declared by Ewen Fergusson before his appointment as an independent member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life; and if he will publish those interests.

Chloe Smith:

Appointments of independent members of the Committee on Standards in Public Life are made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The Code is clear that candidates must be asked to declare potential conflicts of interest in their application and these should be discussed at interview.

The register of interests of all the Committee's members can be found online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cspl-latest-register-of-interests>.

The associated press release on the open competition for this role is at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/professor-gillian-peelee-and-ewen-fergusson-to-join-the-committee-on-standards-in-public-life>.

I also refer the Hon. Member to the letter from the Commissioner for Public Appointments on the competition process: <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Copy-of-2021-07-20-PR-to-Lord-Evans-redacted.pdf>.

■ G7: Cornwall

Catherine West:

[35815]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect on the environment of the Prime Minister's use of a private jet to travel from London to Cornwall on 9 June 2021 ahead of the G7 Summit.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ 14211](#) on 29 June 2021.

■ Government Departments: Directors**Fleur Anderson:** [\[36799\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to treat departmental Non-Executive Directors in a manner equivalent to other members of public boards; and whether that role will be regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Fleur Anderson: [\[36800\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to incorporate existing guidance on the appointment of departmental Non-Executive Directors into the Governance code on public appointments.

Fleur Anderson: [\[36801\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to require every Government Department to publish a quarterly register of interests that includes each member of their departmental board.

Fleur Anderson: [\[36802\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to preclude Secretaries of State from appointing (a) sitting elected representatives with party affiliation and (b) current special advisers as departmental non-executive directors.

Chloe Smith:

The Committee on Standards in Public Life published an interim report last month which recommended that the appointment process for Non-Executive Board Members of government departments should be regulated. We are grateful for the work being undertaken by Lord Evans and his Committee and will respond formally to the Committee's final recommendations when they are published in the Autumn.

Departments publish their register of interests for all members of the departmental board alongside their Annual Report and Accounts.

As employees of departments, current Special Advisers are not eligible to be appointed as Non-Executive Board Members of departments, and none have been so appointed. The Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies sets out that where appointed as a Non-Executive Board Member, there is no bar on elected representatives taking a political party whip relating to their political role. They must exercise proper discretion on matters directly related to the work of the body and recognise that certain political activities may be incompatible with their role as a board member.

■ Meat: New Zealand**Emily Thornberry:** [\[33180\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government has made or contributed to any administrative determinations in

the Northern Ireland protocol joint committee that would bar New Zealand (a) sheepmeat and (b) beef products accessing Northern Ireland's markets using the preferential access set out under the UK New Zealand-specific WTO tariff rate quota commitments.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has not made or contributed to any administrative determinations in the Northern Ireland Joint Committee that would bar New Zealand exporters accessing Northern Ireland's market's using the preferential access set out under UK New Zealand specific WTO tariff rate quota commitment.

Any such impact on New Zealand sheep meat and beef product exporters is a direct result of the EU's unilateral introduction of Regulation 2020/2170 on the application of Union tariff rate quotas (TRQs) and other import quotas, on 16 December 2020. If strictly applied, the Regulation would mean that importers of goods subject to any EU tariff rate quotas or other import quotas directly into Northern Ireland would be unable to access either EU or UK quotas, and would therefore need to pay a tariff.

The UK has underlined to the European Commission that this is a matter requiring urgent consideration as part of addressing issues with the operation of the Protocol, though there has not yet been any resolution found through the Joint Committee. The Government equally has set out its determination to address the issues faced by New Zealand exporters at a meeting of the WTO agriculture committee on 29 March, and we continue to engage with the New Zealand government as discussions proceed.

This is one of the elements of the Protocol we have been clear should be addressed as we seek to find a new balance in how it operates, as set out in our Command Paper published on 21 July ([Northern Ireland Protocol: the way forward, CP502](#)).

■ **Ministers: Email**

Angela Rayner:

[27175]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the oral answer of the Parliamentary Secretary to the hon. Member for Warrington North of 28 June 2021, Official Report, column 36, what further steps she has taken to the look into the incident referred to.

Julia Lopez:

The Information Commissioner has recently launched an investigation into the use of private correspondence channels in DHSC. It would therefore be inappropriate to comment on the ongoing investigation at this stage.

■ **Nigel Boardman**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[35826]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether Mr Nigel Boardman was asked to submit a declaration of interests before he started the review into government procurement activity; and where that declaration is published.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the hon. Member to my [written statement](#) of 22 July 2021.

Nigel Boardman is a distinguished legal expert, having undertaken a number of reviews scrutinising the government. He was asked to lead this review following the appropriate consideration of relevant interests.

Ports: EU Countries**Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[24914\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what information he holds from the European Commission on the average number of weekly checks which being undertaken at EU ports compared to the number of similar weekly checks at Belfast port.

Penny Mordaunt:

This information is not held by the UK Government. However, as indicated by the Chief Veterinary Officer for Northern Ireland, on the 15 April 2021 in the Northern Ireland Assembly's Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, the Northern Ireland Executive has estimated that from January to March, the number of entry documents for products of animal origin, germinal products, and animal by-products (CHED-PS) processed in Northern Ireland represented approximately 20% of the EU total. This is more than any single EU Member State - even though the population of Northern Ireland is just 0.5% of that of the EU as a whole.

Regional Planning and Development: Greater London**Fleur Anderson:**[\[35918\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech of 15 July 2021, which areas of London have been identified within the Government's levelling up agenda.

Fleur Anderson:[\[35919\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether (a) indices of deprivation and (b) measures of median wages will be integrated into the Government's levelling up framework.

Chloe Smith:

Levelling up is at the heart of the Government's agenda to build back better after the pandemic and to deliver for citizens in every part of the UK. As per the Prime Minister's speech, deprivation levels in London have been dramatically reduced but there is still much more to do. The details of how we plan to level up will be published later this year, as part of our landmark Levelling Up White Paper, setting out bold new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunity in all parts of the UK, including London.

■ UK Trade with EU: Civil Servants

Angela Rayner:

[\[31420\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) number of additional civil servants required to administer the checks on goods being imported to the UK from the EU under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and (b) cost of recruiting additional civil servants for that purpose.

Penny Mordaunt:

Checks on goods being imported to the UK from the EU are carried out by HMRC, Defra and local Port Health Authorities. Full import controls are being introduced in a phased approach between October 2021 and March 2022. Defra and HMRC continue to review the number of staff required to conduct these checks and ensure that there are sufficient civil servants in post. Once the import controls, as set out under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, have been fully implemented, an accurate estimate of additional staffing required and the cost of this recruitment can be made.

■ Zero Hours Contracts: Yorkshire and the Humber

Jon Trickett:

[\[34454\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the number of workers on zero hours contracts in (a) the Hemsworth constituency, (b) West Yorkshire and (c) Yorkshire and Humber.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ34454 [\[UKSA's final response to PQ34454.pdf\]](#)

COP26

■ Climate Change

Sarah Jones:

[\[35849\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to further develop financial support to help prevent loss and damage as a result of climate change ahead of the COP26 summit.

Alok Sharma:

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

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

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

■ Climate Change: Treaties

Helen Hayes:

[\[36705\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment has he made of the (a) potential merits and (b) likelihood of an international agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

Alok Sharma:

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international agreement which aims to hold average temperature rise to well below 2 degrees C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. It is the framework under which such efforts should be delivered. The science is clear that in order to avoid the most catastrophic effects of climate change we must keep 1.5C in reach and this is my priority for COP26.

■ Community Development: Climate Change

Fleur Anderson:

[\[35913\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what engagement the Government has had with community groups on tackling the climate emergency ahead of COP26.

Alok Sharma:

As Presidency, we are committed to securing an outcome that respects and reflects the interests of all Parties, including those most impacted by climate change. We are working with civil society to amplify the voices of those on the front line of climate change to deliver a truly 'all of society' and inclusive COP. Civil society organisations, with their links to on-the-ground communities and practitioners, are agents of change and their knowledge and leadership is necessary to deliver effective local solutions. I have established a civil society and youth advisory council which includes community

groups and Indigenous Peoples from around the world. I also meet with civil society and youth groups on my international visits.

Ahead of COP26, we have launched the 'Together for our Planet' campaign to engage the public in the run-up to COP26 and to celebrate the work people across the UK are doing to combat climate change. The campaign aims to drive awareness and create opportunities for people across the UK to participate in the run-up to COP26.

The Together for our Planet campaign is building momentum in the lead-up to COP26 by showcasing how people across the UK are going One Step Greener to tackle climate change. Our One Step Greener 'Climate Leaders' will show how much inspirational action on climate change is already taking place.

We also encourage MPs across the UK to engage with their local communities in the run up to COP, in order to support this. We shared an MP engagement pack with the House to this effect.

■ EU External Trade: Carbon Emissions

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33969\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, if the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is on the agenda for COP26.

Alok Sharma:

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAMs) are not on the agenda for COP26. The agenda at COP26 will be determined by mandates as agreed by Parties at previous COPs and adopted by consensus.

■ Renewable Energy: Treaties

Helen Hayes:

[\[36706\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the (a) potential merits and (b) likelihood of an international agreement to ensure global co-operation to transition to renewable energy sources.

Alok Sharma:

Accelerating the transition from coal to clean energy is a top priority for the UK's COP 26 Presidency. There are many benefits that the energy transition can bring: cleaner air, cheaper power, increased investment, new jobs, better public health, and many more.

The UK recognises that global collaboration is vital to achieving a cleaner future. We have already made significant progress. The Climate and Environment Ministers of the G7 have made historic commitments to end international coal finance in 2021 and to accelerate the transition towards overwhelmingly decarbonised power systems in the 2030s. The UK has also launched the Energy Transition Council, bringing together the political, financial and technical leaders of the global power sector in over 20 countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, and North America, to ensure that clean

power is the most attractive offer globally. The UK is also collaborating internationally through the Powering Past Coal Alliance, a coalition of 135 members, advancing the transition from unabated coal power generation to clean energy.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Immigration

Johnny Mercer:

[\[34547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many applications his Department has received for the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy scheme; how many applicants to that scheme have (a) been excluded from the UK relocation option, (b) been accepted for relocation to the UK under category (i) one, (ii) two and (iii) four and (c) not yet been informed of a decision on their application; and how many of those accepted, rejected or pending were terminated from their employment.

James Heappey:

We have significantly accelerated the pace of relocations under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) in line with the military drawdown. Since 1 June 572 people, former Afghan locally employed staff and their families, have been relocated to the UK. The MOD is working with the Home Office and a range of Government departments to ensure their successful resettlement.

This now takes the total number of people from Afghanistan relocated to the UK under the ARAP and the previous Ex-Gratia Policy to nearly 2,000.

Unfortunately for operational security reasons we cannot at this time comment on specific numbers of applications.

Our commitment to those who are eligible under the ARAP, and the process to deliver it, is not time-limited and will endure beyond the military presence in Afghanistan.

■ Ajax Vehicles: Procurement

Chi Onwurah:

[\[35635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his plans are for the future production of Ajax vehicles; and when he plans to inform contractors of the long-term future of the Ajax vehicle project.

Jeremy Quin:

We have a firm price contract with General Dynamics Land Systems UK and we remain committed to working with our partners to bring Ajax into service.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

Mr Mark Francois:

[36561]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many CVR T Scimitar Reconnaissance vehicles remain in operational service with the British Army; and in which regiments those vehicles are deployed.

Jeremy Quin:

Details of the number of vehicles in the UK Armed Forces are published on an annual basis on the government's website. The most recent publication can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2020>.

For reasons of security, we do not publish any further breakdown of this number.

Regiments of the British Army which operate these vehicles are:

1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

1st Battalion The Royal Welsh

1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment

102 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

5th Battalion The Rifles

8th Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Kings Royal Hussars

Royal Dragoon Guards

Royal Lancers

Royal Tank Regiment

Mr Mark Francois:

[36563]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the all-up weight with any added armour of the (a) CVR T Scimitar Armoured Fighting Vehicle, (b) Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle, (c) Ajax Armoured Fighting Vehicle, (d) AS-90 self-propelled gun and (e) Challenger 2 Main Battle Tank.

Jeremy Quin:

I thank the right hon. Member for his question, however I must inform him that I am withholding the information requested, as its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

Mr Mark Francois:

[36564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which vehicle performs the tracked armoured reconnaissance role in the British Army; and in which regiments is that vehicle deployed.

Jeremy Quin:

The CVR(T) and Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle perform the tracked armoured reconnaissance role in the British Army. These vehicles can be found in the following regiments:

1st Battalion Royal Regiment of Fusiliers
1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment
1st Battalion The Royal Welsh
1st Battalion Royal Horse Artillery
1st Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment
102 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
19 Regiment Royal Artillery
22 Engineer Regiment
26 Engineer Regiment
3 Armoured Close Support Battalion
4 Armoured Close Support Battalion
5th Battalion The Rifles
6 Armoured Close Support Battalion
8 Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers
King Royal Hussars
Queens Royal Hussars
Royal Tank Regiment
Royal Lancers

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Sales**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[36562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many CVR T Scimitar Reconnaissance vehicles have been disposed of in the last 10 years; to which nations; and what the cost incurred or revenue gained was to his Department of those disposals.

Jeremy Quin:

Over the last 10 years, a total of 123 Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) Scimitar have been sold; 42 via a Government-to-Government sale to Latvia, and 81 via the Defence Equipment Sales Authority's Surplus Vehicles Contract.

Due to the way in which historic disposals information is recorded, it is not possible to provide exact details of the income generated for Scimitar. However, the combined sales return for all variants of the CVR(T), totalling 592 vehicles, is £3.82 million (excl. VAT).

■ AWACS

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the whole life cost of the UK's current group of (a) CDEL and (b) RDEL E-7 Wedgetail aircraft.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost is to date of the UK's current group of (a) CDEL and (b) RDEL E-7 Wedgetail aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

The 2021 Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) data set records a cost of £2.2 billion for a baseline fleet of five aircraft. However, this figure is for the acquisition programme and does not include sustainment costs (the Project End date on GMPP is 30 Jun 2026).

The 2021 Integrated Review announced a reduction in fleet size to three aircraft and announced that they would be based at RAF Lossiemouth. This change will make a significant reduction in the programme's Whole Life Cost, and an updated estimate will be made ahead of the next formal business case submission, estimated in 2022.

The total cost to date (as of June 2021) for the E-7 Wedgetail acquisition are as follows: (a) CDEL: £775.62 million and (b) RDEL: £33.05 million.

■ AWACS and Boeing E-3

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[36559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the date on which the (a) last E-3D sentry aircraft will be retired from operational service and (b) first E-7 Wedgetail will achieve initial operating capacity in Royal Air Force service.

Jeremy Quin:

We will retire the E-3D Sentry from operational service later in 2021, as part of the transition to the more modern and more capable fleet of three E-7 Wedgetail aircraft, which are expected to enter service in December 2023.

The United Kingdom remains part of the NATO AEW&C Force Headquarters.

■ AWACS: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the E-7 Delivery Team Leader at Defence Equipment and Support informed the senior responsible owner that the E-7 Wedgetail project was at risk.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the senior responsible owner of the E-7 Wedgetail contract informed him that that project was at risk.

Mr Kevan Jones: [35540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Permanent Secretary of his Department was informed that the E-7 Wedgetail project was at risk.

Mr Kevan Jones: [35541]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Minister for Defence Procurement was informed that the E-7 Wedgetail project was at risk.

Jeremy Quin:

The E-7 Wedgetail Programme reports regularly to Ministry of Defence senior staff and Ministers through internal major project reporting systems and governance structures, including programme risks. These quarterly reports have been made since the Programme's inception in 2018.

Mr Mark Francois: [36560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the revised acquisition cost is of the three E-7 Wedgetail aircraft proposed for purchase under the Integrated Review 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 13 April 2021 to Question 175732 to the hon. Member for North Durham (Mr Jones).

Attachments:

1. AWACS: Procurement [UIN 175732 -.docx]

■ Boeing E-3

John Healey: [35500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what were the total constructive losses to his Department for the reduction in the numbers of the Sentry aircraft fleet in 2012-13.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14 reported a total constructive loss of £64,050,000 resulting from a reduction in the number of Sentry aircraft as an advance notification from 2012/13. This related to a single aircraft, which was subsequently utilised for ground-based training and project purposes. As such, it was deemed to no longer qualify as a constructive loss but as an impairment.

The MOD Annual Report and Accounts 2013/14 can be accessed via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381064/MOD_AR13-14_webversion.pdf

■ Chinook Helicopters

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[36556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for the CH-47 Chinook Bravo November when it leaves operational service; and whether those plans involve donating that helicopter to the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon.

Jeremy Quin:

Recognising the historical service of this airframe, it is likely that it will be gifted to a suitable Museum ensuring the important RAF stories associated with the aircraft will be preserved and shared to inspire future generations.

■ Defence Equipment: Communication

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35543\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which military platforms in service are equipped with Multifunction Advanced Data Link.

Jeremy Quin:

The Multifunction Advanced Data Link is used by Lightning aircraft. The Lightning Force can also communicate with wider Link 16 datalinks used by a wide variety of assets including other frontline fast jet forces and Type 45 Destroyers.

Defence Digital and the Rapid Capabilities Office are undertaking work on new forms of secure communications and NEXUS combat cloud technology to 'digitise the battlespace'. Through this work, we will ensure seamless and secure connectivity between the existing operational technology and datalinks on our fighting platforms via our secure digital infrastructure, to ultimately, enable the integration of military forces across land, sea, air, cyber and space domains.

■ Devonport Dockyard: Radioactive Waste

Luke Pollard:

[\[36760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any Ministers of his Department approved the submission of the application for HM Naval Base Devonport to release radioactive rainwater into the river Tamar before that application was submitted to the Environment Agency.

Jeremy Quin:

Ministry of Defence Ministers noted a submission informing them of Her Majesty's Naval Base Devonport's intention to apply to the Environment Agency (EA) to vary the disposal method for a low-level liquid radioactive waste stream on 17 May 2021, letters were sent to local constituency MPs informing them that the application will be made on 18 May and HMNB Devonport's formal application to the EA was made on 22 June 2021.

■ Electronic Warfare

John Healey: [35502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what were the total constructive losses to his Department for the cancellation of Project Soothsayer.

Jeremy Quin:

The total constructive loss resulting from the cancellation of Project Soothsayer was £87.952 million. The Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17 reported that £50.552 million had been classed as a constructive loss associated with contract termination, while £37.4 million was reported as an extra contractual payment.

The Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17 can be accessed via the following link:

(
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/629769/MoD_AR16-17_gov_Web-Optimised.pdf)

■ Guided Weapons

John Healey: [35499]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what were the total constructive losses to his Department for the reduction in the stockpile of Storm Operational Missiles in 2011-12.

Jeremy Quin:

I assume that the right hon. Member is referring to Storm Shadow missiles.

The Ministry of Defence Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13 reported a total constructive loss of £173.1 million resulting from a reduction in the stockpile of Storm Shadow missiles as an advance notification from 2011-12. This reflected the original decision to dispose of a number of missiles. However, this decision was subsequently reversed, and these missiles were never physically disposed of. No constructive loss is therefore deemed to have occurred.

The MOD Annual Report and Accounts 2012-13 can be accessed via the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/222874/MOD_AR13_clean.pdf

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: Coronavirus

John Healey: [33115]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, (a) when and (b) by whom was the decision made to allow the crew of HMS Queen Elizabeth off-ship during port visits during the covid-19 outbreak.

James Heappey:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Port visits are planned in advance as part of each deployment and while they remain subject to change depending on operational and other requirements, they are important for logistics resupply and the welfare of the crew.

For the Carrier Strike Group 2021 deployment the Commanding Officer of each ship, in consultation with the Commander of the Strike Group, and PJHQ where required, carefully consider the Covid-19 situation at each destination and take into account HMG travel advice published on the gov.uk website and local guidance before allowing the crew off the ship during port visits.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[36553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the through-life cost of the F-35 programme; and on what £/\$ exchange rate that assumption is based over the lifetime of the programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The estimate of the through-life cost of the F-35 programme is £18.76 billion. Based on the endorsed forty-eight F-35B Programme of Record, this estimate includes sunk costs (already recognised in Defence Accounts) and forecast costs (future expenditure until F-35 Out of Service Date). The sunk costs were recognised at the £/\$ exchange rate when the expenditure occurred. Any forecast costs that are transacted in USD\$, are converted to GBP£ using the relevant Ministry of Defence Corporate Planning Assumptions for the Annual Budgeting Cycle.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Meteor Missiles**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[36555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his timetable is for the Meteor air-to-air missile to achieve initial operating capability on the F-35 aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

Initial development work for Meteor integration has progressed well. The Lightning Delivery Team within Defence Equipment and Supply (DE&S), through F-35 Joint Program Office has signed a contract to integrate Meteor in the middle of the decade.

Joint Strike Fighter Aircraft: Procurement**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[36552\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) location and (b) operational status is of each of the 48 F-35 aircraft on order from Lockheed Martin.

Jeremy Quin:

21 Lightning aircraft have been delivered to the UK by Lockheed-Martin. The remaining 27 aircraft remain at various stages of production.

The location of the 21 delivered aircraft in mid-July 2021 is broken down as follows:

17 Squadron, Edwards AFB USA - Three

207 Squadron, RAF Marham - Eight

617 Squadron embarked on HMS Queen Elizabeth - Eight

RAF Marham Maintenance and Finishing Facility - Two

■ **Kurds: Military Aid**

Jim Shannon:

[\[36632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assistance his Department has provided to the Kurdish people to help tackle terrorist groups affecting those people.

James Heappey:

The UK continues to support the Kurdish people at multiple levels to combat the Daesh threat in Iraq and Syria.

In Iraq, the Kurdish Peshmerga have played a leading role in the Global Coalition's successful campaign against Daesh. As a key partner, the UK has trained more than 9,100 Peshmerga fighters and supplied them with technical and military support to enhance their capacity and capability to tackle the threat from Daesh. Furthermore, the UK has gifted over 2,000 tonnes of lethal and non-lethal aid to Kurdish and Iraqi security forces (ammunition, body armour, first aid equipment etc) to support them in their fight against Daesh.

Whilst in Syria, the UK has consistently provided tactical support and funding through the Global Coalition to assist the Syrian Democratic Forces in their efforts to prevent the resurgence of Daesh in the region .

■ **Merlin Helicopters: Early Warning Systems**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[34466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the forecasted costs are of the Crowsnest programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The current forecasted cost for the Crowsnest programme, through to Design and Manufacture contract closure post-FOC, is £435 million.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the (a) Initial Operating Capability, (b) Full Operating Capacity and (c) out of service date is for Crowsnest.

Jeremy Quin:

The contracted Initial Operating Capability functionality was originally forecast for March 2020 and was not achieved, however the Initial Release to Service was achieved in February 2021 which enabled Crowsnest fitted aircraft to deploy with Carrier Strike Group 2021. The Crowsnest programme is currently undergoing a

schedule review to agree new milestones. The out-of-service date for Crowsnest is currently planned to be 2029.

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse is of the delay to the Crowsnest programme; and whether Leonardo share liability for the costs of that delay.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has a firm price contract under the Single Source Contract Regulations for Crowsnest with Lockheed Martin UK. Leonardo UK is a sub-contractor. We continue to reserve our position with Lockheed Martin UK in respect of any further consideration relating to contract performance.

■ **Merlin Helicopters: Repairs and Maintenance**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the condition of the Merlin helicopter that his Department left under the care and maintenance of Leonardo.

Jeremy Quin:

The aircraft has now completed the ground based electromagnetic compatibility testing and is undergoing maintenance to fully recover the aircraft to an airworthy standard, at no additional cost to the Ministry of Defence.

■ **Military Aircraft: In-flight Refuelling**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what air-to-air refuelling method is used by the RAF aircraft (a) P-8A, (b) E-7, (c) RC-135W and (d) C-17.

Jeremy Quin:

The Poseidon MRA1, RC-135W Rivet Joint and C-17 are fitted with receptacles which can allow for the boom air-to-air refuelling system. This will also be fitted to the E-7 Wedgetail when it enters RAF service.

■ **Military Aircraft: Operating Costs**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[36554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost is per flying hour of operating the (a) Typhoon, (b) F-35, (c) C-130J Hercules, (d) A400M, (e) P-8 Poseidon and (f) Ch-47 Chinook.

Jeremy Quin:

I am withholding the information requested as its release would prejudice commercial interests.

■ Ministry of Defence: Email

Cat Smith: [\[35732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he or any Ministers of his Department use personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Leo Docherty:

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

Ministry of Defence Security Policy states that, as a general rule, government information should be processed and stored on government systems, both for security reasons and to preserve the integrity of public records.

Consequently, it should not normally be worked on using private email addresses.

■ Ministry of Defence: Staff

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[35550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many qualified financial officers are employed by his Department.

Leo Docherty:

As at the end of March 2021 there were c2,800 people in the finance profession of which 1,211 have a finance qualification. In this instance a finance qualification is defined as either:

- CCAB/CIMA (Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies/Chartered Institute of Management Accountants). This is a Level 7/Masters equivalent or;
- A level 4 finance qualification (HNC equivalent) accredited to an Accountancy Institute

■ National Flagship: Iron and Steel

Bridget Phillipson: [\[26101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his Answer of 16 June to Question 10178 on Royal Yacht: Procurement, whether the procurement framework for the new national flagship will provide for its construction using British steel.

Mr Ben Wallace:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: Procurement of the National Flagship will be conducted strictly in accordance with Government procurement policy, including that on the procurement of steel as set out in Procurement Policy Note 11/16.

Responsibility for sourcing steel for Government procured vessels rests with prime contractors and, in line with Procurement Policy Note 11/16, it will be for the prime contractor to make its steel requirements known to the UK steel industry in order that they may consider bidding.

The joint industry and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Steel Procurement Taskforce was launched in March 2021, with the aim of working with the

sector to promote the unique selling points of UK steel and explore how best to support and position the industry for success in forthcoming major public contracts.

■ **National Flagship: Procurement**

Emily Thornberry: [\[27070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the high level technical specification document for the UK's national flagship that is available on request to potential suppliers participating in the market engagement exercise launched by his Department on 2 July 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the Level 1 procurement plan for the UK's national flagship that is available on request to potential suppliers participating in the market engagement exercise launched by his Department on 2 July 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [\[27073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the pre-qualification questionnaire that will be used to assess which potential suppliers will progress to the invitation to negotiate phase of procurement for the UK's national flagship.

Mr Ben Wallace:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: Consideration will be given to publication of the high-level technical specification, Level 1 procurement plan and pre-qualification questionnaire after they have been made available to participants in the planned period of market engagement.

■ **Puma Helicopters**

Mr Mark Francois: [\[36557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to dispose of the Puma helicopters earmarked for retirement in the Integrated Review 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

No disposal agreements have yet been made regarding the Puma helicopters earmarked for retirement.

■ **Puma Helicopters: Repairs and Maintenance**

Mr Mark Francois: [\[36558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total cost of the Puma upgrade programme was.

Jeremy Quin:

The total cost of the Puma Life Extension Programme was £371.6 million.

■ RAF Lossiemouth: AWACS

Mr Kevan Jones: [35537]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the capital costs are of basing the E-7 Wedgetail aircraft at RAF Lossiemouth.

Jeremy Quin:

Elements of Wedgetail specific new-build technical facilities at RAF Lossiemouth will be considered as part of the future maintenance and sustainment contracts for the fleet. This remains subject to commercial negotiation and I am withholding internal Ministry of Defence estimates due to commercial sensitivity.

However I can confirm that the Wedgetail aircraft at RAF Lossiemouth will achieve significant capital synergy through their co-location with the Boeing P-8 Poseidon, which will permit efficiencies in technical infrastructure (primarily in the logistics, engineering support and training delivery spaces).

■ Shipbuilding

Deidre Brock: [34512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the national shipbuilding strategy refresh will be published.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 July 2021 to Question 27009 to the right hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne (Mr John Healey).

Attachments:

1. 27009 - Shipbuilding [[27009 - Shipbuilding.docx](#)]

■ Submarines

Mr Mark Francois: [36546]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the (a) four Astute class and (b) two Trafalgar class SSN submarines in commission; and which of those boats are (i) operationally available and (ii) undergoing maintenance and/or refit.

Jeremy Quin:

It is UK policy to not disclose the operational availability of submarines, as to do so would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of our Armed Forces. Our submarines continue to meet all operational commitments.

■ Type 23 Frigates

Mr Mark Francois: [36545]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what is the sea-going status of each of the 13 Type 23 frigates; and which of those ships are (a) operationally available, (b) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit and (c) temporarily unavailable due to propulsion problems.

Jeremy Quin:

The information requested is provided below:

CLASS	UPKEEP/MAINTENANCE	OPERATIONALLY AVAILABLE	TOTAL
Type 23	4	8	12
River Class Patrol Ships	0	3	3
River II Class Patrol Ships	0	5	5
RFA Tide Class	1	3	4
RFA Wave Class	1	1	2
RFA Landing Ship Docks	1	2	3
Sandown Class	2	5	7
Hunt Class Mine Counter Measure Vessels	2	4	6
HMS ALBION/HMS BULWARK	1	1	2

To maintain operational security these figures cannot be broken down to the level of detail requested. The information provided dividing vessels into “Upkeep/Maintenance” and “Operationally Available” (ships on deployment or generating for deployment) is correct at the time of release.

Twelve Type 23 frigates are included as HMS MONMOUTH left Royal Navy service on 30 June 2021.

■ **Type 45 Destroyers**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[35544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has plans to install Multifunction Advanced Data Link on the T45 Destroyer.

Jeremy Quin:

There are no current plans to install the Multifunction Advanced Datalink on Type 45 Destroyers.

■ Wrecks: Protection

Luke Pollard: [\[35880\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using underwater drones to protect sunken Royal Navy ships.

Luke Pollard: [\[35881\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what funding he has allocated to projects that protect and monitor sunken Royal Navy ships from scavengers in the last three years.

Luke Pollard: [\[35882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on the joint provision of underwater drones to monitor wrecks of sunken Royal Navy warships.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) considers the wrecks of many Royal Navy ships to be the final resting place of Service personnel, who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and should be allowed to rest in peace.

The Royal Navy is accelerating its drive towards un-crewed and fully autonomous capabilities for the underwater, surface and air environments, and is exploring as part of its future capability planning work the operational opportunities new technologies provide.

No formal discussions have taken place with the US Government regarding the joint provision of underwater drones to monitor the wrecks of Royal Navy warships.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**■ Artificial Intelligence: EU Action**

Chi Onwurah: [\[34483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the principles set out in the EU proposals for regulations on artificial intelligence.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The UK notes the European Commission's Proposal for a Regulation on a European approach for Artificial Intelligence (AI) with interest. The future of EU regulation on AI is a matter for the Commission, the Member States and European Parliament.

The UK is playing a leading role in international discussions on AI ethics and potential regulations, such as work at the Council of Europe, the OECD, UNESCO and the Global Partnership on AI.

We will publish a new National AI Strategy later this year. Under this strategy we will continue to work with international partners including the EU to support the

development of the rules around the use of AI for the benefit of our societies and economies.

We are monitoring developments across the world, including in the EU, to assess whether and how those developments can inform our own laws and practices. The independent Regulatory Horizons Council (RHC) has also been appointed to scan the horizon for new technological innovations and provide the government with impartial, expert advice on the regulatory reform required to support AI's rapid and safe introduction, while protecting citizens and the environment.

■ **Broadband**

Chi Onwurah:

[34500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of CircleLoop which placed the UK 28th in the world for broadband speeds; and what steps he is taking to accelerate full-fibre and 5G rollout.

Matt Warman:

CircleLoop's 'Connected Countries' report ranks countries using average download speed data, rather than the maximum speed available. Given the pace of the gigabit rollout in the UK, it is understandable that in some cases consumers may wish to wait until their current contract ends before seeking higher speeds.

The government remains committed to delivering nationwide gigabit connectivity as soon as possible. Today, over two in five premises can access gigabit-capable networks, up from just one in ten in November 2019. By the end of the year, 60% will have access to a gigabit network, and we are on track to achieving a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025.

It is the government's view that the best way to achieve nationwide gigabit coverage is to remove barriers to deployment and create a competition-friendly environment in areas where deployment is commercially viable, while focussing government funds on the 20% of the country where commercial deployment is unlikely. To support the hardest-to-reach areas, we have launched Project Gigabit, our £5bn programme to ensure these areas receive gigabit coverage within the same timescales as the rest of the country.

5G Network deployment plans are a matter for the mobile network operators, but the government is undertaking a number of actions to support this. We will shortly publish our response to the consultation on potential reforms to the Electronic Communications Code, which sought views on how we can better facilitate the deployment of new networks, including 5G. Alongside this, we have also consulted on reforms to the planning system to support 5G deployment and extend mobile coverage, and we intend to publish our response to the consultation and bring forward legislation in the Autumn.

We are confident that through these actions we will achieve our 5G rollout ambitions for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027.

■ Charities: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[34542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to assist charities with delivering community services and support in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Matt Warman:

Government recognises the huge contribution of charities and civil society in the national effort against coronavirus, and the significant challenges that many have experienced. This is why we made available a multi billion pound package of support, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the £750 million package for charities and voluntary organisations.

DCMS is committed to working with sector representatives on shared priorities for supporting a strong, sustainable and healthy sector during the covid-19 pandemic and beyond. We have also awarded grant funding to the VCS Emergency Partnership to help provide vital on-going coordination and insights-building within the voluntary sector. This included funding to the National Association of Voluntary and Community Associations (NAVCA) of more than £1.5 million for onward grants to over 200 local grassroots organisations.

My department is also working across government to understand how they are working with and supporting key subsectors, such as community services. We will continue to have ongoing conversations with both the charity sector and key government partners to help monitor the health and resilience of the charity sector.

Rachael Maskell:[\[35753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with businesses on support for local charities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Matt Warman:

Businesses have played a significant role in supporting charities up and down the country during the pandemic. Officials in my department and across government, have held a number of conversations with business and charity sector representatives throughout the pandemic.

Government has published guidance for businesses setting out how they can best support the charity sector, and separate guidance for civil society organisations on how to access support. This included information on pro-bono professional services, digital support to aid service transformation, enabling staff volunteering, and funding. Government has also linked up businesses with suitable brokers, including Business in the Community and Volunteering Matters. These brokers have specialist skills in making connections between businesses and charities.

■ Food: Advertising

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of restrictions on the online advertising of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar on investment by food manufacturers in UK companies compared with international competitors.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Impact Assessment published alongside the Government's consultation response for the 2019 and 2020 consultations on further restricting the advertising of food and drinks products high in fat, sugar or salt (HFSS) on TV and online estimates that advertisers, including manufacturers, retailers and out of home businesses will have lower returns of around £39m per year as a result of the restrictions.

The restrictions will apply to all companies advertising to UK consumers, whether or not they are UK companies.

The Government is cognisant of the revenue impacts to UK business, but we must act now to reduce the risks obesity presents to us all and act to protect our NHS. It is estimated that obesity-related conditions are currently costing the NHS £6.1 billion per year. The total costs to society of these conditions have been estimated at around £27 billion per year.

Throughout this policy's development we have been keen to mitigate the impacts on business whilst balancing the vital need to improve the nation's health. Part of this includes the number of exemptions which are part of the policy. By including these exemptions, such as for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), it keeps the policy proportionate.

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[34075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make it his policy to (a) introduce a junk food advertising ban before 2023 and (b) expand that ban to cover junk food advertising on television, other broadcasting platforms and in public spaces.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is legislating in the Health and Care Bill to introduce a restriction on paid-for advertising of food and drinks products high in fat, sugar or salt (HFSS) online and a 9pm watershed on TV. This watershed will also apply to all On-Demand Programme Services (ODPS) under the jurisdiction of the UK. ODPS that do not fall under the UK's jurisdiction will be included in the online restriction of paid-for HFSS advertising. These measures will come into force simultaneously at the end of 2022. It is not the Government's intention to legislate to restrict HFSS advertising in public spaces. This form of advertising is subject to advertising codes regulated by the Advertising Standards Authority which include restricting HFSS advertising in media directed at children under 16.

■ Football

Fleur Anderson: [35917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to celebrate the recent achievements of the England football team.

Nigel Huddleston:

The England team enjoyed a magnificent run in Euro 2020 and I once again pass on my huge congratulations to the team for their work on and off the pitch.

We continue to work closely with the FA on ensuring their players get the appropriate recognition, and recognise that they are already focused on qualification for the Qatar World Cup next year.

■ Football Index

Justin Madders: [35700]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the timetable is for the findings of the Independent Inquiry into Football Index to be published.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Secretary of State has appointed Malcolm Sheehan QC to lead the independent review into the regulation of BetIndex Limited, the operators of Football index. The review is expected to provide a report for publication in the summer. Its findings will form part of the evidence informing the government's ongoing Review of the Gambling Act 2005, which was announced in December 2020.

■ Gambling

Scott Benton: [36803]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment the Gambling Commission has made of the accuracy of the estimated number of problem gamblers.

Mr John Whittingdale:

As part of the Gambling Commission's duty under the [Gambling Act 2005](#) to advise the government on gambling in Great Britain and provide an effective regulatory function, they collect gambling participation and problem gambling prevalence data via surveys of adults in Great Britain, principally the Health Surveys and quarterly telephone surveys. The data are published as [official statistics](#) and they are produced in accordance with the standards set out by the Government Statistical Service in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The Health Surveys use a face to face methodology; and historically this methodology has provided the best means of delivering a random probability sample, which means every household listed on the Postcode Address File (a list of every point in the UK to which mail is delivered to) is given an equal chance of being selected to take part in the survey. Random probability sampling is generally regarded as the best method to achieve accurate population estimates. The Health

Surveys include the PGSI and the DSM-IV screens for problem gambling, and a combined score from both presents an accurate picture of problem gambling. However, some challenges exist with the Health Surveys such as its relative infrequency so the Commission supplement the data with a quarterly telephone survey.

The quarterly telephone survey is currently the Gambling Commissions' main measure of gambling participation (in the last four weeks) and is intended to supplement the high quality but less frequent prevalence measurement through the Health Surveys.. Telephone interviewing is a widespread method of running a nationally representative survey of a cross-section of the population. The short form PGSI screen is used within the telephone survey to measure problem gambling and the prevalence data compares reasonably closely to the Health Survey figures. However, there are a number of criticisms of telephone surveys, not least that it relies on respondents having telephone access (landline or mobile).

Having recognised some of the challenges above and as part of the Gambling Commissions' ambition to improve the quality and robustness of their statistics, they have recently consulted on proposals to change the research methodology used to collect gambling participation and problem gambling statistics. The consultation responses indicated a high level of agreement with the proposals, and the Gambling Commission are in the process of commissioning a pilot to test a new approach. Their full response to the consultation is available [here](https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/print/participation-and-prevalence-research)
<https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/print/participation-and-prevalence-research>

■ **Gambling Act 2005**

Apsana Begum:

[35940]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when his Department plans to publish the results of the Gambling Act Review.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Review of the Gambling Act 2005 was launched on 8 December with a wide-ranging Call for Evidence, which closed on 31 March. We received c.16,000 submissions from a range of stakeholders and members of the public, which we are considering carefully. The government aims to publish a white paper setting out and consulting on next steps by the end of the year.

■ **Gambling: Reviews**

Carolyn Harris:

[36687]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make a statement on the progress of the gambling review.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Review of the Gambling Act 2005 was launched on 8 December with a wide-ranging Call for Evidence, which closed on 31 March. We received c.16,000 submissions to the Call for Evidence from a range of stakeholders and members of

the public. We are considering all submissions carefully and aim to publish a white paper outlining any conclusions and proposals for reform by the end of the year.

■ **Gambling: Social Media**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[34546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made for the implications of his policies of reports of gambling operators taking bets over social media and messaging platforms to avoid gambling regulations and social responsibility schemes.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Gambling operators are only allowed to provide facilities in the way their Gambling Commission licence and licence conditions allow. If an operator is able under the terms of its licence to accept bets via a messaging platform or social media, it must abide by all the regulatory controls of its licence. Requirements include the need for checks so it is clear who is placing the bet, systems to identify those at risk of harm, and compliance with GDPR regulations on data collection and retention.

■ **Information Commissioner's Office: Complaints**

Chi Onwurah:

[\[34490\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Information Commissioner on resolving the delay caused by the covid-19 outbreak in responding to complaints about the use of personal data particularly in regard to fraud.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Independent Commissioner's Office (ICO) is aware that criminal organisations and individuals have used the Covid-19 outbreak for fraudulent activity, for example by taking advantage of the economic downturn to encourage innocent victims to apply for financial relief funds in exchange for their personal details.

The ICO remains ready to investigate any complaints about organisations taking advantage of the current pandemic, providing they fall within their remit on the misuse of personal data. If the complaint falls outside of their remit, the ICO will refer them to their partners in law enforcement, Action Fraud, Trading Standards or other relevant bodies.

The ICO acknowledges that it began the last financial year carrying vacancies in its operational areas, but this has now been addressed and should allow them to deal with cases quicker. The ICO was still able to deal with around 84% of cases within six months of receipt and expects to improve that significantly during the financial year 2021/ 2022. The ICO have also implemented a new casework management system, which they expect to provide efficiencies as they develop its functionality in the coming year.

A full analysis of how the ICO responded to the challenges of Covid-19 will be covered in a separate report to Parliament, which will be published over the summer.

The report will include details of the lessons learned that will inform the ICO's future approach.

■ Internet: Fraud

Chi Onwurah:

[35636]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to minimise the risk of fraud facilitated through online advertisements in the period before the online advertising regulation consultation launches later in 2021.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is deeply concerned about the growth and scale of online fraud. We know that the best way to tackle these scams is to ensure that the public have all the advice and support they need to detect these frauds and avoid them. That is why we have published guidance on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime) containing easy-to-follow steps and useful resources. This can currently be accessed here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-fraud-and-cyber-crime

As well as this, Action Fraud, the national reporting service for all victims of fraud and cybercrime, also regularly provide fraud alerts via their website including on common and newly seen fraud schemes. This can currently be accessed here:

www.actionfraud.police.uk/news

The Online Safety Bill, published on the 12th May, will require companies in scope of regulation to take action to tackle fraud, where it is facilitated through user-generated content (for example by social media posts) or via search results. We expect the regulatory framework to have a particular impact on specific types of fraud, such as romance scams, which are estimated to cost over £60 million a year and cause significant psychological harm to victims.

As you are aware, DCMS will be considering how online advertising is regulated through its Online Advertising Programme. This work will look at ensuring that standards about the placement and content of advertising are effectively applied and enforced online to reduce consumers' exposure to harmful or misleading advertising. This work will look at the role advertising can play in enabling online fraud and help inform our future efforts to tackle it. We will be consulting on this issue later this year.

■ IX Wireless: Blackburn

John Nicolson:

[33961]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his participation in the launch of IX Wireless' broadband network in Blackburn in June 2021, whether he was aware at the time of that launch of the (a) financial contributions made by that company to Members of his party, (b) appointment of a Peer from his party as an advisor to that company, and (c) that a Peer from his own party is a director of IX Wireless' parent company.

Matt Warman:

The Government is committed to levelling up digital connectivity across the country, including by delivering a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable broadband coverage by 2025.

We are proud to work closely with the telecoms sector in achieving this goal and Ministers regularly support relevant industry announcements, such as the launch of IX Wireless' broadband network in June. Other recent examples include my visit on 7 July to Dorset with Excelerate Technology and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to an Openreach facility in May.

This event was handled by the departmental officials in the usual way.

Rented Housing: Registration**Apsana Begum:**[\[35938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to give powers to local authorities to introduce a mandatory short-term lets registration scheme.

Nigel Huddleston:

Published in June, the Tourism Recovery Plan states that the Government will launch a consultation on the introduction of a Tourist Accommodation Registration Scheme in England.

The Government is committed to hearing the views of all interested parties on the merits and drawbacks of a Registration Scheme, and how any potential scheme could be implemented proportionately to avoid placing a significant regulatory burden on the sector or risking a reduction in supply.

Further details of the timescale for this consultation will be announced in due course.

Research: ICT**Chi Onwurah:**[\[34482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits for the UK's research community of a Government-backed national research cloud which would enable academics to analyse, share and retain large and complex data sets.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We recognise that there are significant opportunities for the UK's research community through sharing and accessing large datasets.

The National Data Strategy (NDS), published in September 2020, set out our vision to harness the power of responsible data use to boost productivity, create new businesses and jobs, improve public services, support a fairer society, and drive scientific discovery, positioning the UK as the forerunner of the next wave of innovation. As part of Mission One of the NDS - unlocking the value of data across the economy - DCMS is thinking about how we can support the development of

infrastructure that promotes the availability of data for research and development purposes. We will engage key experts, academics and other stakeholders to develop our thinking.

■ Social Media: Gambling

Jim Shannon:

[\[36628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to restrict social media sites promoting the use of online gambling.

Mr John Whittingdale:

All gambling advertising, wherever it appears, is subject to strict controls on content and placement. Gambling operators and their affiliates must abide by the advertising codes issued by the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) and the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP). Following work with the Gambling Commission, the industry has committed to make better use of advertising technology to target adverts away from children online and on social media. The sixth edition of the Gambling Industry Code for Socially Responsible advertising, which came into force this month, requires operators to ensure advertising is targeted only at those over 25 years old on social media and to age-gate operator YouTube channels and content.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 with the publication of a Call for Evidence which closed on 31 March. As part of the wide scope of this review we called for evidence on the potential benefits or harms of allowing licensed gambling operators to advertise, including via social media and affiliate marketing. The Call for Evidence received approximately 16,000 submissions from a broad range of interested organisations and individuals. We are considering the evidence carefully and intend to publish a White Paper outlining conclusions and next steps by the end of the year.

Following a call for evidence last year, the government has also been considering how online advertising is regulated through its Online Advertising Programme. We will be consulting on this issue later this year.

■ Sportsgrounds: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will review his policy of lifting covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021 at sporting venues including (a) football stadiums and (b) horse racing venues.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will review his policy of lifting covid-19 lockdown restrictions on 19 July 2021 in (a) theatres and (b) concert halls.

Nigel Huddleston:

On 19 July, England moved to Stage 4 of the Roadmap with many of the remaining legal restrictions being lifted. However, given the continued risks of the virus, the Government has been clear that this is not yet a return to normal and that people should remain cautious given the continued risks of the virus.

While there is no perfect time to relax existing restrictions, moving to step 4 means that relaxations coincide with the end of the school term, and will take place over the summer when both more activities can take place outdoors and pressures on the NHS are lower than in the autumn and winter months.

The Government may need to take measures to help manage the virus during periods of higher risk, such as winter, but will as far as possible prioritise strengthened guidance and seek to avoid imposing restrictions that have significant economic, social and health costs.

■ Swimming Pools**Rachael Maskell:**[\[35754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to (a) ensure and (b) improve public access to local (i) indoor and (ii) outdoor swimming pools.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise the importance of ensuring public access to indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy.

Government has provided a range of support for swimming pools during the pandemic. The £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund supported the reopening of local authority swimming pools throughout the country. In addition, Sport England have made 127 Covid support awards to the Swimming & Diving community (totalling £1,100,560), and a further 20 awards to multi-sport projects (totalling £211,171) where swimming and diving are expected to benefit.

Beyond Covid, Sport England have awarded £8,529,154 to swimming and diving projects since April 2017, and have provided £16,123,002 of funding to Swim England in the same period.

■ Tourism and Travel: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[34531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of recent rises in rates of covid-19 infection on the tourism and travel industry in summer 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise that COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on the tourism industry. We will keep gathering sector intelligence to monitor pandemic-related trends over the summer in order to support the sector's safe reopening and recovery.

In total, over £25bn has been provided during the pandemic to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors in the form of grants, loans and tax breaks. In May, we published the Tourism Recovery Plan to help the sector recover back to pre-pandemic levels and build back better for the future. The plan aims to recover domestic tourism to pre pandemic levels by 2022 and international tourism by 2023; both at least a year faster than independent forecasts predict.

■ Tourism: Coronavirus**Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[36613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the (a) inbound tourism and (B) the tourism economy in the UK.

Nigel Huddleston:

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on inbound tourism and the wider tourism industry. From last March, inbound flight arrivals were down 90% for over a year compared to 2019 levels, hotel occupancy far lower than normal, and the sector was closed for at least six of the last 12 months - more so in some parts of the country subject to local lockdowns last autumn.

We also know that tourism has been the sector most reliant on the government's unprecedented package of support measures. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was crucial in saving tourism jobs, which at its peak supported 87% of hospitality and leisure businesses. In total, at least £25 billion has been provided to the leisure, tourism and hospitality sector so far over the course of the pandemic.

In June, we published the Tourism Recovery Plan to help the sector recover back to pre-pandemic levels and build back better for the future. The plan aims to recover domestic tourism to pre pandemic levels by 2022 and international tourism by 2023; both at least a year faster than independent forecasts predict.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[36614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the inbound tourism industry as part of the UK's economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is taking a number of steps to support inbound tourism's recovery from the pandemic. In total, at least £25 billion has been provided to the leisure, tourism and hospitality sector so far over the course of the pandemic - saving jobs and businesses across the UK.

The Tourism Recovery plan sets out the Government's aim to recover domestic overnight trip volume and spend to 2019 levels by the end of 2022, and inbound visitor numbers and spend by the end of 2023 – both at least a year faster than independent forecasts predict. We will work with VisitBritain to welcome back international visitors as soon as it is safe to do so.

We are regularly engaging with travel industry bodies - such as UKInbound and the European Tour Operators Association - to monitor the pandemic's impact and to further support the sector's recovery.

■ Voluntary Organisations: Integrated Care Boards

Rachael Maskell:

[\[35755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he (a) has had and (b) plans to have with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the level of resources available to the Councils for Voluntary Services sector to shadow Integrated Care System boards.

Matt Warman:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has not held any discussions with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) about the level of resources needed by Councils for Voluntary Service to shadow Integrated Care System boards.

Each government department is responsible for considering how the resourcing needs for civil society partners are impacted by policy decisions. As DHSC is responsible for Integrated Care Systems policy, it is for DHSC to decide what, if any role there will be for civil society partners, and whether this requires additional resources.

As the department with overall responsibility for civil society, DCMS regularly brings together other government departments to discuss civil society, with the aim of ensuring that the views and needs of the sector are considered in the development of policy across government.

■ Voluntary Work

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) the NHS volunteer programme and (b) other national volunteering programmes do not conflict with or undermine programmes run by local organisations.

Matt Warman:

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) aims to empower local volunteering and ensure national efforts to encourage volunteering do not detract from locally-led responses.

DCMS is closely engaged with the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England & NHS Improvement on NHS volunteer programmes, including the national NHS Volunteer Responders programme. In the course of those discussions, we consider local volunteering mechanisms, and how best to ensure that national NHS volunteering works with those, and that NHS volunteers and recipients of NHS volunteer services can be referred to local organisations.

In recognition of the vital role that local organisations have played in the volunteer response to COVID-19, DCMS has commissioned research on local models of mobilising volunteers across England during the pandemic. The research aims to improve the evidence base of the various models of coordinating volunteers at a local level, including the ways in which local organisations collaborated with national volunteering programmes to support community volunteering.

DCMS continues to work closely with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector to assess the needs of the sector and how the government can best support it to continue its vital work. The Minister for Civil Society and DCMS officials are engaging regularly with civil society stakeholders to highlight and address key issues for the sector in responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

EDUCATION

■ Apprentices

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[35623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to encourage employers to take on more apprentices.

Gillian Keegan:

In the 2021-22 financial year, funding available for investment in apprenticeships in England will remain around £2.5 billion - double that spent in 2010-11 financial year, supporting employers of all sizes to offer apprenticeships.

We are supporting employers to offer new apprenticeship opportunities by offering a higher incentive payment of £3,000 for every new apprentice hired between 1 April and 30 September 2021 as part of the government's Plan for Jobs. We have seen over 71,000 incentive payments claimed by employers so far (as of 8 June).

We continue to improve apprenticeships by making them more flexible and making it easier for employers to make full use of their levy funds. We are developing and encouraging innovative apprenticeships training models, such as the front-loading of off-the-job training and accelerated apprenticeships. These models support apprentices to be effective in their role and accelerate their progression and completion. We will also shortly launch a £7 million fund to help employers set up and expand flexi-job apprenticeship schemes, enabling people to work across multiple projects with different employers and benefit from the high-quality long-term training that an apprenticeship provides.

Levy-paying employers can already transfer up to 25% of their annual funds to support apprenticeships in their supply chains or to meet local skills needs. In August 2021, we will make the transfer of levy funds to small and medium-sized enterprises easier by launching an online matching service, whereby levy payers will be able to pledge funds for transfer and create more apprenticeship opportunities in their supply chain, sector or region.

■ Assessments: Equality

Helen Hayes:

[35798]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what discussions his Department is having with Ofqual on the impact of unconscious bias on teacher determined exam grades for (a) GCSE, (b) A-Level and (c) BTEC students.

Nick Gibb:

This Government is committed to maximising fairness for all pupils receiving qualifications this summer, no matter their background.

Following discussions with Ofqual, guidance was issued to centres on making objective judgements to support teachers in awarding GCSE, A level, BTEC and vocational and technical qualifications in 2021. It was designed to help teachers make their judgements as objectively as possible, providing guidance around basing decisions on evidence, being aware of unconscious effects on objectivity, using other evidence to identify possible bias and reviewing judgements with others. Following the steps outlined in Ofqual's guidance helps a school or college assure itself that it has maximised objectivity and avoided bias in its judgments.

Awarding organisations have also produced their own guidance on assessing grades in 2021, including information about the evidence schools and colleges need to use to produce their teacher assessed grade and what the expectations are for different grades.

All centres are required to establish how they will ensure objectivity in their centre policies which will be reviewed by exam boards. Schools, colleges, exam boards and awarding organisations will also undertake rigorous internal and external quality assurance checks to help identify any errors or instances of malpractice in their grading, maximising fairness for all pupils this summer.

Finally, an appeals system has been put in place as a safety net to correct any errors that were not identified earlier in the grading process. Pupils can, therefore, have confidence in the grades awarded this summer.

■ Children: Day Care

Tulip Siddiq:

[36711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support nurseries and other childcare providers to cope with the (a) practical and (b) financial effects of high levels of staff self-isolation during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

We have provided unprecedented support to early years providers during the COVID-19 outbreak and settings have also had access to a range of business support packages, including the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. As long as the staff in the nursery schools affected meet the criteria for the scheme, then early years providers are still able to furlough their staff while that scheme remains in operation, for example, if settings have to close temporarily to manage local effects of COVID-19, such as infections. Findings from the Childcare and Early Years Provider and Coronavirus survey have shown that in November/December 2020, 74% of group-based providers have made use of the Furlough Scheme at any point. Findings of this survey can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-coronavirus-covid-19-wave-3>.

Eligible nurseries may also have qualified for a Business Rates discount to help reduce the costs of their business rates bills during the COVID-19 outbreak. Eligible Nurseries could get 100% off in the first 3 months of the 2021-22 tax year with 66% off for the rest of the 2021-22 tax year which may help providers who have had a reduced income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Additionally, eligible nurseries have been able to access recovery loans to help with access to loans and other types of finance, so that they can recover after the outbreak and transition period.

We liaise regularly with local authorities, and they have not reported to us a significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place, either during this term or at any time since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020. Where parents have been unable to temporarily secure a childcare place, for example due to their usual setting being temporarily closed due to COVID-19, this has been able to be quickly resolved locally and local authorities are not reporting significant sufficiency of supply issues.

■ Children: Reading**Gill Furniss:****[35825]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made on the number of children who read for recreation on a daily basis.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is committed to continuing to raise literacy standards – ensuring all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can read fluently and with understanding. One of the overarching aims of the National Curriculum is to ensure that all pupils develop the habit of reading widely and often, for both pleasure and information.

Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 disruption on the attainment and progress of all students is a key research priority for the Government, and we have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to provide a baseline assessment of catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England and will

monitor progress over the course of the year. The research will be based on existing assessments and help us target support across the system. The Department's research on lost education has produced interim findings based on reading and maths assessments taken in the autumn and spring terms of the 2020/21 academic year. Interim findings show that between March 2020 and Spring 2021, pupils on average made more progress than expected in periods where they were in the classroom, but less progress than expected when there were restrictions on in-person teaching. The Department is committed to publishing its full findings by October 2021.

COVID-19 Reading Habits^[1]

The July 2020 National Literacy Trust (NLT) report into 'Children and young people's reading in 2020 before and during the COVID-19 lockdown' reviewed reading practices of 4,141 pupils between May and early June 2020. Compared to the NLT's pre-lockdown findings, nearly 17% more of children surveyed reported they are enjoying reading.

This report found that the lockdown provided many children 'the opportunity to discover... themselves as readers', and that this was due to children having more time available to read and an increase in online access to stories. Reading was also important for mental health and wellbeing, with 3 in 5 children reporting that reading helps 'make them feel better'. However, a lack of a suitable reading environment in the home and reduced support from schools has negatively impacted some children's ability to read, and their motivation to read for enjoyment.

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) data from 2016 has also reviewed the number of primary aged pupils in England who enjoy reading:

- 2016 PIRLS data for England showed that 83% of pupils liked reading a lot or somewhat compared to 17% of those who did not like reading.
- In addition, the 2016 PIRLS data demonstrated that 53% of England's pupils report very high confidence in reading. This is above the international median of 45%.

PIRLS is an assessment of the reading abilities of primary aged pupils across the world. The results of the next study, PIRLS 2021, will be published in late 2022.

[1] https://cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/National_Literacy_Trust_-_Reading_practices_under_lockdown_report_-_FINAL.pdf.

■ Children: York

Rachael Maskell:

[35763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have had to isolate in York since the lifting of restrictions on 21 June 2021.

Rachael Maskell:

[35764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the (a) average and (b) total number of missed school days by children as a result of the covid-19 outbreak in York since 21 June 2021.

Nick Gibb:

National data on the attendance of pupils during the COVID-19 outbreak is published weekly at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>. Data at local authority level for the period since 21 June 2021 is scheduled to be published on 27 July. It is not possible to determine the number of children that have had to isolate since 21 June 2021, as individual child level data is not available.

■ Condition Improvement Fund

Daisy Cooper:

[34611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps the Government is taking to support specialist post-16 institutions to access the Condition Improvement Fund.

Nick Gibb:

The Department allocates condition funding each year to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of their estates. We have allocated £11.3 billion in condition funding since 2015, including £1.8 billion committed in the financial year 2021/22.

Schools and other eligible institutions access funding through different routes depending on their size and type. The per pupil amount of funding available is calculated using the same funding formula.

Local authorities, larger multi-academy trusts and large voluntary-aided (VA) school bodies receive an annual School Condition Allocation (SCA) to invest in capital maintenance and upgrades across the schools for which they are responsible.

Smaller multi-academy, or stand-alone trusts, VA schools not part of large VA school bodies, and sixth form colleges are instead able to bid to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) each year.

Special post-16 institutions (SPIs), with students funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, are eligible for condition funding, which they access through an annual SCA, rather than bidding to the CIF.

All schools, including eligible SPIs, also receive funding to spend on their capital priorities through an annual Devolved Formula Capital allocation.

Capital allocations are published on GOV.UK.

■ Curriculum: Sign Language**Daisy Cooper:** [\[36770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing students to study British Sign Language as a language option in Key Stage 3.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has recognised British Sign Language (BSL) as a language since 2003. BSL is not a compulsory part of the National Curriculum, although schools are free to offer BSL as part of their wider school curriculum or as part of a varied programme of extra-curricular activities. Some schools may also offer accredited BSL qualifications to support pupils' achievements in the language.

The Department is aiming to introduce a GCSE in BSL as soon as possible, provided it meets the rigorous requirements that apply to all GCSEs. Officials are currently working closely with subject experts and Ofqual to develop draft subject content. The Department plans to consult publicly in due course. Officials are also engaging with Ofqual to ensure the subject content can be assessed appropriately and will be working with stakeholders to ensure that a wide range of views is reflected.

■ Department of Education: Email**Florence Eshalomi:** [\[35978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he or any of the Ministers of his Department use personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Nick Gibb:

I refer the hon. Member for Vauxhall to the answer I gave on 5 July 2021 to Questions [23184](#) and [23186](#).

■ Education: Greater London**Helen Hayes:** [\[35795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the level of funding provided to schools in (a) Lambeth, (b) Southwark and (c) London for education catch-up in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Hayes: [\[35796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of catch up funding provided per pupil in (a) Lambeth, (b) Southwark and (c) London since that funding has been available.

Nick Gibb:

Allocations for the COVID-19 catch up premium for the academic year 2020-21 for Lambeth, Southwark and all other local authorities in London and England, including the per pupil rates, are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium-provisional-allocations>.

■ Educational Institutions: Coronavirus

Paul Maynard:

[34478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to review the self-isolation requirements in educational settings before the new school year.

Nick Gibb:

In line with Step 4 of the roadmap, nurseries, schools, and colleges are no longer routinely required to undertake contact tracing for pupils and staff. Instead, those who test positive will be subject to the normal test and trace process, which will identify close contacts.

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

18 year-olds will be treated in the same way as children up until four months after their 18th birthday to allow them the opportunity to get fully vaccinated, at which point they will be subject to the same rules as adults. Therefore, if they choose not to get vaccinated, they will need to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Nurseries, schools, and colleges will continue to have a role in working with health protection teams in the case of a local outbreak. If there is a COVID-19 outbreak or if central Government offers the area an enhanced response package, a director of public health might advise a nursery, school or college to temporarily reintroduce some control measures.

■ Educational Institutions: Putney

Fleur Anderson:

[36793]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether any of his Ministers plan to visit (a) schools, (b) nurseries or (c) colleges in the Putney constituency in the next six months.

Nick Gibb:

Currently there are no plans for any ministers to visit schools, nurseries, or colleges in the Putney constituency in the next six months.

The Department is keen for providers to continue to focus on delivering education for children and young people.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it has been difficult for the Department to plan visits too far ahead. The Department will review visiting opportunities as COVID-19 restrictions are eased further.

■ Further Education: Finance

Daisy Cooper:

[\[36774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what catch-up funding will be made available to students in further education institutions beyond the 16 to 19 tuition fund.

Gillian Keegan:

On 24 February 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a further investment of £102 million to extend the 16 to 19 tuition fund into the 2021/22 academic year. On 2 June 2021 we announced a further £222 million to extend the 16 to 19 tuition fund for an additional two years until the 2023/24 academic year.

The fund will have a continued focus on targeting additional tuition at young people who need the most support. Eligibility for the 16 to 19 tuition fund in the 2021/22 academic year is being broadened to include economic disadvantage, in addition to low prior attainment. Including these students allows providers to offer tuition to all disadvantaged students who have been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, while still maintaining focus on low prior attainment.

To ensure that those with the least time left have the opportunity to progress, the government is also giving providers of 16 to 19 education the option to offer students in year 13, or equivalent, the opportunity to repeat up to one more year if they have been particularly severely affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. While we expect most students will continue to progress to a suitable destination (such as higher education or into employment), this option will ensure that those who have been most severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak have sufficient options to complete their education.

■ Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[35565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 28129 on Holiday Activities and Food Programme, what the evidential basis is of the four hours a day, four days a week, for four weeks aspiration for holiday provision; and whether periods of longer than 4:4:4 were monitored.

Vicky Ford:

Our holiday activities and food (HAF) programme guidance sets out our aim that children eligible for and in receipt of free school meals should be able to access free holiday clubs for the equivalent of at least 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, and 6 weeks a year. We have made it clear that local authorities and their providers will have flexibility in how they deliver this provision to best serve the needs of children and families in their area, for example, in considering how the programme can be most effectively delivered to older children.

We piloted the HAF programme in the summer holidays between 2018 and 2020 to build our knowledge. The 4 hours a day, 4 days a week, and 6 weeks a year model

referenced was part of the framework of standards established based on insight from providers. The approach enables local authorities across the country to offer good coverage, high quality, but flexible provision. We know that many local authorities are choosing to offer provision that goes beyond this.

Through our investment of up to £220 million this year, including £1,491,000 in Sunderland, we are supporting children and families across the country this summer. We are monitoring the scheme closely, and we have an independent evaluator in place to ensure we continue to learn what works well.

■ **Mathematics: Education**

Christian Wakeford:

[\[36811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help increase the number of students studying mathematics at (a) A Level and (b) degree level.

Nick Gibb:

Since 2014, mathematics has been the most popular subject for students to study at A level. The Government remains committed to increasing participation in post-16 mathematics. The Department has introduced reformed A levels which provide a better foundation to study mathematics at a higher level. The Department also funds the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme (AMSP) which supports schools and colleges to improve the effectiveness of level 3 mathematics teaching and increase participation, including by providing tailored support to schools and colleges in areas with low levels of progression. The AMSP also provides targeted support for students preparing to study mathematics at higher education.

■ **Mathematics: Higher Education**

Christian Wakeford:

[\[36812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy to increase the funding available for students taking pure mathematics at university.

Michelle Donelan:

In January 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, asked the Office for Students (OfS) to reform the Strategic Priorities Grant for academic year 2021/22. The OfS consulted on the Secretary of State for Education's proposals and has recently published its conclusions. The consultation responses were carefully analysed, and the issues raised were considered by both the OfS and the Secretary of State for Education in reaching their respective decisions about the allocation of the Strategic Priorities Grant in 2021/22.

Mathematics is in price group C2 of the Strategic Priorities Grant and therefore does not receive a high-cost subject funding top-up.

Funding for future years will be subject to the Spending Review.

■ National Tutoring Programme: Infrastructure and Projects Authority**Kate Green:**[\[35626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will set out the reasons for the Infrastructure and Projects Agency's red rating of delivery of the National Tutoring Programme in 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) was developed at speed to respond to a very immediate need to support pupils to catch-up on education lost because of restrictions to schools and colleges.

The NTP is an ambitious scheme that supports schools to access additional targeted support for those children and young people who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. In the longer term, we aim to stimulate a well-functioning and sustainable tutoring market, offering high quality tutoring across the country.

Since the programme launched in November 2020, over 240,000 pupils have enrolled on the NTP, and over 195,000 have now commenced tutoring. This is in addition to over 1,000 academic mentors that have been placed in our most disadvantaged schools to provide tuition to pupils that need the most help to catch up.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) undertook a full review of the NTP on 1 March 2021. Nine recommendations were made, including more dedicated resourcing with relevant skills, longer term planning and more direct engagement with the sector.

The IPA carried out a review focused on progress against the recommendations at the end of April 2021, and found that progress had been made. Based on these findings, the review team rated the programme Amber.

A further review is planned for August 2021, focusing on readiness for launch of the Core NTP programme in academic year 2021-22 and progress on the expansion of the programme through school-led tutoring.

■ National Tutoring Programme: Pay**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[35587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his Department's policy to continue to fund the core salary of academic mentors beyond 31 July 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) was developed at speed to respond to a very immediate need to support pupils to catch up on education lost because of restrictions to schools and colleges. The programme has deployed academic mentors to provide tailored support to schools, including subject specific work, revision lessons, and additional support available outside of schools. Since October 2020, academic mentors have provided significant support to young people to catch up on

lost education. The programme has reached over 60,000 pupils in the most disadvantaged schools through placement of academic mentors.

In year one of the programme, schools received funding to cover the core salary of academic mentors between October 2020 and 31 July 2021. Where mentors had made agreements with schools to continue delivery over the summer holidays, arrangements were made for them also to receive a payment to cover August 2021.

Next academic year, mentor contracts will run until the end of August as standard to bring consistency between mentors and others in the school community.

Applications are now open for individuals interested in becoming an academic mentor in the academic year 2021/22. Further information is available here:

<https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/ntp-academic-mentors/application-process> and here <https://tuitionhub.nationaltutoring.org.uk/NTP/s/ntp-academic-mentor-registration>.

■ Pre-school Education: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[35766]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional support he plans to provide for nursery schools closed since 21 June 2021 as a result of levels of covid-19 infection or self-isolation.

Vicky Ford:

The government wants to support nurseries, pre-schools and childminders during this uncertain time, which is why we have spent over £3.5 billion in each of the past 3 years on our early education entitlements, and have invested £44 million for the 2021/22 financial year, for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlement offers.

For the 2021/22 financial year, we have also increased the hourly funding rates for all local authorities by 8p an hour for the 2-year-old entitlement and, for the vast majority of areas, by 6p an hour for the 3-year-old and 4-year-old entitlement. This will pay for a rate increase that is higher than the costs that nurseries may face from the uplift to the national living wage in April. We have also increased the minimum funding floor, meaning no council can receive less than £4.44 per hour for the 3-year-old and 4-year-old entitlements.

As with other sectors, the COVID-19 outbreak has been an uncertain time for childcare providers. Our policy is to ensure that there are sufficient childcare places to meet demand from parents. Despite the level of uncertainty faced by providers over the COVID-19 outbreak, Ofsted data shows that as of 31 March 2021, the number of childcare places, offered by providers on the Early Years Register, has remained broadly stable since August 2015.

We have provided unprecedented support to early years providers during the COVID-19 outbreak, and settings have also had access to a range of business support packages, including the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. As long as the staff in the nursery schools affected meet the criteria for the scheme, early years

providers are still able to furlough their staff while that scheme remains in operation (for example, if settings have to close temporarily to manage local effects of COVID-19, such as infections).

Findings from the Childcare and Early Years Provider and Coronavirus survey have shown that, in November/December 2020, 74% of group-based providers have made use of the Furlough Scheme at any point. Findings of this survey can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-childcare-and-early-years-providers-and-coronavirus-covid-19-wave-3>.

Eligible nurseries may also have qualified for a business rates discount to help reduce the costs of their business rates bills during the COVID-19 outbreak. Eligible nurseries could get 100% off in the first 3 months of the 2021 to 2022 tax year, with 66% off for the rest of the 2021 to 2022 tax year which may help providers who have had a reduced income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Additionally, eligible nurseries have been able to access recovery loans to help with access to loans and other types of finance, so that they can recover after the COVID-19 outbreak and transition period.

We liaise regularly with local authorities, and they have not reported to us a significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place, either during this term or at any time since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020. Where parents have been unable to temporarily secure a childcare place (for example, due to their usual setting being temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak), this has been able to be quickly resolved locally, and local authorities are not reporting significant sufficiency of supply issues.

We continue to work with local authorities and the sector to ensure there is sufficient, safe and affordable childcare for those who need it most.

Tulip Siddiq: [36712]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the evidence for excluding early years staff from the list of key workers exempt from covid-19 self-isolation rules ahead of the changes proposed for 16 August 2021.

Vicky Ford:

A very limited number of named critical workers will be informed that they are considered to have a reasonable excuse to leave self-isolation to attend work if they are contacts. This scheme will only apply to workers who are fully vaccinated (defined as someone who is 14 days post-second dose) and is solely for the purpose of going to work. The education and childcare workforce are not included in this scheme.

Tulip Siddiq: [36713]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department plans to issue to early years providers on the covid-19 self-isolation rules that apply before the 16 August 2021 in the context that the requirement to keep school-aged children in self-contained bubbles will end at the beginning of the 2021 summer holidays.

Vicky Ford:

Firstly, I would like to offer my thanks to all early years providers for their support in the national effort to isolate, track and manage the spread of the virus.

Since 19 July 2021, we have not asked early years settings to keep children in consistent groups ('bubbles') or to reduce mixing between groups. Updated guidance was issued to the sector on 6 July which included a Frequently Asked Questions document and a process map explaining the changes to contact tracing and self-isolation.

Additionally, early years settings are no longer asked to undertake routine contact tracing as NHS Test and Trace are now taking a more active role in notifying close contacts.

Until 16 August, anyone identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case should continue to self-isolate. From 16 August, fully vaccinated individuals will not have to self-isolate at the point they are identified as a close contact of a positive case. This will also apply to anyone under 18 who is identified as a close contact.

■ Pupils: Absenteeism**Esther McVey:**[\[35614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July 2021 to Question 25811, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a statutory obligation on local authorities to (a) collate and (b) submit data on student absenteeism to central Government.

Esther McVey:[\[35616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July 2021 to Question 25811 on Pupils: Absenteeism, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a statutory obligation on local authorities to collate and submit data on student absenteeism to his Department.

Nick Gibb:

It is a statutory requirement that all schools, including independent schools, have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register.

As the responsibility for collating and maintaining the attendance register sits with schools, and it would not be possible for local authorities to perform that function without first getting the data from schools, the statutory requirement to collate and submit data on student absenteeism to the Department also sits with schools.

Local authorities are granted full access to student absenteeism data provided by schools to the Department via the school census for all schools in their geographical area and, for local authority maintained schools, are asked to check and validate the data before it is accepted by the Department.

■ Pupils: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[35765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will provide additional catch-up educational support for days missed at school as a result of the covid-19 outbreak since 21 June 2021.

Nick Gibb:

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has provided extensive support for schools and acted swiftly to help minimise the effect on pupils' education. Being in school is vital for pupils' education, wellbeing, and development, and the Department has kept schools open for as long as possible whilst managing the spread of COVID-19.

Since June 2020, the Department has announced more than £3 billion to support education recovery which will help in closing gaps that have emerged. This includes over £900 million that schools can use as they see best to support the children and young people who have been most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Government is committed to an ambitious, long term education recovery plan and the next stage will include a review of time spent in school and college, and the effect this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of the review will be set out later in the year to inform the Spending Review. The Department will also continue to consider what steps we need to take to support children and young people to catch up following our latest education recovery announcement on 2 June 2021.

■ Pupils: Safety**Damien Moore:**[\[36744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to strengthen safeguarding in schools.

Nick Gibb:

Amended statutory guidance for schools in respect of safeguarding, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE), was published on 6 July 2021, alongside revised departmental advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in school, and will come into force from 1 September 2021.

The guidance has been strengthened and updated following the consultation on proposed changes to KCSIE and departmental advice, as well as findings from the Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges. KCSIE now provides schools with even clearer guidance on how to deal with reports of sexual abuse, and to support teachers and other school staff to spot the signs of abuse and respond quickly, sensitively, and appropriately. The 'Reporting Abuse in Education' helpline has been extended until October to allow anyone to report a concern over sexual abuse in schools, make a referral, or receive advice. The Department will continue to consider what further changes are needed for KCSIE 2022, to ensure all schools and

colleges have the guidance to meet their statutory duties to safeguard children, following a further consultation later this year.

The Department will also be extending the pilot support and supervision programme for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in up to 500 further schools, and 10 further local authorities. The supervision pilot will test the impact and effectiveness of providing supervision to DSLs through these trials. The programme aims to strengthen support for DSLs and will help build the evidence base on what works. The Department is also committed to sharing lessons learned and good practice from these trials. Alongside creating an online DSL hub and considering how we give greater status to DSLs, my right hon. Friends, the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, have asked the Children's Commissioner to immediately start looking at how we reduce children's access to pornography and other harmful content.

■ **Schools: Coronavirus**

Helen Hayes:

[\[35797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional funding and resources his Department is making available to schools for measures to manage the spread of covid-19 in schools in the 2021-22 academic year.

Nick Gibb:

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, schools have continued to receive their core funding as normal. School budgets increased by £2.6 billion in financial year 2020/21, and will increase by a further £4.8 billion in 2021/22 and £7.1 billion in 2022/23, compared to 2019/20.

On top of existing budgets, the Department has provided additional funding to schools to cover the unavoidable costs and specific challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak, such as through the exceptional costs fund in the early stages of the outbreak. In addition, schools are benefitting from a substantial recovery package, worth over £3 billion in additional support, to tackle the impact of lost teaching time.

In line with Step 4 of the roadmap, the Government has relaxed the majority of COVID-19 restrictions. The Department's priority is for all nurseries and schools to deliver face to face, high quality education to all pupils. The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, mental and physical health.

Schools should continue to ensure good hygiene for everyone, maintain appropriate cleaning regimes, keep occupied spaces well ventilated and follow public health advice on testing, self-isolation and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.

■ **Schools: North West**

Damien Moore:

[\[36739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to increase school funding in the north-west of England.

Nick Gibb:

Education funding is a priority for the Government. In the 2019 Spending Round, we committed to significant additional investment in schools of £2.6 billion in financial year 2020/21, £4.8 billion in 2021/22 and £7.1 billion in 2022/23, compared to 2019/20.

The Department has recently announced schools funding for the final year of this three year settlement. In financial year 2022/23, the schools national funding formula (NFF) is increasing by 3.2 per cent overall, and by 2.8 per cent per pupil. The NFF will distribute this funding based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics. Schools in the North-West will see a higher than average increase of 3.4 per cent in funding overall next year, and per pupil funding will increase by 2.8 per cent.

Within the North-West, Blackpool and Oldham are also benefitting from additional funding through the Opportunity Areas programme, which is working to improve education outcomes and social mobility in 12 of the most deprived areas of England. The Department has recently been able to extend this programme for another year, through to the end of August 2022, and will be providing an additional £18 million across all 12 areas.

Schools: Ventilation**Kate Green:****[35627]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answers of 14 July 2021 to Questions 30351 and 30352 on ventilation in schools and colleges, what budget has been made available for enforcement activities in respect of ventilation in each of the last 10 years in (a) schools and (b) colleges; what enforcement action has been taken in respect of ventilation in each of the last 10 years in (a) schools and (b) colleges; and when he last met school or college leaders to discuss ventilation.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not enforce action on ventilation in schools and colleges, but does provide guidance through 'BB 101: Guidelines on ventilation, thermal comfort, and indoor air quality in schools', which can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-bulletin-101-ventilation-for-school-buildings>. Good estate management for schools provides further guidance on managing school buildings effectively, further information can be found via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>.

The Department has provided guidance on COVID-19 control measures, including ventilation, which is informed by the latest scientific evidence in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

The guidance for schools can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak> and the guidance for further education colleges can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-further-education-provision>.

Department officials and Ministers regularly meet with a wide range of stakeholder organisations to discuss the Government's COVID-19 response, including on the use of public health measures in schools and colleges, such as ventilation.

The Department allocates condition funding each year to schools and those responsible for school buildings to maintain and improve the condition of the school estate, including improving ventilation where that is their priority. This includes funding for 16 to 19 academies and sixth form colleges.

The Department has allocated £11.3 billion in condition funding since 2015, including £1.8 billion in the current financial year. Capital allocations for financial year 2021/22, how funding is allocated, and links to previous years' allocations are available on GOV.UK.

■ Social Services: Children

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[35981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing annual spending on children's services ahead of the next Spending Review.

Vicky Ford:

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, and his department discuss a range of issues, including children's services funding with my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as well as the HM Treasury and other government departments on a regular basis.

■ Special Educational Needs

Henry Smith:

[\[35600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to support local authorities to meet their statutory targets for Education, Health and Care plan assessment waiting times.

Vicky Ford:

The special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice makes clear that local authorities must give their decision in response to any request for an education, health and care needs assessment within a maximum of 6 weeks from when the request was received or the point at which a child or young person was brought to the local authority's attention.

We have been using data to provide challenge and support to those local authorities where there are long-standing delays. Additionally, because of circumstances relating to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are carrying out monthly surveys of local authority performance. Our teams of SEND Advisers, and colleagues in NHS England, are working with local authorities to help improve performance. Each year, we also deliver a training programme to local authorities, health, and social care staff on their statutory duties for education, health and care plans and reviews, and we have continued to do this on a virtual basis.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) re-started their revisit programme to areas that received a Written Statement of Action in May, with the full inspection programme re-starting in June. We are continuing to provide support and challenge to individual local authorities with a Written Statement of Action. We have commissioned the CQC and Ofsted, with the support of the Department of Health and Social Care, to develop a new area SEND inspection framework to launch after the existing cycle has finished.

Furthermore, we are providing over £42 million in the 2021/22 financial year to continue funding projects to support children with SEND. This investment will ensure that specialist organisations around the country can continue to help strengthen local area performance, support families, and provide practical support to schools and colleges.

■ Students: Assessments

Helen Hayes:

[35799]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support students who do not receive the grades that they expected in August 2021, in particular students who do not meet their offers for college, university and apprenticeships.

Nick Gibb:

Students should feel confident in their grades this year. Teachers have been able to choose from a range of evidence and students have only been assessed on what they have been taught.

Students should also have been able to see the evidence their teacher planned to submit for them, allowing any errors or circumstances relating to particular pieces of evidence to be taken into account in advance of grade submission.

Teachers have also received support and guidance on the assessment process this year, and examination boards have shared grade descriptors. The process has been subject to multiple internal and external quality assurance checks. This should allow students to feel assured that the process has been applied as fairly and consistently as possible.

Teacher assessed grade results will be issued on the 10 August for A levels and 12 August for GCSEs. While we hope all students receive the grades they need to progress, any student who does feel disappointed with their results will have options open to them.

The Department encourages students to talk to their school or college, and to their prospective college, university, or employer to discuss available options. The National Careers Service will also be running an examination results helpline.

Students who want to improve on their teacher assessed grade may want to consider entering autumn examinations. Examination boards will offer autumn examinations in

all GCSE and A level subjects, and in mathematics and science AS level subjects. These examinations will take place over October, November and December.

There will also be an appeals system, which can be used in exceptional circumstances to correct oversights and errors not identified during earlier parts of the process. An appeal will only be successful if either an error is found, or the grade awarded or the selection of evidence is found to be unreasonable. Students' grades could go up, down or stay the same on appeal, therefore students should carefully consider whether appealing is the right course of action for them.

With regard to examinations in 2022, we recognise that pupils taking examinations next year have faced significant disruption to their education. The Department has launched a joint consultation with Ofqual to seek views on proposed changes to examinations in summer 2022, in light of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on pupils entering these qualifications.

■ Supply Teachers

Daisy Cooper:

[\[36771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many supply teachers have taken maintained schools to Employment Tribunal for breach of Agency Workers Regulations in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The requested information is not held by the Department. The Department does not have an employer-employee relationship with the school workforce and does not collect information on employment tribunal cases.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are responsible for the Agency Worker Regulations. An individual claiming an employer is in breach of those regulations may take their employer to an employment tribunal.

■ Training: Environment Protection

Catherine West:

[\[35816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to introduce a fully funded re-training programme to support people to re-train in new jobs in response to the transition to a green economy.

Gillian Keegan:

In November 2020, the government established the Green Jobs Taskforce, comprising individuals from industry, academia, unions and the education and skills sector. It was tasked with assembling evidence on the skills needed in the green economy and setting out independent recommendations for how government, industry and a wide range of stakeholders might work together to meet the green skills challenge and grasp the opportunities presented by the transition to net zero.

The taskforce's final report was published on 14 July. We will consider its recommendations carefully ahead of setting out, later in the year, our Net Zero Strategy.

In England, the reforms to the skills system set out in the recently published Skills for Jobs white paper provide the foundation on which we can build. This programme of reform, which places employers at the centre of our technical education system, includes the introduction of new T Levels, flexible apprenticeships, Skills Bootcamps and occupational traineeships. Earlier in the year, we marked a major milestone in the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, with the rollout of almost 400 qualifications which are now available and fully funded for any adult who has not already achieved a level 3 (A level equivalent) qualification. We will ensure that these programmes include supporting more people to get the skills they need to move into green jobs and consider where we might need to go further or faster to fill identified skills gaps.

We are already making progress. The Skills Bootcamps will, from July this year, support flexible training in key green sectors such as construction and nuclear. A Green Apprenticeship Advisory Panel is identifying existing apprenticeships that best support green career pathways and our Free Courses for Jobs offer is supporting more adults to study fully funded qualifications in subject areas crucial for green jobs, such as construction, forestry and engineering. The new Emerging Skills Electrification Project will foresight cutting-edge skills in the battery/electrification sector, develop short, modular content to meet the needs of employers and upskill the teaching workforce.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Air Pollution

Jane Hunt:

[36808]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of introducing a 24 hour (a) mean or (b) exceedance level for fine particulate matter 2.5.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises that short-term exposure to elevated levels of PM2.5 can impact health, particularly for vulnerable groups. This is why we provide alerts and advice during air pollution episodes to ensure people can access the information and health advice they need in order to minimise impacts. We are also taking action to increase public awareness about air pollution, including through an expanded £8 million funding pot which will be made available to local authorities through the [Air Quality Grant scheme](#).

Under the Environment Bill, the Government will have a duty to bring forward a target for PM2.5 by October 2022. In setting our air quality targets, we have sought advice from the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) on whether the priority aim should be long-term exposure rather than short-term. COMEAP

advised that a focus on long-term average concentrations of PM2.5 is most appropriate to deliver public health benefits. This advice has been published and can be accessed via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fine-particulate-air-pollution-pm25-setting-targets>.

The two air quality targets that we plan to set will focus on reducing the long-term exposure to PM2.5 and its associated health impacts, actions taken to achieve these targets will contribute to reducing average daily concentrations of PM2.5.

■ Air Pollution: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[35892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the effect of air quality on (a) death and (b) infection from covid-19; and when such discussions occurred.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra continues to hold extensive discussions with the Department for Health and Social Care on the relationship between air quality and health. These have included the specific relationship between air quality and covid-19 transmission, infections and deaths.

In response to Defra's call for evidence on COVID-19 and air quality (April 2020 and published in June 2020), the scientific community and appointed experts from Defra and Public Health England (PHE) considered the possible link between air quality and COVID-19 infection. They concluded that there was no clear empirical evidence of a link at that stage:

[2007010844 Estimation of Changes in Air Pollution During COVID-19 outbreak in the UK.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

Officials and appointed experts from Defra, PHE and the Office for National Statistics delivered a project to describe the relationship between air pollution exposure and COVID-19 deaths. The results and methodology were shared with the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), and a summary of the findings were published in August 2020 at the following URL:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ons-air-pollution-and-covid-19-mortality-rates-in-england-6-august-2020>

The methodology used in this analysis project was also published at the following URL:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/methodologies/coronaviruscovid19relatedmortalityratesandtheeffectsofairpollutioninengland>

The Departments continue to actively engage on a regular basis.

■ Air Pollution: Greater London**Fleur Anderson:****[35912]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of air quality in (a) London and (b) Putney constituency.

Rebecca Pow:

The Mayor of London is responsible for air quality in the capital and has reserve powers under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 to reflect this.

As part of these responsibilities the Mayor of London carries out monitoring of air quality in London. Local authorities are required to review and assess local air quality and in London they report their data to the Mayor.

The [London Air Quality Network](#) provides data on air quality in London accessible to the public.

Air pollution has reduced significantly since 2010 – emissions of nitrogen oxides are at their lowest level since records began. We are continuing to deliver our ambitious plans to improve air quality. To tackle local nitrogen dioxide exceedances, we are providing £880 million to help local authorities develop and implement local air quality plans and to support those impacted by these plans. Our Clean Air Strategy set out an ambitious programme of action to reduce air pollution from a wide range of sources. Our Environment Bill delivers key parts of this Strategy and makes a clear commitment to set a legally binding target to reduce fine particulate matter and enables local authorities to take more effective action to tackle air pollution in their areas.

■ Amazon: Consumer Goods**Daisy Cooper:****[34595]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answers of 6 July 2021 to Question 23303 and 2 July 2021 to Question 21310, on what date Ministers met with Amazon to discuss measures to stop Amazon destroying usable stock; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy raised the media reports of stock destruction during a call with Amazon on 24 June during which Amazon outlined their seven-point plan for dealing with unsold goods to ensure they are not sent to landfill.

Our position on this important issue was set out in our previous responses. We have nothing further to add at this stage.

■ Animal Products: Imports

Luke Pollard:

[\[36762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings he has had with representatives of organisations (a) in favour of and (b) opposed to the Government's proposed ban on trophy hunting in the last 24 months.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government made a manifesto commitment to ban the import of hunting trophies from endangered animals, and Ministers and officials have engaged with a range of stakeholders throughout policy development on this issue. This, together with the outcomes of the recent consultation and call for evidence, will inform our next steps. Our approach on hunting trophies will be comprehensive, robust and effective and will deliver the change we promised to help protect thousands of species worldwide. We will set out our plans soon.

■ Animal Welfare

Tim Farron:

[\[36604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure animal welfare legislation is enforced in response to the reduction in the RSPCA's animal welfare inspectorate.

Victoria Prentis:

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act), local authorities, the Animal & Plant Health Agency and the police all have powers to investigate allegations of animal cruelty or poor welfare (including power of entry to inspect premises).

Under the 2006 Act, anyone is able to take forward a prosecution, and it is on this basis that the RSPCA has been enforcing animal welfare legislation in this country. The RSPCA currently successfully prosecutes 800 to 1,000 people each year.

The Government recognises the valuable work the RSPCA does to improve the welfare of animals. Defra remains committed to continuing its engagement with the RSPCA, and other organisations involved in enforcement activities, so that our high animal welfare standards are maintained and offenders are subject to appropriate penalties.

■ Animal Welfare: Voluntary Organisations

Tim Farron:

[\[36605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ensure that animal rescue centres are properly licensed.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government continues to take positive action to protect and improve the welfare of animals.

The recently published Action Plan for Animal Welfare demonstrates our commitment to a brighter future for animals both at home and abroad. Our reform programme includes pursuing the licensing of animal sanctuaries and rescue and rehoming centres including for cats, dogs and horses. Defra has been engaging with rescue and rehoming organisations to understand their views and the possible impacts of regulating the sector. Any proposals to bring forward licensing regulations will be subject to a consultation .

■ Animals: Euthanasia

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[35793\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that injured animals are not made to travel unnecessarily far journeys in order to be euthanized.

Victoria Prentis:

When animals are transported, their transportation must comply fully with legal requirements aimed at protecting their welfare. All animals must be fit for the intended journey. Veterinary advice should be sought prior to transport where there is any doubt about an animal's fitness to travel. It is an offence to transport animals in a way that will cause injury or unnecessary suffering.

Local authorities carry out routine welfare checks on animals and their means of transport and will take appropriate enforcement measures up to and including prosecution if required, where the appropriate standards are not met.

Earlier this year, the Government consulted on improvements to animal welfare during transport. We will shortly publish the response to the consultation which will outline how we will be seeking to improve standards of animal welfare in transport.

■ Cats: Diseases

Taiwo Owatemi:

[\[35905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) tackle the recent rise in cases of feline pancytopenia and (b) discover the source of that outbreak.

Victoria Prentis:

Feline pancytopenia is an illness which causes a deficiency in blood cells and often, sadly, is fatal to cats. There has recently been a spike in cases in the UK, 521 as of 26/07/2021.

Defra and its delivery body, the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA), the Food Standards Agency (FSA), Food Safety Scotland (FSS) and other government departments across all four nations are working with local authorities and the pet food supply chain to identify the cause of the rise.

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) alerted Defra, APHA and FSA of an emerging issue at the end of June 2021. The RVC followed with a [call to vets for information](#) to identify further cases and collect information on possible causes.

Investigations have included the possibility of a link with specific cat food products and a precautionary product recall was undertaken by Fold Hill Foods Limited; FSA-PRIN-36-2021 was published on 15/06/2021 and an updated PRIN was issued on 17/06/2021. The cat food products subject to the product recall were not exported outside the UK although as a precaution, officials in Ireland and the EU were informed.

Investigations continue and other causes for the increase still cannot yet be excluded. However, initial findings have identified a number of mycotoxins in the recalled batches of feed and the FSA's current risk assessment is that mycotoxins found in the recalled cat food pose a feed safety risk. Evidence to confirm whether the mycotoxins found have caused this rise in cases of feline pancytopenia is being considered. Additionally, Defra and APHA are currently undertaking toxicological screening of a number of the affected cats, the results of which will be known in the coming weeks.

■ **Clean Air Zones: Bradford**

Philip Davies:

[35575]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reasons he imposed a charging clean air zone in Bradford.

Rebecca Pow:

Air pollution is a major public health risk and is a particular threat to vulnerable groups including the elderly and those with chronic respiratory and heart diseases. The mortality burden of the air pollution mixture based on both PM_{2.5} and NO₂ in the UK is an effect equivalent to 28,000 to 36,000 deaths (Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants, 2018).

Under the 2017 UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations and its further Supplement in 2018, 61 local authorities were directed to develop plans for delivering NO₂ compliance in the shortest possible time. Bradford was identified in the 2018 supplement as having roads exceeding legal levels for NO₂, and since then has been working on a local plan to identify and implement measures to address these exceedances in the shortest possible time to safeguard public health.

As the 2017 plan sets out, it is for local authorities to determine what the appropriate solution is for tackling NO₂ concentrations, reflecting the highly localised nature of the problem. In some cases, local authorities will determine that a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is the intervention required. However, given the potential impacts on individuals and businesses, when considering between equally effective alternatives to deliver compliance, Government has been consistently clear that if a local authority can identify measures other than charging zones that are at least as effective at reducing NO₂ to legal levels but with less of an impact, those measures should be

preferred. Any alternative will need to deliver compliance as quickly as a charging CAZ if it is to be preferred for inclusion in the plans which local authorities develop.

Having gone through a detailed business case development process following guidance provided by the Government's Joint Air Quality Unit, Bradford has identified that a Class C Clean Air Zone is needed in order to deliver the legal obligation to tackle NO₂ exceedances in the shortest possible time. Government considered the business case submitted by Bradford earlier this year and has accepted Bradford's evidence that a class C CAZ is required. As part of this approvals process, the business case and supporting evidence were considered by an independent technical panel established to review the evidence submitted by local authorities to support their proposals. The Government is now working with Bradford on the implementation of the CAZ and has also provided Bradford with £31 million from the Clean Air Fund to help local businesses and individuals adapt to the CAZ, including grants to help upgrade vehicles.

■ Climate Change and Ecology

Luke Pollard:

[\[36765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has declared a climate and ecological emergency.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK has adopted some of the most ambitious climate change and environment policies and commitments in the world.

Our Nationally Determined Contribution to cut emissions by 78% by 2035 is the most ambitious in the world. We became the first major economy to set a net zero target in law in 2019. We have doubled our International Climate Finance, and are investing nearly a third of it in nature-based solutions to climate change. We are leading coalitions of ambitious countries to protect at least 30% of the world's land and water by 2030, to redirect land use subsidies globally to support sustainability and renewal, and to breaking the link between commodity production and illegal deforestation.

Among numerous world-first interventions, the Environment Bill is being amended to create a duty to set a historic target on species abundance for 2030, aiming to halt the decline in nature.

■ Compost: Plastics

Ruth Jones:

[\[35889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of compostable plastics on reducing the plastic contamination of (a) soil and (b) the sea.

Ruth Jones:

[\[35890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will further explore the feasibility of developing (a) compostable plastics and (b) other

innovative and sustainable methods of waste disposal to reduce the amount of non-biodegradable conventional single-use flexible plastic produced.

Rebecca Pow:

Ideally we want to tackle litter of all kinds, including plastics, to stop them from being released in the natural environment in the first place. Furthermore, when littered in the open environment, compostable plastics will typically behave similarly to conventional plastics. Indeed, a plastic product that is designed to degrade or disintegrate more rapidly may accelerate the production of microplastic fragments. This is because the existing standard that applies to industrial composting, BS EN 13432, is only effective if the compostable plastic is collected and sent to an appropriate treatment facility.

Therefore, until the appropriate infrastructure is in place across the country to accept compostable plastics, the government's preference is that they are used in closed loop systems where no reusable or recyclable options are available; and with appropriate collection and disposal arrangements in place. We recommend that businesses consult available guidance and evidence summaries on this to help assess if this may be the case for their intended purpose. In accordance with the waste hierarchy, our current preference remains that most plastics are reusable or recyclable.

As set out in our response to the call for evidence on Standards for bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastics, published in April 2021, we want to ensure that innovation in the plastics industry continues but it is vital to ensure that new materials really are more sustainable than conventional plastics and other alternatives. As already highlighted, concerns persist that plastics which are claimed to be biodegradable, if littered or otherwise released into the environment in an uncontrolled way, may not degrade quickly or even at all.

The Government has invested nearly £100 million into research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. £20 million was set aside through the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund, the last funding competition of which opened in June 2020. The Resource Action Fund included £10 million specifically to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter. The Government has also announced £60 million of funding through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150 million investment from industry, towards the development of smart, sustainable plastic packaging (SSPP), which will aim to make the UK a world leader in sustainable packaging for consumer products. Two SSPP funding opportunities have been open for bids in 2021: the SSPP Demonstrator Round 2 and the SSPP business-led research and development competition.

Additionally, the UK Research and Innovation Industrial Strategy Challenge funded by the Government has recently invested £20 million into four plastic reprocessing facilities in the UK to support the development of new technologies to recycle plastic waste. These projects will increase domestic reprocessing capacity. Three of these projects include the development of chemical recycling plants which turn plastic

waste back into oil which can be used to replace virgin oil for use in new plastic products.

■ **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Email**

Florence Eshalomi:

[35979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he or any of the Ministers in his Department use personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Victoria Prentis:

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.

■ **Fishing Vessels: Monitoring**

Ruth Edwards:

[34627]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department is taking to mandate the use of Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (I-VMS) for fishing vessels under 12 metres.

Victoria Prentis:

Control and enforcement is a devolved matter. Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive continue to work together to share information and ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement across UK waters.

The requirement to have a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) for all vessels under 12 metres when fishing in English waters, irrespective of nationality, will ultimately be mandated by a Statutory Instrument and amendments to the licence conditions for those fishing vessels.

This work is progressing, and following an initial public consultation in 2018, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) recently undertook a series of engagement sessions and an industry survey to gain further feedback. This feedback will be used to inform planned discussions about the specification requirements with companies that may supply the required VMS devices.

The MMO plans to conduct more sessions with industry over the summer and autumn and hopes to be able to begin roll-out of VMS devices to the under 12 metre fleet following this engagement.

Olivia Blake:

[\[35962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish a strategy on the roll out of fleet-wide remote electronic monitoring of fishing vessels.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra ran a call for evidence on the use of REM in English fisheries last autumn and published the responses on 7 May. The call for evidence indicated that there are differing views on the use of REM. Defra will engage with stakeholders further to consider how to take forward a future policy.

The Government has been clear that we see the benefits of expanding the use of remote electronic monitoring (REM), but we must develop the right policy for our industry and the marine environment.

Decisions on timing and coverage will be taken as part of wider policy development, on which we will consult in due course.

Enforcement and scientific monitoring are devolved matters and remote electronic monitoring is therefore a devolved competence. This information relates to England only.

■ **Flood Control: Urban Areas**

Catherine West:

[\[36715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of flood defences in inner cities.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government's new six-year flood defence programme will invest £5.2 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes between now and 2027, and will better protect 336,000 properties from flooding and coastal erosion. This will benefit urban areas as well as coastal and rural communities. Climate change projections are built into the design of new flood defences to make sure they are fit for the future and offer the appropriate level of protection to communities.

Surface water is one of the sources of flooding in urban areas and the Government is taking action to tackle this risk which is increasing due to climate change and population growth. The Government published a surface water management action plan in 2018 with 22 actions and we will soon publish an update on this work.

We have already changed our flood defence partnership funding rules to enable more surface water schemes and launched a £200 million innovation fund which includes actions to support surface water flood risk actions. We are putting water company Drainage and Wastewater Plans on a statutory footing through the Environment Bill, to ensure drainage and sewerage systems are resilient to withstand the current and future pressures on them. Lead Local Flood Authorities (county and unitary authorities) have the leadership role on surface water flood risk management.

■ Food: Consumption

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[35553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote the consumption of more (a) local and (b) seasonal produce in England.

Victoria Prentis:

We are committed to promoting healthy and sustainable diets, and the consumption of more locally grown and seasonal produce.

Using the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) and Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services (GBSF) we encourage procurers to consider qualities such as organic, UK seasonally and locally sourced food. As we look to refresh the GBSF, we will consult on the balance our guidance should strike between these areas and nutritional aims. We are committed to introducing a revised GBSF by Summer 2022.

Additionally, on 15 July, Henry Dimbleby published the second part of his independent review of the food system. The Government has committed to responding to the Review's recommendations in the form of a Food Strategy White Paper within six months. As part of the White Paper, the Government will consider how we can support people to access healthy and sustainable food, including more fruit and vegetables. The Government is committed to developing a food strategy that will support the development of a food system that is sustainable, resilient and affordable, support people to live healthy lives, and protect animal health and welfare.

■ Food: Waste

Alicia Kearns:

[\[33363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will introduce mandatory business food waste reporting by 2022 in line with the recommendations of the Climate Change Committee.

Rebecca Pow:

We will consult this year on introducing regulations to make the public reporting of food waste volumes mandatory for certain businesses of an appropriate size. By ensuring businesses are measuring and publicly reporting their food waste, we expect to drive action to reduce it.

Due to the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on food and drink businesses, we postponed the launch of this consultation. Some businesses will require time to embed measurement techniques and build confidence in their data. This needs to be balanced alongside the need to continue reducing our food waste, increasing redistribution of surplus and measuring more accurately to understand the scale of the problem. We therefore propose that reporting starts at least one year after regulations are passed. This will offer businesses time to seek guidance and implement measurement techniques within their operations.

Subject to the consultation responses we therefore would be requiring businesses to report food waste in 2024, for food waste measured in the 2023/2024 financial year. This will ensure data is readily available which in turn will allow for comparison and assessment against our national and international targets.

■ Horses: Animal Breeding

Andrea Jenkyns:

[36688]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department are taking to ensure a reduction in the number of foals being produced in the UK every year .

Victoria Prentis:

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare, and we are committed to making the UK a world leader in the protection of animals, including horses.

To promote responsible ownership, there is clear guidance available to educate and remind horse owners of their responsibilities to provide for the welfare needs of their animal. The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids makes clear that you should consider buying or rehoming a youngster before taking the decision to breed. The foal's individual future must also be considered before breeding from your equine, and the code highlights the UK's overpopulation problem at the time of publication. The Code can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf

Further information on responsible breeding is available to the public, including World Horse Welfare's "Need to Breed" initiative which can be found here:

<https://www.worldhorsewelfare.org/advice/management/do-you-need-to-breed>.

We continue to have close engagement with key stakeholders in the equine sector and are monitoring the situation regarding the supply of foals.

■ Horses: Animal Welfare

Andrea Jenkyns:

[36689]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of establishing an independent body to oversee horse welfare in the UK.

Andrea Jenkyns:

[36690]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of launching a review of horse welfare standards in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government shares the public's high regard for animal welfare, and we are committed to enhancing our status as a world leader in the protection of animals. The

Action Plan for Animal Welfare is an ambitious plan which sets out an overview of the Government's main priorities on animal welfare and conservation. In the action plan, we have committed to ensuring that the equine sector addresses key welfare issues such as racehorse fatality levels.

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (the 2006 Act) it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to an animal. Anyone who is cruel to an animal faces being sent to prison for up to 5 years, or receiving an unlimited fine, or both. The 2006 Act is backed up by the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids which provides owners with information on how to meet the welfare needs of their equines. The Code makes clear that owners are responsible for meeting the horse's need for safe and suitable shelter and pasture, whether this is through a livery yard, rented land or land that they own. The Code can be found here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700200/horses-welfare-codes-of-practice-april2018.pdf

The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 were developed to help improve welfare standards across a range of activities involving animals that are licensed by local authorities. Under these regulations, hiring out horses in the course of a business for riding or instruction in riding and selling animals as pets in the course of a business are both licensable activities. This includes riding schools, trekking, loan horses, pony parties, hunter hirelings, polo/polocrosse instruction, pony hire, pony and donkey rides.

The Animal Welfare Committee is an expert committee that advises the Department on the welfare of animals. This includes farmed, companion and wild animals kept by people. Please see further details here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/animal-welfare-committee-awc>

Defra considers that current legislation and guidance provides the right safeguards and powers in respect of protecting horse welfare. We will continue to engage with key stakeholders to see if more can be done to spread best practice among horse owners, as well as increased partnership working with the equine welfare sector in order to tackle equine welfare issues.

■ Horses: Slaughterhouses

Rachael Maskell:

[35751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of banning the slaughter of horses in abattoirs.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to the highest standards of animal welfare when animals are slaughtered or killed. Legislation sets out strict requirements to protect the welfare of horses when slaughtered. These requirements are monitored and enforced by Official Veterinarians of the Food Standards Agency to ensure that animals are spared avoidable pain, distress or suffering during the slaughter process.

■ Ivory: Trade

Hilary Benn: [\[35511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will (a) list the designated ports responsible for checking musical instrument certificates under CITES and (b) confirm whether those ports are all currently operational.

Hilary Benn: [\[36525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether musicians travelling to the UK from the EU with instruments that have CITES requirements must travel through CITES designated points of entry and exit.

Hilary Benn: [\[36526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether musicians travelling to the UK from the EU with instruments that have CITES requirements can travel using (a) the Eurotunnel and (b) other roll-on roll-off services.

Rebecca Pow:

Any musical instruments covered by CITES controls must be imported or exported through one of the 36 designated land, sea and airports which are all currently operational. The up to date list of the ports is available on the following GOV.UK page: www.gov.uk/guidance/trading-cites-listed-specimens-through-uk-ports-and-airports.

■ Marine Protected Areas

Ruth Edwards: [\[34625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to publish the next Marine Protected Areas Network report.

Rebecca Pow:

The Marine Protected Areas Network report is published every six years. The latest report was published in 2018 and the next will be published in 2024.

Ruth Edwards: [\[34626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate his Department has made of the lifetimes of the (a) Marine Protected Areas and (b) Highly Protected Marine Areas programmes.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine conservation is a devolved competence and the following information therefore relates to England only.

We view MPAs as permanent features of our conservation efforts at sea and the improvements we will see to marine biodiversity within each site would be lost if their protection was to be removed. We will keep them under review and make changes where new scientific evidence suggests it is needed.

On 8 June 2021, the Government published its response to the Benyon Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). The Government accepted the central recommendation that we should take forward some pilot sites with the purpose of biodiversity recovery. The Government is developing criteria for HPMa identification to create a list of potential sites this year, followed by consultation and designations in 2022. We will evaluate the effects of pilot HPMAs on the ecosystem, social and economic factors and this evaluation will inform future HPMa work.

Luke Pollard:

[\[36759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Defence on (a) the Government's proposals for Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) and (b) proposed locations for HPMAs.

Rebecca Pow:

On 8 June 2021, the Government published its response to the Benyon Review into Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). The Government accepted the central recommendation to take forward pilot sites with the purpose of biodiversity recovery.

The response to the Benyon Review was agreed across Government. Defra officials met with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) during the Benyon Review and when preparing the Government response. The response states that HPMAs will be outside of routine defence exercise areas, and the selection of sites will consider the ability of an activity or sector to adapt to the location of a HPMa.

The Government is developing ecological, social and economic criteria for HPMa identification to create a list of potential sites this year, followed by a consultation and designation of sites in 2022. Defra will engage the MoD and other Government departments on the potential list of sites when it becomes available.

■ Musical Instruments: Customs

Hilary Benn:

[\[36527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the (a) application for Musical Instrument Certificates (MICs) for musicians travelling to the UK from the EU with instruments that have CITES requirements must be made in the country of export and (b) UK recognises the same (i) MICs and (ii) CITES requirements necessary for EU member states.

Victoria Prentis:

A Musical Instrument Certificate (MIC) is ordinarily issued by the country of residence to facilitate multiple cross border movements of instruments covered by CITES controls.

Following our departure from the EU, by virtue of the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020, the UK retained the CITES legislation and procedures followed whilst we were members of the EU. The UK will continue to accept MICs issued by EU Member States.

■ Plastics: Recycling

Ruth Jones:

[35888]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of food contamination on the recyclability of flexible plastic waste.

Rebecca Pow:

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) has produced guidance for local authorities to tackle the problems of contamination in recycling, which can be found here: wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-05/WRAP-Tackling-contamination-dry-recycling-May2021.pdf. WRAP also produces the Recycling Tracker which is the largest and longest running survey on recycling attitudes, values and behaviours. The surveys can be found at this link: <https://wrap.org.uk/resources/report/recycling-tracker-report-2020-behaviours-attitudes-and-awareness-around-recycling>.

The Government wants to see the recycling of plastic film increased and plastic films included into the plastic recyclable waste stream for consistent collections. We have worked with stakeholders across the plastic packaging value chain to gather evidence on the issues related to introducing plastic films into kerbside collections, including food contamination. In our recent consultation on 'Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England, we sought views on best practice around the separate collection of plastic films, to include guidance on this recognising that ideally plastic films would be segregated from other recyclable materials within the plastics waste stream to facilitate easier sorting and reduce contamination. We are currently analysing responses to the consultation and gathering further evidence around issues relating to material quality, sorting, reprocessing and contamination to include in best practice guidance.

■ Plastics: Waste

Ruth Jones:

[35891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the amount of flexible plastic waste using sustainable methods.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government wants to see the reduction in plastic waste, and where plastic waste still exists, to increase the recycling of plastic film and flexibles. In our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy, we outlined our intention to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste throughout the lifetime of the 25 Year Environment Plan (by 2042).

We have recently undertaken a second consultation on introducing extended producer responsibility (EPR) for packaging. This would see producers required to pay the costs of managing the packaging they place on the market including when it becomes waste. It also proposed that producers' fees will be varied so that those who use unrecyclable or difficult to recycle packaging such as flexible plastics would be

required to pay higher fees. This will incentivise producers to consider their packaging choice.

In addition, we proposed that where producers see a need for additional investment to increase recycling and meet recycling targets under Packaging EPR, they could choose to raise further funding through the scheme. For example, to upgrade sorting and recycling infrastructure so that more types of film plastics can be recycled.

In our recently published second consultation on 'Consistency in Household and Business Recycling in England,' we consulted on proposals to include plastic films and flexible packaging in household collection services by the end of the financial year 2026/27. We also consulted on proposals to introduce plastic films and flexible packaging into business collection services by the end of the financial year 2024/25.

We are now analysing the responses that were received in response to these consultations and will publish our response in due course.

■ River Tamar: Radioactive Waste

Luke Pollard:

[36763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Ministry of Defence on their proposals to release untreated radioactive rainwater from HM Naval Base Devonport into the river Tamar.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) was in discussions with HM Naval Base (HMNB) Devonport on their proposals for the disposal of rainwater containing tritium (a radioactive isotope of hydrogen) between December 2020 and June 2021. At that point HMNB Devonport formally submitted an application to vary its Approval for the receipt and disposal of radioactive waste.

At present this low level contaminated rainwater passes through the effluent treatment plant operated by the neighbouring nuclear site, Devonport Royal Dockyard Ltd. HMNB Devonport now wants to release the rainwater directly into the River Tamar/Hamoaze. This would result in a very minor increase in dose to the public – equal to less than five minutes of the average annual background radiation dose in the UK. The total dose from all pathways and sources of radiation from the Dockyard was less than 0.005 mSv in 2019, which was less than 0.5 percent of the dose limit. Overall this is a very low level of radioactivity that will be discharged to the environment. The environmental impact of the tritium discharge is therefore minimal.

Discussions included the EA giving pre-application advice to the dockyard to ensure that the application would contain sufficient information to allow the EA to assess the application in a timely manner. The EA consulted with the public until 27 July about this application and will now work to determine the application. The consultation can be found here: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/nuclear/application-to-vary-the-radioactive-substances-app/>

The radioactive substances provisions of the Environmental Permitting Regulations do not apply to the Ministry of Defence (MoD). However, there is a Memorandum of Understanding between the EA and the MoD which provides for equivalent administrative arrangements. The Approval held by the MoD for HMNB Devonport is the equivalent of a Permit that would be held by a civilian operator.

The EA will continue to monitor pollution in the River Tamar/Hamoaze and the potential impact of the HMNB discharge if the application is approved.

■ Rivers: Pollution and Sewage

Sally-Ann Hart:

[35957]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of reviewing the compliance limits set for waste water and sewage effluent being released into rivers and streams in response to the recent fines levied against Southern Water for illegally discharging sewage into rivers and coastal waters.

Rebecca Pow:

The investigation and subsequent prosecution of Southern Water focused on unlawful discharges of sewage through the storm system thus bypassing full treatment at Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and discharging to the environment in non-storm conditions. The sites all discharged either directly into, or in close proximity to, designated shellfish waters off the North Kent coast, around the Solent, and Langstone and Chichester Harbours.

During the current water company investment round (2020 - 2025), water companies are required to install overflow operation monitors on storm overflows at around 3500 WwTW, including Southern Water WwTWs, along with Flow Passed Forward Flow monitors. Permits will be reviewed and conditions tightened to afford even greater levels of scrutiny and environmental protection. The data from these monitors will be used to assess compliance with permit Flow Passed Forward Flow limits when overflows operate. As well as ensuring that the required flows are passed forward for full treatment through the WwTW when the overflow operates, the monitors will also be used by the Environment Agency to check that the overflows only operate within permit requirements of rainfall and snowmelt.

The Government is pushing forward in working towards improving the state of the water environment by setting robust and ambitious water quality targets within the Environment Bill. Alongside these targets the Government will consider the policy levers required to meet the targets, including taking further action to tackle sources of water pollution.

■ Sheep Scab: Disease Control

Giles Watling: [36753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what measures the Government is taking to work with key stakeholders to manage the spread of sheep scab, or psoroptic mange, in England.

Giles Watling: [36754]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what measures the Government is taking to work with devolved nations to tackle the spread of sheep scab across the regions.

Giles Watling: [36755]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what support the Government is providing to farmers who are struggling to manage the outbreak of sheep scab, or psoroptic mange, on their farms.

Victoria Prentis:

This is a devolved matter and the information provided therefore relates to England only.

Endemic diseases like sheep scab affect animal health and welfare, as well as productivity. As set out in the [25 year Environment Plan](#) and the [Agricultural Transition Plan: June 2021 progress update](#), we are working with industry to reduce the impact of endemic diseases, including through the launch in 2022 of an Annual Health and Welfare Review for eligible livestock farmers.

Sheep Scab initiatives are currently managed at a local level but we are working with Devolved Administrations to plan how we tackle the condition across regions.

A group of experts have recently been successful in a bid for funding from Defra via the Rural Development Programme for England to lead a two-year community-led project to improve the control of sheep scab in three hot spot areas where scab currently presents a significant problem: the North West, the Midlands and the South West. Farmers participating in this initiative will receive a unique combination of on-farm advice, best practice training, and free blood testing.

Farmers seeking further advice on sheep scab can contact the [Animal Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#).

■ Slaughterhouses: Animal Welfare

Andrea Jenkyns: [35792]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that regulations protecting animals from unnecessary suffering are adequately enforced in abattoirs.

Andrea Jenkyns:

[35794]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to improve animal welfare conditions in abattoirs.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to the highest standards of animal welfare when animals are slaughtered or killed and we have made CCTV mandatory in all slaughterhouses in England. Legislation sets out the main requirements to protect the welfare of animals when being slaughtered. In slaughterhouses, these requirements are monitored and enforced by Official Veterinarians of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to ensure that animals are spared avoidable pain, distress or suffering during the slaughter process. A service level agreement with the FSA is reviewed and agreed annually.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to animal welfare breaches and all FSA staff are instructed to take prompt and proportionate enforcement where breaches are identified, including those identified through live and retrospective CCTV viewing. The FSA has checks and monitoring systems in place to ensure the correct action is taken by Official Veterinarians and ensure the very highest standards are maintained.

Following a recent review^[1] of the legislation protecting the welfare of animals at the time of killing and as part of our Action Plan for Animal Welfare, we are carefully considering a wide range of welfare at slaughter improvements that could be made and will consult in due course.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welfare-of-animals-at-the-time-of-killing-england-regulations-2015-post-implementation-review>

■ **Tree Planting: North of England**

Rachael Maskell:

[36682]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government has made progress on tree planting targets for (a) the Northern Forest (b) the White Rose Forest and (c) in York.

Rebecca Pow:

We continue to work with the Woodland Trust and the Community Forest Trust to support the planting of more than 50 million trees between Liverpool and Hull as part of the Northern Forest initiative. The 50 million target is not a Government target but will contribute to the Government's commitment to increase tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament.

As set out in our new England Trees Action Plan, we are working with charities, landowners, and local communities to increase tree planting across England. This includes partnerships such as the Northern Forest, which we kick-started with £5.7 million of investment in 2018, and the Community Forests Network, with whom we aim to plant over 6000 hectares of new woodlands by 2025, supported by investment from our £640 million Nature for Climate Fund.

The Northern Forest stretches from Liverpool and Chester to Hull, through Manchester, Leeds, and Sheffield. Four of the twelve Community Forests are located in the Northern Forest – White Rose Forest, which covers Leeds city region and North and West Yorkshire; the Mersey Forest, which covers Merseyside and North Cheshire; Heywood, which covers Kingston upon Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire; and City of Trees, which covers Greater Manchester.

Our Nature for Climate Fund-supported programme of tree planting by the Community Forests, including the White Rose Forest, received £12.1 million funding last year and will see many more trees planted across these areas over this parliament. The table below shows the number of trees planted between 2018-2021 with Government funding. Other non-Government funded trees are also being delivered across the Northern Forest by the Northern Forest Partnership.

PLANTING SEASON
(DATA ON TREES
PLANTED ACROSS
THESE AREAS MAY
OVERLAP.)

	YORK	THE WHITE ROSE FOREST	THE NORTHERN FOREST
2018-2019	0	7,453	103,980
2019-2020	0	21,069	200,235
2020-2021	675	365,935	860,167
TOTAL	675	394,457	1,164,382

In addition to this, we have extended the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, providing up to £6 million over the next two years to support planting of large trees in our towns and cities. We have also launched the £2.7 million Local Authority Treescapes Fund which encourages applications establishing more trees in non-woodland settings such as parklands, urban areas, beside roads and footpaths.

■ Tuna: Fishing Catches

Luke Pollard:

[36761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to publish his proposals for a catch and release pilot for blue fin tuna.

Victoria Prentis:

A catch, tag and release (CHART) programme to conduct scientific research into Atlantic Bluefin Tuna abundance in English waters will run from 16 August until 14 November 2021.

Details of the programme were published on the website of the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) on 23 April 2021: [CHART Programme for Atlantic Bluefin Tuna - CEFAS](#).

■ Waste Disposal

Helen Hayes:

[\[35802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of giving local authorities increased powers to direct waste producers, including property managers for properties with shared services, to sort waste appropriately.

Helen Hayes:

[\[35803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to increase local authority powers to recover the full costs from waste producers and property managers of collecting and disposing of the contents of a contaminated bin and other failures to follow a reasonable requirement to separate waste for recycling.

Helen Hayes:

[\[35804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to increase local authority powers to direct property managers to make suitable provision for waste storage within properties they manage, including for separate collection of recyclable materials, where such decisions are not directly in the control of residents.

Rebecca Pow:

In respect of household waste, local authorities already have powers under section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) to serve a notice requiring an occupier to put their waste for collection in a specified kind and number of receptacles. Clause 57(5) of the Environment Bill amends section 46(2) of the EPA so that, subject to it being reasonable, an English waste collection authority (WCA) may require separate receptacles or compartments of receptacles to be used for the purposes of complying with its duties under new section 45A or 45AZA. This would mean that an English WCA can require different recyclable waste streams to be put in different receptacles.

A person who fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any requirements imposed by section 46 shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale. An authorised officer may issue a fixed penalty notice under section 47ZA of the EPA to enable a person to discharge any liability to conviction for the offence.

If a person has failed to comply with a section 46 requirement, WCAs can also give a written notice under section 46A of the EPA if the failure has caused or is or was likely to cause a nuisance or has been or is or was likely to be detrimental to any amenities of the locality. If a written warning gets ignored, they can issue a financial penalty under section 46B. They also are not required to collect the waste if it is put out in contravention of a section 46 requirement.

Regarding household waste from non-domestic premises and relevant waste (which is commercial and industrial waste, which is similar in nature and composition to

household waste), the Environment Bill requires that the person that presents waste for collection under the arrangements must present it separated in accordance with the arrangements (which must comply with the requirements in the Environment Bill). This would therefore include the waste producer but also a property manager if they were presenting the waste on behalf of a number of properties.

Under section 47 of the Environmental Protection Act, a WCA may already serve a notice against a business if their waste is not stored in receptacles of a particular kind and it is likely to cause a nuisance or to be detrimental to the amenities of the locality. Clause 57(6) of the Environment Bill amends s47(3) of the EPA so that WCAs can require separate receptacles or compartments to be used for the purposes of complying with the requirements in new s45AZB.

We are not currently planning on amending this legislation to change the powers that local authorities have. Our consultation on 'Consistency in Household and Business Recycling,' recently closed and we are considering responses to our proposals on the detail around enforcement.

■ Waste Management

Helen Hayes:

[35801]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that changes to waste management reflect differing local contexts including (a) availability of space for waste storage, (b) differing collection frequency needs and (c) difficulties in separating food waste in areas where residents predominantly live in flats; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authorities are empowered to make adjustments in accordance with those contexts.

Rebecca Pow:

We want to make recycling easier and ensure that there is a comprehensive, consistent service across England. The Environment Bill stipulates that all local authorities in England must make arrangements for a core set of materials to be collected for recycling from households. This core set includes paper and card; plastic; glass; metal; food waste and garden waste.

Local authorities can still decide to collect the recyclable waste streams co-mingled (i.e. multiple waste streams collected together) in cases where it is not technically or economically practicable to collect the recyclable waste streams separately from each other, or there is no significant environmental benefit in doing so, subject to completing a written assessment. The only exception to this is that food and garden waste must always be collected separately from the dry recyclable waste streams. Local authorities may apply these exceptions in circumstances where there is a lack of available storage space to collect recycling streams separately – including blocks of flats. We have recently consulted on plans to develop further guidance on written exemptions and best practice for local authorities. This guidance will take into consideration views provided by stakeholders during our recent public consultation.

Local authorities will also maintain the ability to decide the frequency of recyclable waste collections, except for food waste which will need to be separately collected on a weekly basis.

Finally, local authorities will be provided with new burdens funding to support adjustments to their waste collection services necessitated by our reforms. We are working to assess the net additional costs of our reforms as provided in the Impact Assessment accompanying our second public consultation on recycling consistency. As part of this process we will engage with local authorities to consider the appropriate nature and timing of funding.

■ Waste Management: Finance

Helen Hayes:

[35800]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when his Department plans to publish the formula for new burdens funding for the proposed changes to waste management.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government will ensure that local authorities are resourced to meet any new burdens arising from our collections and packaging reforms, including up front transition costs and ongoing operational costs.

We are working to assess net additional costs to local authorities, in line with the new burden's doctrine. We will engage with the Local Government Association on these cost estimates, including the appropriate timing for funding to be provided to authorities. We will share information on cost estimates and funding timelines with local authorities in due course.

■ Water: Meters

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[34552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring households to have water meters in England and Wales.

Rebecca Pow:

In 2019 the Government carried out a consultation on measures to reduce personal water consumption, which sought views on households being charged by the volume of water they consume. The Government's response to the consultation was published in a [Written Ministerial Statement on 1 July 2021](#).

Responses to the consultation and call for evidence are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/water-conservation-measures-to-reduce-personal-water-use>

■ Wines: Imports**Daniel Zeichner:**[\[33951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether abolishing the VI1 form for wine imports requires primary legislation.

Victoria Prentis:

No power has been conferred specifically for the purpose of abolishing all VI1 forms, and, because abolishing VI1 forms would involve the repeal of retained direct principal EU legislation, new primary legislation would be required to confer such a power. It would also be possible for new primary legislation to be made which removes the provisions requiring the use of the VI1 form directly.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Armed Conflict****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[34561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an estimate of the number of civilians who have been killed in conflict in Afghanistan in (a) the six months prior to the withdrawal of NATO coalition troops from Afghanistan and (b) since those troops were withdrawn from that country.

Nigel Adams:

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) publishes quarterly reports on civilian casualties. The most recent documented 1,783 civilian casualties (573 killed and 1,210 injured). The UK remains committed to supporting Afghanistan on its path to a more peaceful and positive future and strongly supports efforts to energise the Afghan peace process. Only a negotiated and inclusive political settlement will bring sustainable peace.

■ Afghanistan: Females**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[34016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much the UK Government has spent in the last 10 years on tackling violence against women and girls in Afghanistan; and what comparative assessment he has made of the level of violence against women and girls in that country (a) five years ago and (b) in 2021.

Nigel Adams:

All our programming, including on health and education, considers gender equality, and our work to promote peace benefits all Afghans. UK Government spending to tackle violence against women and girls in Afghanistan has supported more than 28,000 survivors of Gender Based Violence to access health care, counselling, basic legal guidance, and referrals to law enforcement and housing. Additionally, the UK has addressed root causes through the UK's ground breaking *What Works to Prevent*

Violence Programme, which received £25 million globally between 2014-20, with a further £67.5 million committed in 2021. Rates of violence against women and girls are estimated to continue to be high in Afghanistan. It is likely that rates increased during the COVID-19 pandemic as they did elsewhere in the world. We are also concerned that they are increasing with the resurgence in insecurity.

■ Afghanistan: NATO

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of effect of the withdrawal of UK armed forces troops from the NATO mission in Afghanistan on the (a) political and (b) security situation in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The Prime Minister spoke to President Ghani on 17 June to reaffirm the UK's commitment to supporting Afghanistan to achieve a stable and democratic future following the withdrawal of NATO troops. We will back Afghanistan through our diplomatic and development work and assistance to the security sector. The security situation in Afghanistan remains serious. There is no military route for the Taliban to achieve their goals; if they wish to play a political role in a more stable and secure Afghanistan, they must engage meaningfully in the peace talks. The UK supports the international efforts to energise the Afghan peace process and to promote regional cooperation and stability.

■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential (a) geostrategic and (b) geopolitical merits of the UK's withdrawal from Afghanistan for (i) national defence, (ii) international stability and (iii) democracy in Afghanistan.

Nigel Adams:

Our primary objective when we deployed to Afghanistan 20 years ago was to ensure that it wasn't used as a base for international terrorism. There has not been a successful international terrorist attack on the West mounted from Afghanistan since. Those countries who were brave enough to send their Armed Forces to serve in Afghanistan enabled the progress that was made across the country as a whole. Afghanistan now has a burgeoning civil society, with a free press and an education system. Compared to 2001, 8.2 million more children are now in school. Life expectancy has increased from 56 years (2002) to 64 (2018). Maternal mortality has almost halved and infant mortality has decreased faster than any low-income country since 2001. Under the Taliban, women were excluded from governance; today women hold over a quarter of the seats in Afghanistan's parliament. As the Prime Minister said on 8 July, the international military presence was never intended to be permanent. The UK remains committed to supporting Afghanistan on its path to a

more peaceful and positive future and strongly supports efforts to energise the Afghan peace process. Only a negotiated and inclusive settlement will bring sustainable peace.

■ **Afghanistan: Taliban**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government has made an assessment of the likelihood of resurgence of the Taliban as a result of the withdrawal of UK and coalition troops.

Nigel Adams:

The Prime Minister spoke to President Ghani on 17 June to reaffirm the UK's commitment to supporting Afghanistan to achieve a stable and democratic future following the withdrawal of NATO troops. We will back Afghanistan through our diplomatic and development work and assistance to the security sector. The security situation in Afghanistan remains serious. There is no military route for the Taliban to achieve their goals; if they wish to play a political role in a more stable and secure Afghanistan, they must engage meaningfully in the peace talks. The UK supports the international efforts to energise the Afghan peace process and to promote regional cooperation and stability.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the risk posed by the Taliban to the UK-backed coalition Afghan Government after the withdrawal of UK armed forces from that country.

Nigel Adams:

The Prime Minister spoke to President Ghani on 17 June to reaffirm the UK's commitment to supporting Afghanistan to achieve a stable and democratic future following the withdrawal of NATO troops. We will back Afghanistan through our diplomatic and development work and assistance to the security sector. The security situation in Afghanistan remains serious. There is no military route for the Taliban to achieve their goals; if they wish to play a political role in a more stable and secure Afghanistan, they must engage meaningfully in the peace talks. The UK supports the international efforts to energise the Afghan peace process and to promote regional cooperation and stability.

■ **Bermuda: EU External Trade**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33161\]](#)

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

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33163\]](#)

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

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[33164\]](#)

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

Nigel Adams:

We remain unwavering in our commitment to safeguarding the Overseas Territories' interests and we are providing support to Anguilla, Bermuda and Montserrat, following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. During negotiations of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK made clear to the EU from the outset that we were negotiating on behalf of the Overseas Territories. However, the European Commission refused to negotiate a future relationship that included the Overseas Territories. We sought to change the Commission's position, but the Commission declined to engage. We continue to work with all the Overseas Territories to take advantage of the opportunities available to us as an independent trading nation.

■ **China: Uighurs**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to review the effectiveness of the sanctions he has applied to China in response to the persecution of the Uyghur Muslim community.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) plans he has to increase and (b) criteria he uses to assess the effectiveness of sanctions against China in response to the persecution of the Uyghur Muslim community.

Nigel Adams:

The sanctions announced by the Foreign Secretary in March imposed asset freezes and travel bans on four senior Chinese officials and one entity responsible for the egregious human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang. By acting with 29 other countries on an agreed set of designations, we increased the reach and impact of these measures and sent the clearest possible signal of the international community's serious concern and collective willingness to act. Sanctions remain one response among a number of diplomatic tools that we deploy around the world to help achieve the UK's foreign policy goals. We consider them to be most effective when backed by co-ordinated, collective action, as we took in March. We continue to keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

■ Commonwealth: Embassies**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[36575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of flying commonwealth flags from motor vehicles in addition to the flag of the High Commission representative concerned on UK missions in Commonwealth countries.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office have considered the merits of displaying the Commonwealth flag on British High Commissioners' official vehicles. These vehicles will continue to display the Union flag only.

■ Developing Countries: Climate Change**Mr Andrew Mitchell:**[\[36531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the COP Presidency paper entitled Priorities for Public Climate Finance in the Year Ahead, published January 2021, whether his Department is planning to changing climate funding mechanisms to encourage adaptation and resilience programmes that remove barriers to family planning and girls' education.

James Duddridge:

Coping with climate change is a challenge that faces us all. The poor in developing countries are likely to be hit first and hardest. Our International Climate Finance (ICF) reaches those most in need and we are committed to doubling our ICF to £11.6bn over the next five years. In our adaptation programming we prioritise locally-led action with a strong grounding in the local context and needs, targeting marginalised groups.

We do not need to change climate funding mechanisms to ensure that, through quality education, more girls are empowered and equipped as agents of change. Voluntary family planning programmes empower women and girls to choose whether and when to have children - this in turn supports the health, prosperity and resilience of their communities and countries.

■ Developing Countries: Food Supply**Martyn Day:**[\[35782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the impact of reductions in the Official Development Assistance budget on his Department's ability to tackle hunger and famine.

Nigel Adams:

The UK economy is facing the worst economic contraction in over 300 years. Our borrowing is the highest it has been outside of wartime. Against this backdrop, we have been forced to prioritise public spending, including temporarily reducing the ODA spend from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. FCDO allocates our aid budget in accordance

with UK strategic priorities, and to remain a force for good across the world. Our aid is targeted at the highest priority global challenges and the Foreign Secretary has been clear that poverty reduction remains at the heart of UK ODA.

The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance this year is at a record high, with acute food insecurity and malnutrition also rising. Preventing famine is a key priority for FCDO, as evidenced by the launch of the Foreign Secretary's Call to Action in September 2020. But this is not only about money. It is also about diplomatic action, smarter financing and more effective responses to crises. The UK will combine our funding with our diplomatic strength and world-leading aid expertise to protect people across the world from increasing risk of famine.

■ Developing Countries: Women's Rights

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[35875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) gender equality and (b) women's rights are supported beyond commitments to girls' education in its International Development Strategy.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO is committed to ensuring gender equality and women's rights remain at the heart of the UK's approach to development, and commitments beyond girls' education will feature in the new International Development Strategy. We look forward to engaging with partners and stakeholders, including civil society, on the Strategy over the coming months.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[35876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that women's rights organisations and experts have opportunities to input into the new International Development Strategy.

Wendy Morton:

We look forward to engaging with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders, including civil society, on the International Development Strategy over the coming months. Women's rights organisations are critical to achieving lasting transformation in women's and girls' rights, and the Integrated Review specifically commits FCDO to work closely with them to tackle the violence and discrimination that hold women back.

Sarah Champion:

[\[36648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans his Department has to consult and get input from women's rights organisations and experts in developing the Government's new International Development Strategy.

Nigel Adams:

We look forward to engaging with a diverse range of partners and stakeholders, including civil society, on the International Development Strategy over the coming

months. Women's rights organisations are critical to achieving lasting transformation in women's and girls' rights, and the Integrated Review specifically commits FCDO to work closely with them to tackle the violence and discrimination that hold women back.

■ **Diplomatic Service: Flags**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[36571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of including the flag of the Consular Officers afloat in his Department's flag flying policy.

Nigel Adams:

It is Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) policy for British Consular Posts in foreign countries to fly the Consular flag. The FCDO does not use the Consular Officers Afloat flag.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Ethnic Groups**

Ruth Jones: [\[35885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Black and ethnic minority staff are employed by his Department.

Nigel Adams:

As of 31 March 2021, 17.67% of UK Based Staff in the FCDO self-identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. We do not currently have the data for our Country Based Staff.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Flags**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[36572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, who is responsible for his Department's policy on flying flags from his Department's buildings.

Nigel Adams:

The Secretary of State and Permanent under Secretary at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are responsible for FCDO policy on flying flags.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[36573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of giving greater prominence to the Commonwealth flag in its policy on flying flags from his Department's buildings.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[36574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of flying the

Commonwealth Flag from its building all year round on relationships between the UK and other Commonwealth countries.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) have considered the merits of flying the Commonwealth flag. The FCDO will fly the Commonwealth flag for a week in March 2022 to mark Commonwealth Day, as well as for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. It is not our practice to fly on a permanent basis the flags of organisations of which the UK is a member.

Henry Smith:

[\[35607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his Department's policy to fly the Commonwealth flag all year round from his Department's main building in Whitehall.

Nigel Adams:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will fly the Commonwealth flag for a week in March 2022 to mark Commonwealth Day, as well as for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. It is not our practice to fly on a permanent basis the flags of organisations of which the UK is a member.

■ **Gas Fired Power Stations: Overseas Aid**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[35597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which overseas gas power-related projects have received commitments of funding from the public purse since 12 December 2020.

James Duddridge:

There have been no new commitments to provide public funding for overseas gas power-related projects since 12 December 2020.

However, UK Export Finance have continued to provide support for the fourth phase of General Electric's ongoing "Power Up Program" in Iraq. This includes providing essential maintenance, parts and services to improve efficiency and safety for various power stations. This is in line with the UK's newly introduced Fossil Fuels policy.

■ **Gulf States: Foreign Relations**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[35585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to (a) help ensure security and (b) promote the UK's economic interests in the Gulf.

James Cleverly:

The Government works closely with all our friends in the Gulf to strengthen our shared security and prosperity interests, including through dialogue to promote

regional stability, initiatives to tackle illicit finance and terrorism, and defence cooperation.

Britain has strong bilateral trading relationships with the Gulf and it is already one of our largest export destinations, with total trade of over £30 billion in 2020. We are committed to broadening and deepening our shared economic interests further, including through government-to-government trade dialogues, and also within specific sectors following conclusion of the UK-GCC Joint Trade and Investment Review.

■ Integrated Activity Fund

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[35586\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to increase oversight and transparency of UK funding through the Integrated Activity Fund of institutions in (a) Saudi Arabia and (b) Bahrain.

James Cleverly:

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

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

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

■ International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Steve McCabe:

[\[36521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 5 July 2021 to Question 22172 on Israel: Palestinians, under what circumstances the UK will collaborate with the United States on the international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

James Cleverly:

The UK government shares the objective of increasing understanding and dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians. UK officials remain in close contact with the US Government regarding the International Fund. The US is at a very early planning

stage, and once more information is available, we will consider options for collaboration.

■ **Israel: Gaza**

Jim Shannon:

[\[35646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Egyptian and Israeli counterparts on a permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

James Cleverly:

During the recent conflict, the UK urged the parties to engage with mediators. We fully supported Egyptian, Qatari and UN efforts towards a ceasefire, working closely with the US. As the Prime Minister has made clear, leaders in the region must now work to find a durable solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict that prevents terrorism, ends the cycle of violence, and delivers a sustainable and just peace based on a two state solution.

■ **Israel: Palestinians**

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[35617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to support peace between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

James Cleverly:

Following the ceasefire announcement, the Foreign Secretary visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on 25 and 26 May for talks with senior leaders. The Foreign Secretary met former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and reiterated the UK's firm commitment to the two-state solution. We have a regular dialogue with the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. The Foreign Secretary and Ministers have also engaged regional partners, including with Egypt, Jordan and Turkey. The Foreign Secretary made it clear that the UK would continue to work with the parties, and other actors, to encourage a durable ceasefire and to urge them to address the drivers of conflict.

Steve McCabe:

[\[36520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2021 to Question 22012 on Israel: Palestinians, whether the Constituencies for Peace and Support for Israeli NGOs peacebuilding projects conduct cross-border work between Israelis and Palestinians.

James Cleverly:

UK peacebuilding project work contains cross-border elements. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate-General in Jerusalem work closely with all sectors of society, including ultra-Orthodox communities, the National Religious, Israeli Arabs and Palestinian communities affected by the conflict, to encourage support for and progress towards peace.

■ Libya: Travel Information**Damien Moore:****[R] [36740]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of changing the travel advice (a) for Libya and (b) for certain regions in Libya.

James Cleverly:

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

■ Nepal: Coronavirus**Jim Shannon:****[33226]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the UK will donate at least five million covid-19 vaccine doses to Nepal in the next three months to lead a global plan to get the 40 million vaccine doses required urgently in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK's G7 Presidency in June championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics and confirmed the UK will share 100 million vaccines over the next year, 30 million of those by the end of 2021. We are currently reviewing which countries will receive donations, though at least 80% of the vaccines shared will go to COVAX. The UK is a leading donor to COVAX, the multilateral mechanism set up to support international co-operation on vaccines, having committed £548 million to the scheme. COVAX has delivered over 1,800,000 doses to Nepal so far with further tranches on the way. COVAX remains best-placed to allocate vaccines to where they will be most effective. As shareholders and contributors to both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the UK has also pushed hard for multilateral organisations to provide finance to countries for vaccine procurement, including Nepal. The World Bank has now made at least \$75 million available to the Government of Nepal for that purpose; a further \$165 million will soon be proposed to the board of the Asian Development Bank, which the UK will also support.

Jim Shannon:**[33917]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to recent calls to the international community from the Prime Minister of Nepal, if he will commit to leading on getting 40 million vaccine doses to Nepal in the coming months.

Nigel Adams:

The UK's G7 Presidency in June championed equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics and confirmed the UK will share 100 million vaccines over the next year, 30 million of those by the end of 2021. We are currently reviewing which countries will receive donations, though at least 80% of the vaccines shared

will go to COVAX. The UK is a leading donor to COVAX, the multilateral mechanism set up to support international co-operation on vaccines, having committed £548 million to the scheme. COVAX has delivered over 1,800,000 doses to Nepal so far with further tranches on the way. COVAX remains best-placed to allocate vaccines to where they will be most effective. As shareholders and contributors to both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the UK has also pushed hard for multilateral organisations to provide finance to countries for vaccine procurement, including Nepal. The World Bank has now made at least \$75 million available to the Government of Nepal for that purpose; a further \$165 million will soon be proposed to the board of the Asian Development Bank, which the UK will also support.

■ Saudi Arabia: Capital Punishment

Janet Daby:

[\[35883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to advocate for children in Saudi Arabia who are at risk of execution as a result of partaking in democratic resistance; and what steps he took to support Mustafa Al-Darwish before he was executed.

James Cleverly:

The United Kingdom strongly opposes the death penalty in all countries and in all circumstances, as a matter of principle. The Saudi authorities are aware of the UK Government's strong position on such cases. We reiterated our opposition to the death penalty in Saudi Arabia in a joint statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September 2020. On 24 May 2021, during my visit to Saudi Arabia, I discussed the death penalty, including those charged with conducting crimes as minors, with the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, Dr Awwad Alawwad. The British Embassy Riyadh raised our concerns regarding Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish with the Saudi authorities ahead of, and following, his execution.

■ South Africa: Property Rights

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[36567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of the South African Government constitutional amendment to allow expropriation of private property without compensation on human rights in that country.

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[36568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has had discussions with their South African counterparts on ensuring that UK citizens and UK domiciled companies will not have their private properties expropriated as a result of the change in the constitution that will allow for expropriation without compensation.

Andrew Rosindell:**[36569]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect of the constitutional change to allow expropriation of private property without compensation on bilateral South Africa-UK trade agreements.

Andrew Rosindell:**[36570]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will work with policy research entities and NGO's in South Africa on the issue of expropriation of private property without compensation.

James Duddridge:

Our High Commission is closely monitoring ongoing parliamentary processes and proposals relating to land reform in South Africa, including the progress of the Ad Hoc Committee to Initiate and Introduce Legislation Amending Section 25 of South Africa's Constitution. We welcome President Ramaphosa's public commitment that land reform will be carried out without negatively affecting economic growth, agricultural production and food security. We will continue to engage with the South Africa authorities and experts as the process of land reform unfolds.

■ Sri Lanka: Human Rights

Sam Tarry:**[36806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will undertake and publish an assessment of the human rights impact of the £6.3 million the Government has spent on supporting security reform in Sri Lanka.

Nigel Adams:

The UK government's aim for security sector reform in Sri Lanka is to encourage the development of a modern, accountable and human rights compliant military, and support the development of a police service that is gender sensitive and respects human rights. Promoting adherence to international humanitarian law and human rights compliance is integral to our engagement.

All UK assistance, including training and defence engagement, is subject to robust Overseas Security and Justice Assistance (OSJA) assessments that analyse the potential human rights, international humanitarian law, political and reputational risks of any proposed assistance to ensure that it supports our values and is consistent with our domestic and international human rights obligations. Annual review summaries of our Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programmes can be found online at: <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-3-CSSF-09-000003/documents>

■ Sri Lanka: Sanctions

Sam Tarry:

[\[36805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to apply sanctions against (a) General Shavendra Silva and (b) other officials in Sri Lanka accused of committing human rights abuses in that country.

Nigel Adams:

Sanctions are one response among a number of diplomatic tools we can deploy around the world as part of a broader political strategy in order to change or send a political signal regarding particular behaviours. The Global Human Rights Sanctions regime gives the UK a powerful tool to hold to account those involved in serious human rights violations or abuses. We will continue to consider targets globally, guided by the objectives of the human rights sanctions regime and the evidence. However, it is not appropriate to speculate on who may be designated in the future, as to do so could reduce their impact.

■ Tigray: Armed Conflict

Jim Shannon:

[\[36630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has offered assistance to officials in the Tigray region of Ethiopia to help tackle potential state terrorism in that region.

James Duddridge:

Political negotiation is the only way to resolve the situation in Tigray, and we are urging all parties to the conflict to stop fighting and begin an inclusive political process.

■ Turkey: Politics and Government

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[36565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the extent to which democratic freedoms have been curtailed in Turkey since the 2016 coup d'état attempt.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware that certain measures adopted under a state of emergency following the attempted coup in 2016 have since been enshrined in law. These include pre-trial detention, freedom of expression and restrictions on civil society. It is important that the long-term response to the 2016 coup attempt is lawful, measured and democratic. The right to freedom of expression should be protected and Turkey's international obligations upheld. I raised human rights with my Turkish counterpart during my visit to Turkey in June.

■ Turkey: Radicalism**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[36566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the 2016 coup d'etat attempt on the level of Turkish support for (a) the Muslim Brotherhood and (b) other extremist Islamist groups.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware that the Turkish government regards the Muslim Brotherhood as a political movement, not a terrorist organisation; and that Muslim Brotherhood figures have lived in Turkey, and associated media outlets have operated there, for many years. We continue to take concerns about the Muslim Brotherhood seriously. Turkey takes the fight against all forms of terrorism, including Daesh and ISIS, extremely seriously and we work in close cooperation on those issues bilaterally and in international fora such as the Counter Daesh coalition.

■ USAID**Layla Moran:**[\[36736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish a readout of his recent call with Samantha Power, Administrator of the US Agency for International Development.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary spoke with USAID Administrator, Samantha Power on 19 July. They discussed a number of shared foreign policy and international development priorities, including Afghanistan, the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, our shared agenda to increase green investment in infrastructure, and global vaccine supply. The Foreign Secretary also underlined the UK's desire to see a strong US contribution to the Global Partnership for Education ahead of the replenishment summit hosted jointly by the Prime Minister and President Kenyatta of Kenya on 29 July in London.

■ West Papua: Coronavirus**Alex Sobel:**[\[36737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the UK Government has plans to supply covid-19 vaccines direct to authorities in West Papua.

Nigel Adams:

The UK's G7 Presidency has championed equitable access to vaccines, and in June the Prime Minister announced at the G7 Leader's Meeting that the UK will share 100 million doses within the next year, 30 million of those by the end of 2021. 80% of these will go to COVAX, which remains best-placed to allocate vaccines to where they will be most effective. To date, COVAX has delivered 11.7 million vaccines in Indonesia. These have been distributed across the country, including the provinces of Papua and West Papua. The Foreign Secretary met with Health Minister Budi in April

this year during his visit to Indonesia, and also discussed joint efforts to tackle Covid-19 with Foreign Minister Marsudi at the G20 summit on 29 June.

■ **Yemen: Food Supply**

Martyn Day:

[\[35781\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle increasing hunger in Yemen as a result of the covid-19 pandemic and continued conflict.

James Cleverly:

The UK has committed £87 million to Yemen for 2021/22 which will address food insecurity and support nutrition. This includes feeding 240,000 of the most vulnerable Yemenis every month and supporting 1.5 million of the most vulnerable households with additional cash assistance to allow them to buy food and basic supplies and support 400 health centres. Globally the UK has committed £548 million to COVAX, which has allocated 2.3 million vaccines to Yemen. We also continue to work with donors, the UN and NGOs to lobby the parties to lift access restrictions and ensure humanitarian aid reaches those who most need it in Yemen.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

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

Jim Shannon:

[\[35640\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Correction for Luther et al., Hepatic gap junctions amplify alcohol liver injury by propagating cGAS-mediated IRF3 activation, published in the PNAS journal of 11 May 2020, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies on the treatment of alcohol-related liver disease of the identification of two potentially druggable pathways in that study.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence will review the study and assess the impact on its published clinical guidance.

■ **Abortion**

Sir John Hayes:

[\[31305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the procedure is for updating abortion notification HSA4 forms in the event of additional complications occurring either after the initial submission of the form or after the 14-day timeframe for returning them.

Sir John Hayes:

[\[31306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's consultation entitled Home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation and the statement in that consultation that for terminations in 2019

where the second early medical abortion pill was administered at home, complications may be less likely to be recorded on the abortion notification form, whether (a) those complications are reported by other means and (b) his Department has plans to review the process for reporting abortion complications to ensure that data is collected for complications not reported on the abortion notification form.

Helen Whately:

There is currently no process in place for additional complications to be recorded on HSA4 forms after submission of the form. The Department is undertaking a project to review the system of recording abortion complications data and we anticipate this work will be completed later this year. The review will cover all data on complications arising from abortion including timing of reporting.

Sally-Ann Hart:

[\[33371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to review the current 24 week time limit on abortion on the grounds of risk of injury to the physical or mental health of a pregnant woman or any of her children based on the latest science on viability.

Helen Whately:

It would be for Parliament to decide whether to make any changes to the law on abortion. As with other matters of conscience, abortion is an issue on which the Government adopts a neutral stance and allows hon. Members to vote according to their moral, ethical or religious beliefs.

■ **Abortion: Coronavirus**

Gareth Bacon:

[\[32533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons the Government decided to include home-administered early medical abortions in the Coronavirus Act 2020; what the evidential basis was for that decision; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

In March 2020, the Government put in place a temporary approval to enable eligible women and girls to be able to take both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation in their own homes. This approval was put in place on a temporary basis using powers in the Abortion Act 1967 following engagement with key stakeholders, including the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

Factors taken into consideration when making this decision included the impact of staff isolation on the provision of abortion services, the need to limit travel and the transmission of COVID-19 during the pandemic, and maintaining access to safe abortion services for women including those who were shielding. Safe and continued access to urgent healthcare has been and remains our priority.

Gareth Bacon:

[\[32534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has (a) commissioned or (b) plans to commission research on the health and welfare of women who have used home-administered early medical abortion during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Department has no plans to commission research on this specific issue.

The Government's public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women asked questions about the impact on the provision of services for women and girls with particular regard to safety. The consultation has now closed and we are considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year.

■ Abortion: Drugs

Bob Blackman:

[\[24161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which external organisations his Department is working with and in what capacity, to assess the efficacy of continuing the practice of early medical abortions by post; which of those organisations have a financial interest in providing abortion services; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The Government committed to undertake a public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women. The consultation has now closed and we will be considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year.

An external company is contracted by the Department to undertake independent analysis of consultation responses. They are supporting the impartial analysis of responses to the consultation on the temporary approval.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[35657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department will publish its response to its consultation on the home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks' gestation.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The consultation has now closed. We are considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year.

Justin Madders:

[\[35713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of permitting both pills for early medical abortions to be taken at home on NHS services.

Helen Whately:

The Government's public consultation on whether to make permanent the temporary measure allowing for home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks gestation for all eligible women has now closed. We are considering all evidence submitted and plan to publish our response later this year.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[36577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made and what data has been collected on the number of women who have taken early medical abortion pills at home who are not registered with the National Health Service.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold information on the number of abortions for women who have taken early medical abortion pills at home, who are not registered with the National Health Service.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[36578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women have received early medical abortion pills by post after the legal limit of nine weeks and six days.

Helen Whately:

HSA4 Abortion Notification Forms received by the Department show that of the 117,584 abortions where one or both medications were taken at home in 2020, 26 were taken at 10 weeks gestation or later.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[36579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of women hospitalised as a result of using early medical abortion pills at home.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold this information centrally.

Andrew Rosindell:[\[36580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people using fake names cannot acquire access to early medical abortion pills at home.

Helen Whately:

Eligibility for National Health Service funded abortions is determined by providers during the consultation process, including whether verification of identity of the individual is needed.

■ Accident and Emergency Departments: Mental Illness

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[25823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many adults attended an accident and emergency department with a recorded first diagnosis of a psychiatric condition in each month from March 2020 to the most recent month for which that data is available.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[25824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people aged 18 and under attended an accident and emergency department with a recorded first diagnosis of a psychiatric condition in each month from March 2020 to the most recent month for which that data is available.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The data is not available in the format requested.

■ Asthma: Health Services

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[36615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the roll out of asthma diagnostic hubs, set out in NICE Guidance NG80.

Jo Churchill:

Community Diagnostic Hubs (CDHs), which diagnose a number of conditions, will be launched in place of asthma diagnostic hubs. Diagnostics for respiratory conditions are part of the proposed 'core' services to be provided by CDHs. A review of diagnostics in the NHS Long Term Plan, highlighted that patients with respiratory symptoms would benefit from this facility due to the number of diagnostic tests that they use.

In 2021/22, £325 million has been allocated for diagnostic services. Discussions on how funding will be allocated are ongoing. Plans for mobilisation of CDHs from across England are currently under review. NHS England and NHS Improvement have approved the mobilisation of some early adopter sites from summer 2021 with more CDHs opening from autumn 2021.

Yvonne Fovargue:

[\[36619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to restore severe asthma referrals to pre-covid-19 levels.

Jo Churchill:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon MP) on 7 July to Question [13943](#).

■ Asthma: Medical Treatments

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[36617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support clinical choice in asthma treatment in the provision of biologic treatments, as recommended in the APPG report, entitled Improving Asthma Outcomes in the UK.

Jo Churchill:

There has been significant increase in the use of biologics in the last three years. The decision to start a biologic treatment for asthma is made by specialist severe asthma multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) based in severe asthma centres on clinical grounds. The MDT considers all aspects of the patients' illness, efficacy of current treatments and other treatment options. Patients receiving biologics are closely monitored to ensure that they are receiving the right treatment to help manage their symptoms.

■ Asthma: Prescriptions

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[36620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the merits of making prescriptions available for biologics for (a) severe asthma and (b) asthma that is difficult to control, available within secondary care.

Jo Churchill:

Clinicians are responsible for making prescribing decisions for their patients, taking into account the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's technology appraisals and guidance on management of asthma and the local commissioning decisions of their respective clinical commissioning groups.

Prescribing of biologics is co-ordinated through severe asthma centre multi-disciplinary team to ensure current treatments are optimised and all appropriate treatments are considered with use of biologics as part of the treatment review for each patient. The biologic prescribing pathway is one of the areas of focus for the NHS England Severe Asthma Accelerated Access Collaborative.

■ Asthma: Telemedicine

Yvonne Fovargue: [\[36616\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of (a) the efficacy of remote consultations for asthma treatment and (b) the effect remote consultations has had on outcomes for asthma patients.

Jo Churchill:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ Babylon Health

Justin Madders: [\[21247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a list of (a) all meetings between (i) the Secretary of State and (ii) health ministers and the private

health care provider Babylon and (b) all social and other events organised by Babylon that were attended by (A) the Secretary of State and (B) one or more health ministers since June 2019.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 28 June 2021]: Since June 2019, there has been one external event attended by the former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Rt hon. Matt Hancock MP) where Babylon Health Care, alongside other organisations, was also in attendance.

■ **Baroness Harding of Winscombe**

Jack Dromey:

[\[35594\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the register of gifts and hospitality relating to Baroness Harding of Winscombe in her role as Executive Chair of Test and Trace.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: Baroness Harding undertook an unpaid cross-Government role and was not appointed on civil service terms and conditions. As such, Baroness Harding was not required to maintain such a register. However, we can confirm that she did not receive any gifts or hospitality.

■ **Bio Products Laboratory**

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[29742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, which other providers compete with Bio Products Laboratory Limited for NHS contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: The National Health Service Commercial Medicine Unit contracted with the Bio Products Laboratory Limited in four tendering exercises. The following table shows the frameworks under which the company was contracted and the awarded suppliers.

FRAMEWORK TITLE	AWARDED SUPPLIERS
NHS Framework Agreement for the Supply of Human Albumin	Bio Products Laboratory Ltd Biotest UK Ltd CSL Behring UK Ltd Grifols UK Ltd Octapharma Ltd
NHS Framework Agreement for the Supply of Human Normal Immunoglobulin and Anti-D Immunoglobulin	Bio Products Laboratory Ltd Biotest UK Ltd CSL Behring UK Ltd Grifols UK Ltd LFB Biomedicaments Octapharma Ltd Takeda UK Ltd
NHS Framework Agreement for the supply of products for the treatment of Haemophilia A	Bio Products Laboratory Ltd Biotest UK Ltd Grifols UK Ltd Novo Nordisk Ltd Octapharma Ltd Pfizer Ltd Roche Products Ltd

Swedish Orphan Biovitrum Ltd (Sobi Ltd)

Takeda UK Ltd

NHS Framework Agreement for the supply of products for the treatment of bleeding disorders

Bio Products Laboratory Ltd

■ Blood Cancer: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes:

[\[29099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with blood cancer are advised about (a) the level of risk covid-19 poses to them and (b) the effectiveness of covid-19 vaccines for those conditions.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: There is emerging evidence that suggests that some immunocompromised and immunosuppressed individuals, which may include individuals with blood cancer, may not respond as well to COVID-19 vaccines as others. We are continuing to work to better understand who is less well protected by the vaccines and there are various studies underway looking at this issue. As new evidence emerges around vaccine efficacy, we will ensure this is communicated with affected individuals in the most appropriate way. However, all COVID-19 vaccines should offer some degree of protection and those at increased risk should receive both doses to optimise protection.

As restrictions were eased on 19 July, it is now appropriate to return to tailored risk advice for those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, with conditions such as blood cancer, from their general practitioner practice or specialist if they have any concerns.

■ Borderline Substances Advisory Committee

Alex Norris:

[\[34022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform independent report, published May 2021, what assessment he has made of how the (a) work of the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances and (b) the Medical Nutrition Industry were taken into account in that report.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: We have not made such an assessment.

■ Brain: Tumours

Sarah Olney: [\[27277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to commit increased funding for brain tumour research.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: In May 2018 the Government announced £40 million over five years for brain tumour research as part of the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). Brain tumour research is a difficult area with a relatively small research community. We are increasing this field, by providing workshops for researchers and training for clinicians.

The NIHR released a public announcement to the research community in April 2018, making clear our desire to receive brain tumour research funding applications. We are relying on researchers to submit high-quality research proposals. All applications that were fundable in open competition have been funded.

Sarah Olney: [\[27278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the families and friends of patients with brain tumours.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: The Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) mental health services can be accessed by adults with physical health problems, including those with brain tumours, as well as their family and friends whose mental health may be impacted as a result of this physical illness. Many IAPT services have strong links with a range of health and care settings to ensure that patients and carers receive the right support as quickly as possible, including secondary care and the patient groups within it.

■ Bunzl Healthcare: Protective Clothing

Angela Rayner: [\[32410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the £22.6 million contract awarded to Bunzl Healthcare on 3 April 2020 for personal protective equipment during the covid-19 outbreak was approved through the eight stage process to assess and approve offers of support to supply personal protection equipment.

Angela Rayner: [\[32411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 25834 on Coronavirus: Protective Clothing, how many contracts for the supply of personal protective equipment pre-dated the formalised eight stage assurance process; and what was the total cost of those contracts to the public purse.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: The National Audit Office (NAO) published a report on Government procurement activity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in November last year. The report is available at the following link:

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/government-procurement-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

The report noted (Paragraph 3.19) that by 28 April 2020, personal protective equipment contracts had been awarded to 71 suppliers, with a total value of £1.5 billion, i.e. before offers were being processed through what the NAO have described as the eight stage process. Bunzl Healthcare were one of these suppliers.

The 'eight stage process' is a term to describe at a point in time a structured process of checks and due diligence on suppliers which evolved in March and April 2020. It includes the introduction of a central clearance board at the beginning of May 2020 to perform checks previously performed by the Department's Accounting Officer to add an extra level of assurance that the deal met the Department's requirements.

However, from the start all suppliers were evaluated by officials on financial standing, technical compliance and ability to perform the contract.

■ Business Travel: Coronavirus**Dan Jarvis:****[31404]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is making available to British citizens who are having to travel through covid-19 amber list countries to re-enter the UK for business purposes.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: From 19 July, arrivals from 'amber list' countries who have been fully vaccinated through the United Kingdom vaccination programme do not have to quarantine or take a day eight test after arrival in England. Those who are not fully vaccinated and are returning from 'amber list' countries currently must quarantine for 10 days at home and take a polymerase chain reaction test on or before day two and after day eight. They also have the option to end quarantine early on day five, following a negative test result.

■ Calcium and Milk: Children and Young People**Jim Shannon:****[36629]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage the consumption of (a) milk and (b) calcium for (i) children under the age of 8 and (ii) other young people.

Jo Churchill:

Change4Life and Start4Life include information to parents of young and primary school aged children on consumption of milk as part of a healthy balanced diet.

The Government's dietary advice, as depicted by the Eatwell Guide, encourages the consumption of milk and dairy products or dairy alternatives as part of a healthy balanced diet. The Eatwell Guide principles, including consumption of milk and dairy products, underpin the School Food Standards and Public Health England's example menus and guidance for early years settings, which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/example-menus-for-early-years-settings-in-england>

Children and young people should be able to get all the calcium they need from a healthy balanced diet. Milk and dairy products or dairy alternatives are an important source of calcium. When choosing dairy alternatives, such as soya drinks, we advise selecting calcium-fortified versions.

■ Cancer: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon:

[35641]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on the potential merits of emerging treatments from AstraZeneca for ovarian and kidney cancer being made available through the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

Ministers and officials regularly discuss emerging treatments with a range of organisations.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body which makes evidence-based recommendations for the National Health Service on whether medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE assesses all new cancer medicines and is committed to publishing draft guidance at the time of licensing, with final guidance published within three months of licensing wherever possible.

■ Cancer: Nurses

Jim Shannon:

[27160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will commit to publishing a long-term, fully funded plan for the cancer workforce.

Jim Shannon:

[27161]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to (a) support and (b) allocate funding to the cancer workforce to ensure that there are sufficient nurses to tackle the treatment backlog and provide the best care for people living with cancer.

Peter Dowd:

[27176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to produce a long-term and fully funded plan for the cancer workforce.

Peter Dowd:

[\[27177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase the size of the cancer nursing workforce to help tackle the cancer treatment backlog; and if he will make a statement.

Jim Shannon:

[\[28190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will publish a fully-costed multi-year funding settlement as part of the autumn 2021 spending review to ensure an adequate number of cancer nurse specialists to deliver the targets set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Peter Dowd:

[\[28220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on publishing a fully-costed multi-year funding settlement to ensure the adequacy of the size of the cancer nurse specialist workforce to deliver the targets in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Jo Churchill:

The Spending Review 2020 provided £260 million to continue to increase the National Health Service workforce and support commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, including the Cancer Workforce Plan phase one published by Health Education England (HEE) in 2017. In 2020/21, HEE is prioritising the training of 400 clinical endoscopists and 450 reporting radiographers. Training grants are being offered for 250 nurses to become cancer nurse specialists and 100 chemotherapy nurses, training 58 biomedical scientists, developing an advanced clinical practice qualification in oncology and extending cancer support-worker training.

HEE is facilitating a number of initiatives to increase clinical nurse specialist capacity which will help tackle the elective backlog, including the development of cancer nurses, through provision of 250 training grants of up to £5,000 each in 2020/21. The grants are aimed at existing and aspiring cancer nurse specialists to enable them to undertake additional training to develop specialist clinical, leadership, education or research capabilities.

Discussions with HM Treasury on any multi-year settlement will take place within the Spending Review process.

Peter Dowd:

[\[32420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on providing a fully-costed and comprehensive multi-year funding settlement to ensure the adequacy of the size of the Cancer Nurse Specialist workforce to deliver the targets in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Jo Churchill:

Discussions with HM Treasury on any multi-year settlement will take place within the Spending Review process. There are specialist training grants for 250 nurses to become cancer nurse specialists.

■ Cancer: Staff**Olivia Blake:**[\[32553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increased investment in the clinical oncology workforce.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Discussions are ongoing between the Department and HM Treasury on the potential for further investment in the National Health Service workforce, including for clinical oncology, as part of the Spending Review process.

■ Cancer: Waiting Lists**Peter Dowd:**[\[28219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service, Early: Cancer Diagnosis Guidance, published on 31 March 2021, what plans the Government has to produce a long-term strategy to tackle the estimated 37,000 people who had not started their first cancer treatment.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England in partnership with NHS England and NHS Improvement, is running a campaign, 'Help us help you', to raise awareness of general symptoms of cancer and encourage people experiencing persistent symptoms to contact their general practitioner. Cancer referrals were over 10,500 referrals per day in April, and 11,000 per day in May.

Local systems, drawing on advice and analysis from their Cancer Alliance, will ensure that there is sufficient diagnostic and treatment capacity in place to meet the needs of cancer to meet the increased level of referrals and treatment required to address the shortfall in number of first treatments by March 2022. NHS England and NHS Improvement are prioritising delivery of NHS Long Term Plan commitments that also support recovery such as increasing diagnostic capacity and early diagnosis and survival rates through rapid diagnostic centres (RDC). As of June 2021, there were 88 active RDC pathways across hospitals in England, compared to 12 in March 2020.

Peter Dowd:[\[32419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the NHS Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service, Early: Cancer Diagnosis Guidance, published on 31 March 2021, what plans the Government has to produce a long-term strategy to tackle the estimated 37,000 people who had not started their first cancer treatment.

Jo Churchill:

Following the 'Help us help you' campaign which raised awareness of general symptoms of cancer and encouraged people experiencing persistent symptoms to

contact their general practitioner, cancer referrals reached over 10,500 referrals per day in April and 11,000 per day in May. Local systems, drawing on advice and analysis from their Cancer Alliance, will ensure that there is sufficient diagnostic and treatment capacity in place to meet the increased level of referrals and treatment required to address the number of first treatments by March 2022.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are prioritising delivery of NHS Long Term Plan commitments which supports recovery, such as increasing diagnostic capacity and early diagnosis and survival rates through rapid diagnostic centres (RDC). As of June 2021, there were 88 live RDC pathways across hospitals in England, compared to 12 in March 2020.

■ Care Homes and Hospices: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel:

[22016]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the guidance for visiting patients in (a) care homes and (b) hospices in respect of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

We regularly review and assess COVID-19 visiting guidance for inpatient settings (including hospices) and residential care home settings to ensure access to visitors, whilst balancing the risks and safety of patients and residents. Guidance has been informed by clinical advice throughout the pandemic in order to ensure it is up to date and effective in keeping outbreaks to a minimum whilst allowing residents and patients to have meaningful visits.

Guidance on visiting in care homes is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visiting-care-homes-during-coronavirus/update-on-policies-for-visiting-arrangements-in-care-homes>.

The Department engages with partners, including Public Health England, representative organisations and care providers, to understand the impact and effectiveness of care home visiting guidance in terms of allowing some visiting whilst preventing incursion of infection in care homes wherever possible, and inform any updates required. The Care Quality Commission has reported limited instances of providers not being able to follow visiting guidance. There has been little evidence of increased outbreaks in care homes as a result of more visits.

Most hospices are independent, charitable organisations, with visiting policies at the discretion of the hospice manager. We produce guidance on testing in hospices, including for visiting, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-hospices>.

The Department, NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the challenge hospices face in allowing families to spend as much time as possible with their loved one in the last few weeks of life while minimising the risks of COVID-19 transmission for other patients, visitors and staff. NHS England and NHS Improvement have

published guidance on end of life care, including how COVID-19 may affect visitation, which is available at the following link: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care/>

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson: [27059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to help protect people from covid-19 infection in care home settings in the event that further easing of covid-19 restrictions is announced for the 19 July 2021.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: On 27 June 2021, we announced a further £251 million of adult social care COVID-19 support through and extension of the Infection Control and Rapid Testing Fund. To prevent infections entering care homes, anyone who is likely to be infectious should continue to be discharged to a setting that meets a set of agreed standards to provide safe care for COVID-19 positive residents. The Government has extended the supply of free personal protective equipment for the adult social care sector until the end of March 2022.

Our guidance is kept under continuous review based on the emerging international and domestic evidence and we will continue to update our policies accordingly.

Rachael Maskell: [33267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to facilitate supported conversations with unvaccinated staff in care homes before those staff are required to have a covid-19 vaccine.

Helen Whately:

We are delivering a programme of work to support vaccine uptake among social care staff, including communications to address the concerns of those who may be hesitant to receive the vaccine. The Department has developed a toolkit for the adult social care sector which includes resources addressing common concerns about the vaccines and advice on how to reassure people about taking the vaccine. The Department has also talked directly to managers of care homes for older adults with low vaccine uptake among their staff, signposting managers to resources they can use when speaking to staff to enable them to feel confident about the vaccine.

Rachael Maskell: [33272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons it is mandatory for care home staff to receive a covid-19 vaccine and not domiciliary care staff.

Helen Whately:

The independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies Social Care Working Group has highlighted that people living in care homes have been particularly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Without high uptake among staff in care homes, there is a significant risk of the virus spreading further and causing harm to residents and those who cannot take the vaccine for medical reasons.

The responses to the consultation made a case for extending this policy beyond care homes to other settings where people vulnerable to COVID-19 receive care.

Therefore, a consultation on vaccination as condition of deployment in NHS and wider social care settings will be launched in the coming weeks.

■ **Care Homes: Dual Jobholding**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason people working in care homes are not allowed to work in other care settings during the covid-19 outbreak but are allowed to gain secondary employment in (a) the hospitality sector, (b) the retail sector and (c) other employment settings.

Helen Whately:

Restricting the movement of staff between care homes and other health and care settings remains essential to minimise the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks and infection in care homes. Findings from research published in July 2020 included some common factors in care homes with higher levels of infection amongst staff, which included some care home practices such as care homes employing staff who work across multiple sites.

■ **Care Homes: Vacancies**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to address the shortage of care home staff in (a) York and (b) nationally.

Helen Whately:

We expect councils to take an active role in developing the capacity of the adult social care workforce in their local area. The Department is also taking action to support recruitment into the adult social care sector, including a national recruitment campaign across broadcast, digital and social media. We are also working with the Department for Work and Pensions to promote adult social care careers to jobseekers.

■ **Care UK**

Jon Trickett:

[\[34445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value was of payments made to Care in each of the last 10 years.

Jon Trickett:

[\[34446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value was of payments made to Spire in each of the last 10 years.

Jon Trickett:

[\[34447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value was of payments made to Virgin Care in each of the last 10 years.

Jon Trickett:

[\[34448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the value was of payments made to Circle Health in each of the last 10 years.

Edward Argar:

The information is not held in the format requested. Contractual arrangements made with providers at clinical commissioning group and National Health Service trust level are not held centrally.

■ Carers

Emma Hardy:

[\[29882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to make a comparative assessment of the number of (a) people requiring care and (b) carers who are qualified and employed in England.

Helen Whately:

The Government uses national level modelling from the London School of Economics' Care Policy and Evaluation to understand how demand for publicly funded long-term care is likely to change in the future. The latest evidence shows that the demand for publicly funded long-term care is likely to grow in the coming years.

On assessing the number of carers who are qualified and employed, the majority of roles in adult social care do not have formal qualification requirements, whilst the number of workers employed today does not necessarily indicate how many people will choose to join the workforce in the future. Any assessment of workforce numbers would also need to account for the invaluable role played by informal carers.

■ Carers: Career Development

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to develop a career pathway for care staff.

Helen Whately:

The Department funds a range of training opportunities to help develop career pathways in adult social care, including funding Skills for Care to further develop their leadership programmes and the Workforce Development Fund which offers employers access to funding to support their staff, as well as support and essential development opportunities for regulated professionals in social care. The Department is continuing to provide financial support to students to qualify as social workers through the Social Work Bursary and Education Support Grant, as well as expanding the Think Ahead Mental Health Social Work Scheme. In addition, the Government is investing £2.5 billion in the National Skills Fund which includes £95 million of funding to give adults free access to level 3 qualifications.

■ Carers: Recruitment

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a specific minimum wage for care workers to assist with recruitment and retention of care staff.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: We have no current plans to make an assessment.

The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay independent of central Government. Local authorities work with care providers to determine a fair rate of pay based on local market conditions.

■ Conditions of Employment

Sarah Owen:

[\[32525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for social care staff and their employment rights of mandating covid-19 vaccinations as a condition of employment for those workers when that was not part of their existing employment contract.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: The proposed regulations to make vaccination a condition of deployment in care homes apply to all staff employed directly by the care home, those engaged via an agency and any volunteers deployed in the care home. The regulations contain a 16-week grace period from when they are made to when they come into force to enable staff who have not been vaccinated to take up the vaccine or obtain evidence that they are exempt.

Care homes will be expected to comply at all times with employment legislation and adhere to good employment practice in ensuring adherence to the regulations. This includes communicating the requirement and timescales to be vaccinated or obtain an exemption to staff as soon as possible, notifying staff of and the potential consequences of not doing so, and consulting and engaging with staff and exploring redeployment opportunities. Further details of good employment practice that care homes will be encouraged to follow will be set out in guidance which will be published as soon as possible.

■ Coronavirus

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[10131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 May 2021 to Question 6161 on the vaccination status of people hospitalised with the Indian variant of covid-19, for what reason those essential data are not held centrally in the format requested; in what format those data are held centrally; and if he will make it his policy without further delay to (a) gather centrally and (b) subsequently release to the media each day the numbers of people that have been hospitalised with the Indian

variant of covid-19 who are (i) vaccinated with (A) one and (B) both doses and (ii) unvaccinated against coronavirus.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 9 June 2021]: Data concerning the numbers of people hospitalised with the Delta variant who have received one dose, two doses and are unvaccinated is collected centrally for inclusion in Public Health England's (PHE) 'Investigation of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern: technical briefings' which is available at the following link:

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

This data was first included on 27 May and form part of ongoing surveillance and vaccine effectiveness monitoring activity. Public Health England collates data on COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations and COVID-19 vaccination status from a number of different data sources, including the Office for National Statistics, National Health Service trusts, private laboratories and Lighthouse Laboratories There are currently no plans to provide daily statistics due to varying reporting timelines of the data sources.

Rachael Maskell:

[36671]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will publish local data on who is being infected by covid-19 by (a) age, (b) ethnicity and (c) socio-economic status.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) publishes data on COVID-19 case data by age group at lower tier local authority level on the United Kingdom Coronavirus Dashboard which is available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

PHE also publishes regional and national COVID-19 case data by age group and ethnicity in the weekly flu and COVID-19 surveillance report. Data on COVID-19 case rates is available by index of multiple deprivation quintile. The surveillance report is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2021-to-2022-season>

■ Coronavirus: Children

Rachael Maskell:

[36670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what role paediatricians will have in identifying children eligible for the covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 19 July 2021, the Government accepted the final advice of the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to offer vaccination to children

and young people aged 12 years old and over with specific underlying health conditions that put them at risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19.

The National Health Service are asking local systems to have plans in place to invite eligible children for a first dose as soon as possible, with the second dose offered eight weeks later. Operational guidance will be issued to the service, including paediatricians. We are ensuring a robust process is in place for the identification and invitation of all eligible children and young people. Public Health England are currently updating the Green Book for public health professionals, including paediatricians, to reflect the updated at-risk groups who should receive vaccination.

■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

Justin Madders:

[\[35699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of calls (a) made to, (b) answered by and (c) that were answered within 60 seconds by the 119 covid-19 NHS test and trace service in each month from January to June 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: NHS Test and Trace has made an informal estimate of call volumes and response times. However, as this is primarily used for management purposes, it has not been centrally verified.

Cat Smith:

[\[35728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people deleted the NHS Test and Trace app on (a) 18, (b) 19 and (c) 20 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold data in the format requested. We are considering what further metrics we may be able to publish about app usage.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[35759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data he holds on the length of time taken to upload contact tracing information on the NHS Test and Trace system.

Jo Churchill:

No such data is held. Contact tracing information is uploaded during the scripted conversations with the contact cases by the NHS Test and Trace call handler.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[35760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans for NHS Test and Trace to record more detailed contact tracing information.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: NHS Test and Trace plan to record additional contact tracing information in connection with the recent announcement covering future self-isolation requirements for those who are fully vaccinated.

Layla Moran:

[\[35870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate the Government has made of the number of people who have deleted the NHS covid-19 application after installing it.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: We have made no specific estimate as this information is not currently held. We are considering what further metrics we may be able to publish about app usage.

■ **Coronavirus: Contracts**

Neale Hanvey:

[\[31554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of covid-19 related public procurement contracts were awarded using emergency contracting procedures; and what the total value of those contracts is.

Neale Hanvey:

[\[31555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish details of the (a) individual covid-19 related public procurement contracts which were awarded using emergency contracting procedures, (b) value of each of those contracts and (c) purpose for which each of those contracts was awarded in each month since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: Regulation 32(2)(c) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 allows for the direct award of a contract without advertising in cases of “extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the contracting authority”. The majority of COVID-19 related contracts were awarded using this Regulation. However, to obtain the information requested incur disproportionate cost. The Department’s data does not distinguish between the use of this Regulation and other procedures under the Regulations which also allow for a direct award.

■ **Coronavirus: Death**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[\[35830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS staff have died from covid-19 since March 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: Data published by the Office for National Statistics’ shows that between 9 March 2020 and 7 May 2021, there were 639 registered deaths involving COVID-19 among healthcare workers and 922 deaths among social care workers in England aged 20 to 64 years old, using last known occupation. The definition of healthcare workers includes both those employed in the National Health Service and wider healthcare sector workers.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Ben Bradley:

[\[28307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 10614 on Coronavirus: Disease Control, how representatives of industry can participate in such efficacy trials; and what steps (a) his Department and (b) the Health and Safety Executive is taking to explore the potential merits of using (i) photohydroionisation and (ii) other technologies to decontaminate single use FFP3 masks to extend their use.

Jo Churchill:

At the start of 2020, a review of technologies to decontaminate single use personal protective equipment (PPE) was undertaken. UVC was among the technologies assessed as it is used for sterilisation of pathogens in other settings. However, there are no regulatory approvals for UVC in healthcare settings, so HPV was selected for the pilot phase. This pilot found HPV was not effective, so further testing was stood down.

Given the resilience we have built through on-shore production of single use PPE and the piloting of reusable PPE, there are no current plans for further investigative work.

Helen Hayes:

[\[29100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the lifting of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021 on people (a) with a weakened immune system, (b) with blood cancer and (c) who are medically unable to take the covid-19 vaccines.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: While no specific assessment has been made, a recent study from Public Health England looked at more than one million people in at-risk groups, which found that people who are immunosuppressed are significantly better protected from symptomatic infection following the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Studies are also underway looking at which groups are less protected through vaccination, which may include groups with weakened immune systems and those with cancers of the blood. The findings will improve our knowledge of the levels of risk. We also recognise that there is a very small group of people who cannot receive the Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[29135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what equalities impact assessments his Department has made of plans to end covid-19 restrictions on 19 July for the protected characteristics of (a) sex, (b) maternity, (c) disability and (d) race.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The Department has produced equality analyses of the potential impact of COVID-19 restrictions to assist in decision-making. We will

consider an updated equality analysis before any decisions are taken on restrictions from 19 July which will cover all protected characteristics, including sex, maternity, disability and race. This satisfies the public sector equality duty on public authorities to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010.

Ms Diane Abbott:

[29725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on covid-19 risk for immunocompromised people after the planned easing of covid-19 restrictions on July 19 2021.

Jo Churchill:

While no specific assessment has been made, a recent study from Public Health England looked at more than one million people in at-risk groups, which found that people who are immunosuppressed are significantly better protected from symptomatic infection following the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Studies are also underway looking at which groups are less protected through vaccination, which may include groups with weakened immune systems and those with cancers of the blood. The findings will improve our knowledge of the levels of risk. We also recognise that there is a very small group of people who cannot receive the Pfizer BioNTech, Moderna or AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines.

Ms Diane Abbott:

[29726]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help reduce the risk of contracting covid-19 for immunocompromised people after the planned easing of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals was published on 12 July including those who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed, is available at the following link:

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

Following the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the Government offered the household contacts aged over 16 years old of severely immunosuppressed individuals priority access to vaccination from COVID-19, to help reduce the risk of the immunosuppressed individual catching COVID-19 from a member of their household. This recommendation has now been extended to household contacts aged 12 to 15 years old.

The JCVI has provided interim advice is that booster vaccines should first be offered in a two staged approach, with individuals in stage one offered a booster and flu vaccine as soon as possible from September, which includes adults aged 16 years old and over who are immunosuppressed. Those in stage two should be offered a booster vaccine as soon as practicable after stage one, with equal emphasis on deployment of the flu vaccine where eligible. This includes adult household contacts

of immunosuppressed individuals. General practitioner practices or specialists can also provide personalised support and advice on any additional precautions.

Peter Kyle:

[30400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people who are immunosuppressed after the easing of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals was published on 12 July and outlines support for all clinically extremely vulnerable people, including those who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed, which is available at the following link:

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

In addition, immunosuppressed individuals are a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies, novel antivirals and repurposed compounds. Their general practitioner practice or specialist can also provide personalised support and advice on any additional precautions.

Dan Jarvis:

[32397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support is available to ensure that where a person is clinically vulnerable they are able to interact safely in public after the lifting of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals from 19 July was published on 12 July, outlining support that all clinically extremely vulnerable people can access, which is available at the following link:

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

If a clinically extremely vulnerable individual has any concerns about their physical or mental wellbeing they should access the National Health Service website or contact their general practitioner practice or specialist who can provide them with nuanced and personalised support and advice on any additional precautions they should take.

Mr Clive Betts:

[33113]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what covid-19 related powers local authorities will retain after 19 July 2021 to manage any further covid-19 outbreaks; and if he will set out which of those retained powers local authorities will (a) exercise directly and (b) need to gain authority from Government before use.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020 were extended from 18 July to 27 September.

The Regulations provide powers for local authorities to issue directions to place restrictions on or close businesses, events, and public outdoor places where they assess there is a serious and imminent threat to public health posed by COVID-19. We will keep these measures under continuous review to ensure that they are proportionate as part of the public health response to COVID-19. Local authorities must notify the Secretary of State when the powers are used but do not require authority from Government before use, with the exception of those related to 'essential infrastructure'.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[34471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Disabled Children's Partnerships Left Behind report, what discussions he had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the ring-fenced funding of covid-19 recovery policies for disabled children, young people, and families to allow them to regain lost progress and improve their ability in managing their conditions.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: We have had no specific discussions. However, as part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health and care services to disabled children. We have provided 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 for children's social care. Since 2019-2020, the Government has provided additional funding for adults' and children's social care via the social care grant and is allocated £1.7 billion in 2021-2022. To improve access to healthcare, including for disabled children, we have also invested £6.6 billion from March to September 2021 to ensure health inequalities are tackled in National Health Service recovery plans.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) NHS Test and Trace and (b) local public health teams have the (i) capacity and (b) resources to manage effectively an increase in cases of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

NHS Test and Trace has built in flexibility within its contracts to adjust capacity which includes surge testing through mobile testing units; door-to-door testing, increasing supplies of test kits; increased laboratory processing capacity; enhanced contact tracing; walk in vaccine clinics; and increased communications to drive vaccine uptake.

We have provided local authority public health teams with additional funding through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to support their local efforts in managing COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks to deliver interventions such as targeted testing for hard-to-reach groups; additional contact tracing; enhanced communication and marketing; and additional support for compliance and enforcement. We expect

local authority Chief Executives to work in coordination with the Director of Public Health to determine the necessary activities.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the test and release strategy at preventing the spread of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

No recent assessment has been made.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[36695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether anyone has been appointed to take over the responsibilities that Dr Jenny Harries held, in terms of shielding and other policies to help the clinically extremely vulnerable in her previous position as deputy chief medical officer, following her appointment as chief executive of the UK Health Security Agency and head of NHS Test and Trace in April 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Senior officials oversee the development and implementation of policy drawing on clinical expertise as required.

■ **Coronavirus: Immunotherapy**

Daisy Cooper:

[\[34600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential clinical benefits to immunocompromised patients of the use of monoclonal antibody treatments alongside covid-19 vaccinations.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[34602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his strategy is for ensuring immunocompromised patients have access to treatments that may boost the efficacy of covid-19 vaccines.

Jo Churchill:

Immunocompromised patients are a priority cohort for research into therapeutic and prophylaxis treatments such as monoclonal antibody therapies, novel antivirals, and repurposed compounds. Monoclonal antibody treatments could potentially play a complementary role alongside the current vaccines programme in providing protection for those patients who may receive lower protection from vaccination compared to the general population. The Therapeutics Taskforce and the cross-agency United Kingdom-wide group RAPID C-19 are monitoring clinical trials of monoclonal antibody treatments. The National Health Service is preparing to deploy antibody treatments as soon as they become available.

It is not yet possible to determine the exact patients who may be able to benefit from new treatments, as this will depend on results from clinical trials, licensing approvals

from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and clinical policies set by NHS England and expert clinicians.

Daisy Cooper: [\[34601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to assist the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to progress the licensing process for the REGEN-COV, Regeneron, monoclonal antibody treatment.

Jo Churchill:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA) licensing of therapeutics, including for REGEN-COV, is an independent process. The Therapeutics Taskforce encourages companies seeking approvals for COVID-19 therapeutics to provide the data the MHRA requires to ensure that their products are of acceptable quality, safety and efficacy. Approval can only be determined when the full data has been provided by the manufacturer and assessed by the MHRA.

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[31473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing free (a) FFP2 and (b) FFP3 face masks to clinically extremely vulnerable people during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: Personal protective equipment (PPE) is used in a limited number of settings to protect wearers against hazards and risks, such as surgical mask or respirators used in medical and industrial settings. FFP2/PPF3 masks and other higher specification PPE must be professionally fit tested to ensure that air flows through the filter rather than around the mask. If these masks are provided without fit testing, it is not clear that they will be effective. Additionally, in settings where members of the public are currently required to wear face coverings, it may be difficult to safely and comfortably wear a fitted mask for extended periods of time.

■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

Anne Marie Morris: [\[30357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure a consistent message across Government communication channels that there is no legal requirement to self-isolate if notified by the NHS covid-19 phone app.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: As cases continue rising it is vital that people are aware of their personal risk so that they can make informed decisions on their behaviour to protect those around them. The NHS COVID-19 app is doing exactly what it was designed to do - informing close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 that they are at risk and advising them to isolate. Our communications campaigns and messaging across government reflects the latest

scientific advice about the importance of self-isolation. The NHS COVID-19 app continues to be an important tool in response to the pandemic.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[31318]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the scientific reasoning is behind the Government's policy of a person who is fully vaccinated against covid-19 still having to self-isolate if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: Continuing with close contact isolation until 16 August 2021 will allow more time for people to receive their second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Higher population immunity will mitigate against the small risk of onward transmission from fully vaccinated, but infected, close contacts. Maintaining contact self-isolation will contribute to transmission reduction and aligns with the principle of gradual resumption of pre-pandemic behaviours following step four of the roadmap.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies' modelling suggests a period of extremely high prevalence of infection lasting until at least the end of August 2021, which increases exposure risk, even in vaccinated individuals. This modelling is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001160/S1300_SAGE_93_minutes_Coronavirus_COVID-19_response_7_July_2021.pdf

Cat Smith:

[35729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people were told to isolate by the NHS Test and Trace app on (a) 18, (b) 19 and (c) 20 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold data in the format requested. We are considering what further metrics we may be able to publish about app usage.

■ **Coronavirus: Screening**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[28939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people who test positive for covid-19 on 19 July 2021 who will be (a) asymptomatic, (b) unable to work through sickness, (c) hospitalised and (d) admitted to intensive care.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: We have not made this specific estimate.

Justin Madders:

[29810]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the finding of the AffiDX antigen lateral flow covid-19 test

small-scale study that that test outperformed two lateral flow antigen tests which are commercially available in Europe when detecting the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2.

Jo Churchill:

We have had no such discussions.

Mark Jenkinson:

[\[33329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the selection criteria and process for the daily covid-19 contact testing workplace pilot.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Daily contact testing permits a contact of a positive case of COVID-19 to test daily for seven days with a lateral flow device, with each negative result releasing the individual to undertake essential activities for 24 hours.

Organisations participating in the workplace daily contact testing pilot were selected because they had expressed an interest in joining the pilot and already had an asymptomatic test site in the workplace. The workplaces selected were also designed to ensure a spread of different types of organisation, including additional public sector organisations, to assess the operational implications of running daily contact testing. A document setting out in more detail the process and selection criteria for the workplace daily contact testing pilot is currently under review prior to publication.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[33924\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the current rate for false (a) positives and (b) negatives from (i) PCR and (ii) lateral flow covid-19 tests.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: Since August 2020, Public Health England has evaluated over 150 lateral flow antigen devices produced by United Kingdom and international manufacturers. To date, 31 have displayed performance characteristics desirable for mass testing, namely a very high specificity and sensitivity – or low false positive and false negative - against viral loads associated with infectiousness.

Specificity and sensitivity vary from test to test. The rate of kit failure or false positive or negative, from a phase two evaluation was 9.9%. Real time polymerase chain reaction tests are highly sensitive and highly specific at over 90%, but may still show low rates of false negative and false positive results. These false negative and false positive results cannot be entirely eliminated and all tests should be interpreted in light of clinical history and presentation.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[33926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on how many occasions in the last two months regional covid-19 PCR testing sites in England reached their maximum daily testing capacity.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: None of the regional COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction testing sites reached their maximum daily testing capacity in the last two months.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[33927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the available covid-19 PCR testing capacity for each of the regional testing centres in England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: We hold a number of data fields including information on geographical metrics; logistical and operational data; information on contractors and sub-contractors; and site-specific information.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[33928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the maximum daily covid-19 PCR testing capacity was at each regional testing centre in England for each month from January 2021 to the latest date for which data is available.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: We are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive. We are currently running a procurement exercise for assisted testing services at regional test sites in England. Information related to specific testing capacity at each of these sites forms part of the competitive tendering process. Publication of this information could weaken the Department's position in commissioning and achieving value for money in the procurement of future services.

Justin Madders:

[\[34513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, since its introduction, how many people have participated in the daily covid-19 testing regime as an alternative to self-isolating; and how many of those people have subsequently had to self-isolate as a result of a positive test.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: There are currently two ongoing clinical studies on daily COVID-19 testing as an alternative to self-isolation. The general public daily contact testing clinical study is a randomised control trial led by Public Health England, trialling at-home testing. The secondary schools and colleges daily contact testing clinical study is a randomised control trial, sponsored by the Department and Public Health England, trialling assisted on-site testing. We do not yet have the requested data, but information on the number of participants will be published once the studies have completed.

The workplaces daily contact testing pilot evaluation scheme is evaluating the operational feasibility of daily contact testing in workplaces. Since the pilot began in March until 10 July, 3,596 individuals have been tested as part of the evaluation across 20 workplaces, resulting in 25 positive cases being identified.

Justin Madders:

[34515]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) employees of Government, (b) Ministers and (c) Members of Parliament have participated in the daily testing pilot.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: We do not hold information on the occupation of those taking part in the workplace daily contact testing pilot evaluation scheme. Data for the daily contact testing clinical study, trialling home testing for members of the general public, is also anonymised.

Justin Madders:

[34517]

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

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: Organisations participating in the workplace daily contact testing pilot were selected having expressed an interest in joining the pilot and whether an asymptomatic testing site was available in the workplace. The workplaces selected were also designed to ensure a spread of different types of organisation, including additional public sector organisations, to assess the operational implications of running daily contact testing.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[35656]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many lateral flow tests for covid-19 are available for (a) August, (b) September, (c) October, (d) November and (e) December 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The Department is unable to release this information as it is currently being used for the formulation of government policy on lateral flow testing. We procured 294m Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests in May and are constantly reviewing demand to ensure we have enough stock to satisfy demand. We have recently received approval from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to use a United Kingdom made LFD, a real milestone on the progressive journey of the UK diagnostics and life sciences industry.

Rachael Maskell:

[35758]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there are sufficient lateral flow tests and PCR tests to meet the covid-19 testing demand.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: We are increasing our polymerase chain reaction and lateral flow device capacity to align with demand and expect that additional capacity will be secured over the coming weeks. We will also begin building our winter stockpile to ensure sufficient cover is in place ahead of winter.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[21972]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he is having with representatives of providers of covid-19 vaccination hubs on the future use of the systems established for the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We engage regularly with the COVID-19 vaccination programme to discuss its progress and future.

A lessons learned process is ongoing to look at how the systems behind the programme can be used in future. On 1 July, NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to National Health service organisations setting out COVID-19 vaccination autumn/winter or phase three planning, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/07/C1327-covid-19-vaccination-autumn-winter-phase-3-planning.pdf>

The letter highlights the delivery model for the potential booster vaccination programme and co-administration with the seasonal influenza vaccination programme. The letter acknowledges that mixed delivery models, with tailoring to community needs in partnership with local authorities, has played a critical role in reaching underserved communities. The letter recommends systems should deploy delivery models which both spread capacity across community pharmacy, vaccination centres and general practice whilst considering the best delivery access for local population requirements, making the most of community pharmacy, pop ups, mobile units and other approaches.

Jess Phillips:

[29061]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish communications on the potential continued risk to immunocompromised and immunosuppressed groups who may not receive the same level of protection from the covid-19 vaccines as the general population.

Nadhim Zahawi:

On 12 July, we published updated guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable, including those who are immunocompromised and immunosuppressed, in light of the lifting of restrictions on 19 July. 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/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

The Deputy Chief Medical Officer and NHS England's National Medical Director wrote to clinicians on 16 July regarding immunosuppressed patients to provide an overview of the information available to date regarding vaccine efficacy in the immunosuppressed. This included additional information to inform conversations clinicians may have with patients who are immunosuppressed.

Sarah Owen:

[\[31551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 July 2021 to Question 28345 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what steps he is taking to ensure that UK residents vaccinated against covid-19 whilst overseas with a (a) Pfizer, (b) Oxford-AstraZeneca and (c) Moderna vaccine are able to be certified as vaccinated by the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: We currently undertaking work to agree which regulators from around the world have similar stringent standards as the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. This will be finalised in due course and will allow recognition of vaccines administered abroad. Once a decision has been made, NHSX will provide access to a NHS COVID Pass for those eligible.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[32276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that covid-19 vaccinations administered in (a) EU member states and (b) other jurisdictions are recognised as valid for entry to UK without the need for quarantine and isolation.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Work is ongoing to determine which non-United Kingdom vaccines could be recognised in this country. Once confirmed, NHSX will provide access to an NHS COVID Pass for those eligible.

Catherine West:

[\[32467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on mandatory covid-19 vaccinations for care home staff.

Helen Whately:

The regulations will require care home providers to deploy only those workers and volunteers who have received a complete course of their COVID-19 vaccination, unless they are medically exempt. Any professionals visiting a care home, such as healthcare workers, tradespeople, hairdressers and beauticians and Care Quality Commission inspectors will also be required to show they have been vaccinated before entering the home, unless they have a medical exemption. There will be a 16-week grace period from when the regulations are made to when they come into force to enable staff to receive the vaccine.

Catherine West:

[\[32469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the numbers of care staff that will leave the care sector as a result of his policy of mandatory covid-19 vaccinations for care home staff.

Helen Whately:

The Government will be setting out analysis of the number of current staff who we estimate may not be vaccinated or exempt by the end of the 16-week grace period in an impact assessment to be published shortly.

Rachael Maskell:[\[33268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the uptake of the covid-19 vaccine following a supported conversation.

Nadhim Zahawi:

No specific assessment has been made. Information on the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine following a supported conversation is not collected as part of the vaccine record.

Philip Davies:[\[33874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the number of (a) men and (b) women receiving the covid-19 vaccination; and what steps he is taking to ensure that equal numbers of men and women receive that vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

No specific comparative assessment has been made on the number of men and women receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

The 'UK COVID-19 vaccine uptake plan' published in February sets out the Government's approach to ensure that all groups have the opportunity to receive the vaccine. The plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-uptake-plan/uk-covid-19-vaccine-uptake-plan>

Vicky Foxcroft:[\[34548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to offer people who are immunosuppressed, but not identified as extremely clinically vulnerable, a booster covid-19 vaccination as part of the covid-19 vaccination booster programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published interim advice on a potential COVID-19 booster vaccination programme on 30 June, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-5-year-action-plan-for-antimicrobial-resistance-2019-to-2024>

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

that adults aged 16 years old and over who are immunosuppressed are offered a booster vaccine in stage one.

Final decisions on the timing and scope and cohort eligibility of any COVID-19 vaccine booster programme will be confirmed once the JCVI has provided their final advice.

Matt Rodda:

[34567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much (a) his Department and (b) the NHS has spent on (i) advertising using social media and other forms of information channels and (ii) other public information to encourage people to uptake the covid-19 vaccine to date; and how much has been spent on public information to encourage minority communities to receive that vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: The Department spent £1.3 million on advertising between December 2020 and 31 January 2021. Activity included tailored content designed to specifically support multicultural communities. Some local National Health Service teams ran COVID-19 vaccine campaigns, but this information is not collected centrally.

Campaign spending supporting the COVID-19 vaccination programme transferred to the Cabinet Office in February 2021.

Dawn Butler:

[35555]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support the health and wellbeing needs of people who are currently participating in trials of unapproved covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: Participants in all clinical trials are provided with contact details at the local site should they have any health and wellbeing concerns which may be related to the trial.

The trial's principle investigator advise the participant based on their knowledge of whether the participant received an active COVID-19 vaccine trial product or a placebo.

Dawn Butler:

[35556]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) steps his Department is taking to encourage take up of the covid-19 vaccinations amongst health workers and (b) guidance and support his Department is offering to staff who may be hesitant about receiving a covid-19 vaccine.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The 'UK COVID-19 vaccine uptake plan' sets out our approach to maximise the number of people taking up the offer of vaccination. The plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-uptake-plan/uk-covid-19-vaccine-uptake-plan>

We are working at a local and national level to give health and social care workers information about the vaccine with information from trusted, local leaders and to ensure there is appropriate outreach from clinicians and vaccine services.

The Government launched a six-week consultation in April to inform the decision on whether to make the COVID-19 vaccination a condition of deployment in adult care homes. The responses highlighted a clear public health rationale to consider extending this policy to other settings where people vulnerable to COVID-19 may also receive care. The Government will shortly launch a further public consultation on whether to make COVID-19 vaccination a condition of deployment in healthcare and the wider social care sector, to help protect patients and the people they care for.

Adam Holloway:

[35566]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made any special arrangements to encourage people living illegally in the UK to receive covid-19 vaccinations in recognition that those people will not have NHS or national insurance numbers and may be fearful of engaging with the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Vaccination against COVID-19 is offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status. Entitlement to free National Health Service treatment is generally based on ordinary residence in the UK. A person who can show they have taken up ordinary residence in the UK can access all NHS services immediately, including COVID-19 vaccinations, based on clinical need. No immigration checks are needed to receive these services and the NHS is not required to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

An NHS number is not needed to make a booking for a COVID-19 vaccine or when attending a vaccination appointment. If individuals are registered with a general practitioner (GP), their GP will contact them in due course. If they are not registered with a GP, NHS regional teams, will contact unregistered people to ensure they are offered the vaccine. The Enhanced Service Specification: COVID-19 vaccination programme 2020/21 enables practices working within their Primary Care Network groupings from shared vaccination sites to vaccinate unregistered patients provided they are eligible.

Cat Smith:

[35735]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will upgrade the NHS Test and Trace app so that people who have had one covid-19 vaccine dose in England and one covid-19 vaccine dose in Wales can demonstrate their covid-19 vaccination status.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Obtaining an NHS COVID Pass via the NHS App is available to citizens registered with a general practitioner (GP) in England. Individuals who are not registered with a

GP, but who have a National Health Service number can obtain an NHS COVID Pass through the NHS.uk or by calling 119. Currently, vaccines administered in other systems such as Wales are not automatically recorded in the vaccination system used in England.

A Vaccine Data Resolution Service is being established by NHS Digital to support any patient residing in England, registered with an English GP, who may have incomplete COVID-19 vaccination records, either because a vaccination event has not registered appropriately or may have taken place in a different part of the United Kingdom. This service, expected to be available by early August, will initially address issues around vaccination records for those who have been vaccinated in the UK and queries about vaccinations displaying in the NHS App.

Fleur Anderson: [\[35914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent engagement he has had with participants on the Novavax trial.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Ministers have had no recent engagement with trial participants.

Apsana Begum: [\[35925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the European Medicines Agency on the exclusion of Indian-made covid vaccines from the EU vaccine passport scheme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have had no recent discussions with the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The EMA is an independent regulatory body which makes decisions on the vaccines approved for use in the European Union. The EU Digital COVID Certificate is a matter for the European Commission and individual Member States. The Government continues to engage the European Commission on certification to ensure that travel is unhindered and supported by a common approach. People vaccinated in the United Kingdom can use the NHS COVID Pass to demonstrate their vaccination status for international travel.

Rachael Maskell: [\[36672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish information on local infection rates and hospitalisations according to vaccination status.

Nadhim Zahawi:

While Public Health England (PHE) plans to publish national data on hospitalisation by vaccination status in due course, there are currently no plans to publish local infection rates by vaccination status.

The technical briefing published by PHE provides the latest data regarding hospitalisations and deaths by variant, including the Delta variant, as well as data concerning those hospitalised with the Delta variant who are vaccinated with one and both doses and those unvaccinated. This data is available at the following link:

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

■ **Coronavirus: York**

Rachael Maskell:

[35761]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of York's local contact tracing system compared to NHS Track and Trace.

Jo Churchill:

No specific assessment has been made.

■ **Dementia: Diagnosis**

Andrew Rosindell:

[33166]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to restore rates of dementia diagnosis to pre-covid-19 outbreak levels; and if he will take steps to further improve dementia diagnosis rates from those pre-covid-19 outbreak baselines.

Helen Whately:

The Government has made £17 million available this financial year to NHS England and NHS Improvement to reduce dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the dementia diagnosis rates and deliver targeted efforts to support recovery of referrals, diagnosis and where appropriate, support access to post-diagnostic support. We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course.

Andrew Rosindell:

[33167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the diagnosis of dementia is (a) more accurate and (b) given at the earliest opportunity.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing to encourage memory assessment services to provide safe and person-centred assessment and diagnosis for dementia, via remote methods or in face-to-face consultations as appropriate. To ensure accurate diagnosis, webinars and guidance have been provided to support evolving best practice and an approach to diagnosis that supports patient choice.

To ensure early diagnosis, the Government has made £17 million available this financial year to NHS England and NHS Improvement to reduce dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses.

Andrew Rosindell:

[33168]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that NHS services are able to accurately diagnose all the subgroups of dementia.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are continuing to encourage memory assessment services to provide safe and person-centred assessment and diagnosis, via remote methods or in face-to-face consultations as appropriate for all types of dementia diagnoses. Webinars and guidance have been provided to support evolving best practice and an approach to diagnosis that supports patient choice. The 'Memory Service Assessments: A New Way of Working' guidance specifically sets out considerations for subtyping a diagnosis of dementia as part of the diagnostic pathway and is available at the following link:

[http://www.yhscn.nhs.uk/media/PDFs/mhdn/Dementia/Covid_19/MAS/MSA - A New Way of Working revised Dec 2020.pdf](http://www.yhscn.nhs.uk/media/PDFs/mhdn/Dementia/Covid_19/MAS/MSA_-_A_New_Way_of_Working_revised_Dec_2020.pdf)

■ Dementia: Research

Jonathan Ashworth:

[23196]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the Government spent on dementia research in (a) 2018-19, (b) 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: In 2018-19, Government spending on dementia research was £82.9 million and £75.7 million in 2019-20. Figures for spending in 2020-21 are not yet available.

■ Dental Services

Rachael Maskell:

[24254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria he is using to assess the adequacy of the number of dentists.

Jo Churchill:

Health Education England (HEE) uses population data to identify locations that may have an over supply or under supply of dental professionals in training, both currently and projected for future years. HEE is working to develop training allocation models to provide more places in those areas which are undersupplied based on this data, which is intended to address medium and long-term supply.

Data on the number of dentists who have carried out National Health Service activity by region during each financial year is published annually by NHS Digital as part of their NHS Dental Statistics collection. This, alongside other data held at regional level on the oral health needs of their population, is used to assess the adequacy of provision.

Apsana Begum:

[\[35935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional funding he plans to provide to NHS England to help reduce the current waiting lists for NHS dentistry.

Jo Churchill:

We continue to work closely with the National Health Service, Public Health England and the profession to safely increase levels of service, taking into account the ongoing infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements. This includes prioritising existing and additional funding provided to NHS England to tackle backlogs in care.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: CCTV**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many CCTV breaches have been reported at his Department in each of the last five years.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: In the last five years there has been one breach where CCTV footage has been shared outside of the Department.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have access to the CCTV footage recorded in his Department's offices.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: We are unable to provide the specific number of people with access to the Department's CCTV for security reasons. However, security officers have access to CCTV on a rota basis.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a comprehensive record of people who have access to the CCTV footage recorded in his Department's offices (a) exists and (b) is frequently updated.

Edward Argar:

A comprehensive record of people who have access to the CCTV footage recorded in the Department's offices exists and is frequently updated.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: China**

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[29739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish (a) the company name and (b) the contract value for each contract that a Chinese or Chinese-financed company holds with (i) his Department and (ii) the NHS; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The location of all overseas suppliers with which the Department currently holds contracts could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Information is not held on whether a contract is held with a Chinese-financed company.

NHS England and NHS Improvement do not collect this information centrally.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Contracts**Fleur Anderson:**[\[27344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what role Ministers in his Department had in the approval of contracts under the emergency procurement processes during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: Ministers were advised by officials to make decisions in response to COVID-19, which included consideration of procurement and contracting options with suppliers. Under the Department's standing Financial Control Framework Ministers delegate to the Department's Accounting Officers to deliver their decisions and provide support in handling public funds. The Accounting Officer should ensure the Department operates to a high standard of probity and has safeguards in place to ensure value for money and appropriate risk management procedures. Under this Framework, assurance processes to assess offers from suppliers were put in place and undertaken by officials in relation to all individual contracts awarded in response to COVID-19 using regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations, which allows for a direct contract award due to extreme urgency or the absence of competition.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Email**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[24191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Minister for Health has conducted any departmental business on his private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[24192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health has conducted any departmental business on her private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Jonathan Ashworth:[\[24193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any departmental business has been conducted on his private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Minister for Care has conducted any departmental business on her private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Prevention, Public Health and Primary Care has conducted any departmental business on her private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Innovation has conducted any departmental business on his private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Covid-19 Vaccine Deployment has conducted any departmental business on his private email addresses; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that full records are kept of that business.

Edward Argar:

All Ministers are aware of the guidance around personal email usage and Government business is conducted in line with that guidance.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Security

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how security services for his Department are provided; and whether any element of those security services are contracted to the independent sector.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: EMCOR UK are contracted to provide security services to the Department's buildings.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[24186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which (a) Ministers, (b) officials of his Department and (c) other personnel have access to the (i) CCTV footage, (ii) records of entry and exit and (iii) other security information relating to his Department's offices.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: The contracted security officers at each office have access to the closed-circuit television footage, access control system and any other

security systems. Officials involved in the management of security could request access to the information.

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[24187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how often the security footage relating to his Department's offices is monitored and checked for anomalies.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: Closed circuit television footage is monitored live.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Caroline Lucas: [\[15211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 7785 tabled on 26 May 2021 by the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion; and what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the US Food and Drug Administration warning, issued on 10 June 2021, for the public to stop using the Innova test; if he will (a) specify how much money has been spent on Innova lateral flow tests to date and (b) estimate how much more will be spent on those tests under current contracts; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 17 June 2021]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 17 June to Question 7785.

Lateral flow tests used by the United Kingdom, including Innova, receive a rigorous laboratory-based evaluation by a joint Public Health England and University of Oxford team. We are confident that these tests are safe and effective. We are unable to provide the information requested relating to costs as it is commercially sensitive.

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[28927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 10131, tabled on 29 May 2021, by the Rt hon. Member for New Forest East.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer of 26 July to Question 10131.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[32511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide an Answer to Question 29135 on Coronavirus: Disease Control by 15 July 2021 which is the last sitting day of the House of Commons before covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 26 July to Question 29135.

Mr Mark Harper:

[R] [\[33867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Question 27052 tabled by the Rt hon. Member for Forest Dean on 5 July 2021, for what reason it has not been possible to provide an Answer by the named day of 8 July 2021; and by which date he plans to provide a substantive Answer to that Question.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer of 22 July to Question 27052.

Mr Mark Harper:

[R] [\[33869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason it was not possible to answer Question 28127 tabled by the hon. Member for Forest of Dean on the named day of 12 July 2021; and when he plans to provide a substantive response to that question.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer of 20 July to Question 28127.

■ Dermatitis: Waiting Lists

Jim Shannon:

[\[36634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in average waiting times for atopic eczema patients accessing dermatology services; and what plans he has to improve access to those services.

Jo Churchill:

No specific assessment has been made. We have provided an additional £1 billion to improve patient access and accelerate the recovery of elective services, including dermatology.

■ Dermatology

Peter Dowd:

[\[30366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to prioritise the transformation of dermatology services in England.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: NHS England's National Outpatient Transformation programme is developing a toolkit to support local systems to transform dermatology services. The toolkit includes a suite of redesign tools, optimal dermatology pathways and a baseline self-assessment tool, which will enable local systems to improve the efficiency and enhance the benefits of dermatology outpatient appointments. It also explores opportunities to improve the quality of primary care referrals into secondary care, teledermatology and the two week wait skin cancer pathway, working collaboratively with the National Cancer team to create new pathways for assessing and treating suspected skin cancer patients.

■ Diabetes: Health Services

Feryal Clark:

[32540]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 28361 on Diabetes: Health Services, what recent steps his Department has taken to improve the public health provision of diabetes (a) treatment, (b) support, (c) care and (d) prevention services.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Long Term Plan set out a number of key ambitions, to improve care and outcomes for those individuals with diabetes. To support patients to potentially achieve remission from their type 2 diabetes while improving management and control, NHS England and NHS Improvement are piloting at scale, low-calorie diets. To improve care, NHS England and NHS Improvement have invested approximately £120 million of Transformation Funding into local services to target variation and improve performance in the treatment and care of people living with type 1 and 2 diabetes since 2017/18. This investment, overseen by local systems, covers the four treatment and care priorities, including: footcare teams; inpatient nursing teams; treatment target attainment; and, supported self-management. NHS England and NHS Improvement's diabetes prevention programme identifies those most at risk of developing diabetes and refers them onto a behaviour change programme. Individuals receive tailored, personalised help to reduce their risk of developing stage 2 diabetes. Following a successful two-year pilot programme that saw a significant increase in the adoption of flash glucose technology across all clinical commissioning groups, over 35% of patients living with type 1 diabetes are now benefitting from flash glucose monitoring. Our focus on obesity and investment in weight management services also aims to prevent diabetes.

■ Disability: Children

Alex Cunningham:

[35630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the finding by the Disabled Children's Partnership's in their report, *Left Behind*, published 16 July 2021, that nearly three quarters of disabled children have seen their progress managing their conditions reversed in the covid-19 outbreak, what plans he has to ensure that disabled children can (a) regain lost progress and (b) improve their ability in managing their condition.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: As part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services to disabled children, including support for managing their condition. In 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance making clear that restoration of essential community services must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan

in place or are going through an assessment for one. We have invested £6.6 billion from March to September 2021 to help National Health Service recovery and an additional £1 billion to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children, to access NHS services.

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[35838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the average amount of additional (a) therapy and (b) other health support that disabled children will potentially be required to have to help tackle the effect of missed services during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

No specific assessment has been made. However, as part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services and support, including therapies, to disabled children. In 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance making clear that restoration of essential community services must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or are going through an assessment for one.

■ **Doctors' List of Patients**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of patients who have presented to a GP in the last 12 months declared a matter for which they are on a hospital waiting list, including (a) appointments, (b) treatments and (c) surgery, as the primary reason for their visit.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: This information is not held centrally.

■ **Earwax: Medical Treatments**

Munira Wilson:

[\[35901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing ear wax removal procedures on the NHS for (a) pensioners and (b) people on low incomes.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise manual ear syringing is no longer advised by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence due to risks associated, such as trauma to their ear drum or infection. General practitioner (GP) practices are increasingly recommending self-care methods as the primary means to support the safe removal of ear wax.

However, if a GP practice considers removal clinically necessary, the procedure should either be undertaken at the practice or the patient should be referred to an

appropriate service depending on the arrangements in place in the local area, including for pensioners and those on low incomes. Local commissioners are responsible for meeting the health needs of their local population and should continue to ensure there is appropriate access to ear wax services.

■ Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services

Karin Smyth:

[\[35737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is sufficient psychological support within non-specialised clinical settings for young people experiencing severe eating disorders unable to access a Tier 4 bed.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are enhancing capacity in community eating disorder services to improve urgent response and the delivery of intensive home treatment. Community eating disorder teams for children and young people are resourced to support early identification and access to treatment as soon as an eating disorder is suspected. These teams are working with schools, colleges and primary care to support improved awareness and access to expert advice and treatment.

Karin Smyth:

[\[35739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that there is sufficient provision of specialist beds throughout the country for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Tier 4 inpatient units for severe eating disorders.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have announced £40 million in 2021/22 to address the impact on children and young people's mental health and enhance services across the country, including for eating disorders. We are ensuring the appropriate beds are available or that alternatives to admission are in place in England.

■ Electronic Cigarettes

Mr David Jones:

[\[36589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will request the Committee on Toxicity to undertake a toxicological evaluation of the effect of nicotine delivery levels in e-cigarettes.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans to do so.

The Department and Public Health England previously asked the Committee on Toxicity (CoT) to review the potential toxicological risks from electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems. This included information on ENDS e-liquids that contain nicotine, concentrations, and nicotine exposure. The CoT's statement is available at the following link:

<https://cot.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/COT%20E%28N%29NDS%20statement%202020-04.pdf>

■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis

Charlotte Nichols:

[35941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to reduce the average diagnosis time for endometriosis patients to (a) four years or less by 2025 and (b) one year or less by 2030.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The treatment and diagnosis of endometriosis which will be carefully considered as part of work on the Women's Health Strategy. A call for evidence was launched to inform the priorities, content and actions of the Strategy, which included questions on gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis. We are analysing the responses and we aim to publish the Strategy later this year.

Research exploring the experiences of women presenting with endometriosis-like symptoms in primary care hosted by the National Institute of Health Research, was published earlier this year, which will inform our understanding of delays in diagnosis.

■ Females: Health Services

Dame Diana Johnson:

[16806]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to tackle (a) pre- and (b) post- covid-19 inequalities and intersectional issues affecting adolescents and young women accessing sexual and reproductive health services; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 21 June 2021]: The Department is developing a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which will be published in 2021. We are considering issues relating to inequalities in access to sexual and reproductive health services as part of the process to develop the Strategy.

The recent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency reclassification of desogestrel means that women can now purchase a progestogen-only contraceptive from a pharmacy following a detailed consultation with a pharmacist. This reclassification is an important step towards improving women's health by widening access to sexual and reproductive health services and providing all women with more choice in the provision of safe and effective contraception. Progestogen-only contraception will continue to be available free from prescription charge from general practitioners and sexual and reproductive health services, as is the case for all prescribed contraception.

■ Food: Labelling

Marsha De Cordova: [36749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a full mental health impact assessment was carried out prior to the creation of his Department's policy to make calorie labelling mandatory for all restaurants, pubs and cafes with 250 or more employees.

Marsha De Cordova: [36750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria his Department will use to determine the (a) efficacy and (b) success of its policy to make calorie labelling mandatory for all restaurants, pubs and cafes with 250 or more employees.

Marsha De Cordova: [36751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, (a) when and (b) how many experts were consulted by his Department on its policy to make calorie labelling mandatory for all restaurants, pubs and cafes with 250 or more employees.

Marsha De Cordova: [36752]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish his Department's evidence on the relationship between mandatory calorie labelling on menus and reduction in levels of obesity.

Jo Churchill:

We have consulted extensively throughout the development of our policy to mandate calorie labelling for the out-of-home sector. Our 2018 consultation received 1,158 responses including feedback from a wide range of experts. However, a record of the specific number of experts who have contributed to this process is not held centrally.

The Department has published an impact assessment detailing the likely effect of the policy. This includes analysis on the estimated benefits that would be generated from a reduction in calorie intake as well as the evidence used to support our assessment. The Department has also published an equality assessment, which together with the impact assessment, considers evidence of the potential impact of the policy on mental health.

We are committed to reviewing the Regulations within five years of them coming into force. In part, the review will consider whether the policy has achieved its aims in helping consumers make more informed, healthier choices when eating out or getting a takeaway and whether it has encouraged businesses to reformulate their food offers. Officials are developing plans for evaluating the effectiveness and implementation of the policy.

The impact assessment and equality assessment are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/calorie-labelling-for-food-and-drink-served-outside-of-the-home>

■ Gender Recognition: Clinics

Apsana Begum: [\[35926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the length of time between people being referred to a Gender Identity Clinic and starting treatment.

Jo Churchill:

No formal assessment has been made as waiting time information is not collected centrally.

Apsana Begum: [\[35930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on the health and wellbeing of trans people of the increase to waiting times between referral and first appointment for Gender Identity Clinics; and what steps he is taking to help shorten those waiting lists.

Jo Churchill:

We know that long waiting times for care is negative on patient's mental health and wellbeing. We are improving access to gender identity services with the opening of four new clinics, in London, Manchester, Cheshire and Merseyside and the East of England. These clinics are now all open and receiving patients. A further new clinic is planned in Sussex due to open in 2022. These clinics are expected to reduce the waiting list by a third.

■ Gender Recognition: Surgery

Apsana Begum: [\[35927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on the (a) health and (b) wellbeing of trans masculine people of the unavailability of genital surgery on the NHS for those people.

Jo Churchill:

No formal assessment of the unavailability of genital surgery has been undertaken.

Apsana Begum: [\[35928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure a contract for trans masculine genital surgery is secured as quickly as possible.

Jo Churchill:

The contract for phalloplasty services is currently out for tender with a view for rapid award.

Apsana Begum: [\[35929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to providing funding for trans masculine people to have genital surgery abroad until the NHS provides a UK provider.

Jo Churchill:

There are no current plans for patients to be sent abroad for phalloplasty services. The contract for phalloplasty services is currently out for tender with a view for rapid award in the near future.

■ General Practitioners

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[28139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Carpenters Practice Inspection report, published by the Care Quality Commission on 26 June 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on access to quality NHS primary care of any disruption resulting from the sale of GP practices to for profit providers.

Jo Churchill:

Regardless of whether the contract holder is an individual, a partnership, or an organisation, all contract holders and providers of National Health Service core primary medical services are subject to the same requirements, regulation and standards. We have no plans to make a further assessment.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[28140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to Carpenters Practice inspection report, published by the Care Quality Commission on 26 June 2021, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect on (a) patient safety, (b) effective leadership, (c) good governance and (d) high quality sustainable care of sale of GP practices to for profit providers.

Jo Churchill:

Regardless of whether the contract holder is an individual, a partnership, or an organisation, all contract holders and providers of National Health Service core primary medical services are subject to the same requirements, regulation and standards. We have no plans to make a further assessment.

Damien Moore: [\[36741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage general practices to return to in person appointments.

Jo Churchill:

Face-to-face appointments have been available throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and approximately half of all appointments during the pandemic have been delivered in person. NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to general practitioner (GP) practices on 19 July, setting out the expectation that practices should offer a blend of face to face and remote appointments, with remote triage where possible.

Practice receptions should be open, so patients without access to phones or online services are not disadvantaged. Practices are expected to review their communications to ensure patients know how to access GP services.

■ General Practitioners: Quarantine

Rachael Maskell:

[\[28261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure patients can be seen by a trained registered health professional in the event that GP practices are required to close in response to a high number of staff self-isolating as a result of increased levels of covid-19 infection.

Jo Churchill:

Through its regional teams, NHS England and NHS Improvement work closely with clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) to ensure business continuity measures are in place in the event that a practice encounters an outbreak which may have an impact on service delivery. This includes ensuring access to an appointment with a health care professional, either face-to-face or remotely as appropriate, taking into account patient need and clinical judgement. In many cases, self-isolating staff have been able to consult remotely using laptops provided by CCGs to support home working.

■ General Practitioners: Telemedicine

Justin Madders:

[\[35706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with GPs on the effect of e-consult on workload pressures.

Justin Madders:

[\[35707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of eConsult on GPs' workloads during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

We have regular discussions general practitioner (GP) stakeholder organisations and representatives on a wide range of issues, including appointment and consultation systems and workload.

We continue to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement and general practice to assess the impact of different types of appointment and the effects on workload. NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned an independent evaluation to understand the impact for staff, patients and the wider health and care system of using digital tools in primary care to inform its long-term strategy.

■ Genetic Engineering

Feryal Clark:

[\[35947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential for gene therapy technologies to help tackle health inequalities in (a) communities affected by specific hereditary conditions and (b) the general population.

Edward Argar:

Gene therapies have the potential to treat hereditary and non-hereditary diseases that are a cause of long-term health conditions and poor quality of life. The Government supports research, development and adoption readiness of advanced therapy medicinal products, including gene therapies, through the Advanced Therapy Treatment Centre network, which is hosted by the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult. The Department has also invested over £9 million in NHS Blood and Transplants' Clinical Biotechnology Centre which manufactures recombinant proteins and gene therapy products for use in clinical trials enabling access for patients to the latest therapies.

■ Government Departments: Coronavirus**Fleur Anderson:**[\[35921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which Government departments have taken part in the covid-19 daily testing pilot.

Jo Churchill:

The Border Force as part of the Home Department, and the Cabinet Office have participated or are participating in the workplaces daily contact testing pilot evaluation scheme.

■ Health and Care Bill**Rachael Maskell:**[\[34526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his oral contribution of 14 July 2021, Official Report, column 427, if he will clarify which posts would be subject to Schedule 2, Clause 17 of the Health and Care Bill.

Edward Argar:

Schedule 2, Clause 17 of the Health and Care Bill does not refer to specific posts as it has been designed to be flexible to allow local areas to determine what they need. This will function in much the same way as it does in current clinical commissioning groups.

■ Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[33107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Minister for Care on 13 July 2021, Official Report, column 270, on what date work on the impact assessment for the draft Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 (a) began and (b) is due to be completed.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: We began analysis on the impact of the proposal in May with the proposal subject to the final consultation analysis. The assumptions

were adjusted to account for the extension of the proposal to cover all Care Quality Commission-registered care homes and all persons who enter a care home. Following the consultation we are continuing to conduct analysis on the likely impact on the behaviour of care home staff in response to the regulations.

The Government will be setting out analysis of the number of current staff who we estimate may not be vaccinated or exempt by the end of the 16-week grace period in an impact assessment to be published shortly.

Mark Jenkinson:

[\[33330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the impact assessment for the draft Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 as it stood at 19:19 on 13 July 2021.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: The Government has set out analysis of the number of current staff who we estimate may not be vaccinated or exempt by the end of the 16-week grace period in an impact statement. This figure provides an indication of the numbers that may need to be recruited by the sector to replace workers who may choose to leave the workforce rather than be vaccinated. The full impact assessment will be published as soon as possible.

■ Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[33980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with local health leaders on the capacity of local health systems in (a) primary and (b) secondary care.

Edward Argar:

The Department continues to engage with local health leaders, regional commissioners and NHS England and NHS Improvement to manage capacity in primary and secondary care. Through its regional team, NHS England and NHS Improvement work closely with clinical commissioning groups who are best placed to engage and support their local health systems on issues such as capacity.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Quarantine

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to support health and social care staff who have been asked to isolate and do not wish to participate in Test and release programmes.

Jo Churchill:

Fully vaccinated health and social care staff who have to self-isolate, may be able to leave self-isolation to attend work in exceptional circumstances where, in the judgement of a nominated health professional, there would otherwise be a significant risk to the health or safety of patients or service users. In these exceptional

circumstances, they should only attend work after having a negative polymerase chain reaction test and daily lateral flow antigen tests. Where staff choose to self-isolate rather than take part in these arrangements, they will still be able to access financial support, if they are eligible and relevant practical support.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Social Distancing

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36673\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to support health and social care staff who choose to continue to apply social distancing measures.

Helen Whately:

It remains mandatory for National Health Service staff, visitors, and patients to continue to follow social distancing measures while accessing or visiting healthcare settings, including the use of face masks. This applies to all health services including hospitals, general practitioner practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies.

Due to the nature and vulnerability of people receiving care in social care settings, staff will continue to wear personal protective equipment and practice strict infection control. Visitors are also asked to continue to book appointments, take a test on the day of their visit to the care home, wear a mask throughout their visit, wash hands thoroughly on arrival and limit close contact with residents to help keep care home residents safe.

■ Home Care Services: Local Government

Steve Reed:

[\[31414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of a market failure in the domiciliary care sector on local authorities.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to shape their local markets according to local needs, which includes securing the right balance of domiciliary, residential and other provision. Throughout the pandemic, we have made available over £2 billion in specific funding for adult social care, in addition to over £6 billion for local authorities to address pressures on their services. In partnership with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Local Government Association, we carried out a service continuity and care market review to understand the robustness of local authorities' plans and the level of support needed to maintain continuity of provision through winter 2020-21.

■ Hospital Beds

Esther McVey:

[\[35615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the statement of the Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment, Official report, column 259, and the letter

from the. Member for Tatton dated 24 June 2021, how many more (a) intensive care beds and (b) non-intensive care beds were available throughout the NHS in (i) March 2020 and (ii) 19 July 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: This information is not available in the format requested.

Hospital capacity has been organised in new ways due to the pandemic to meet the enhanced infection prevention and control measures. This results in beds and staff being deployed differently from in previous years in both emergency and elective settings within the hospital.

■ Hospitals: Consultants

Jim Shannon:

[\[33923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the Royal College of Physicians' (RCP) eleventh survey of RCP members and fellows that 27 per cent of consultants expect to retire in the next three years and many within the next 18 months, whether the NHS has a plan in place to prevent staff shortages.

Helen Whately:

In April 2021 there were over 4,000 more doctors working in hospital and community health service settings compared to April 2020. This includes almost 1,500 more consultants and around 2,200 more doctors in training. We have increased the number of medical school places by 1,500 over recent years, opening five new medical schools across the country. NHS England and NHS Improvement are leading work on retaining our current medical workforce including supporting groups who may be more likely to leave following COVID-19 through the Generational retention programme.

■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

Laura Trott:

[\[35907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to update Infection, prevention and control guidance for hospitals in response to the easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions on 19 July 2021; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of including in that guidance an exemption from requirements to wear a face covering for parents providing cot-side care to their babies on neonatal units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Health and care settings will continue to maintain appropriate infection prevention and control measures as necessary and this will be reviewed during the summer.

Guidance in National Health Service settings, including hospitals and primary and community care are undergoing further review to ensure that it is in line with service needs and as evidence becomes available, including in neonatal settings.

■ Hospitals: Meat

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[36694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that patients at hospitals can access information as to how the meat they are served in hospital meals is slaughtered.

Edward Argar:

This is a matter for local National Health Service trusts. The NHS is required to meet the requirements of the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services which require all food served to meet United Kingdom legislative standards for animal welfare or equivalent standards.

The Independent Hospital Food Review, published in October 2020, made recommendations for improving hospital food for patients and an expert panel is now in place to implement these recommendations. This includes how food is best provided to patients given their medical conditions, personal or cultural preferences and religious requirements. This sub-group will include representatives from religious organisations.

■ Hospitals: Staff

Chi Onwurah:

[\[34494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to mitigate the impact of staff absences in NHS hospitals in (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Central, (b) North East region and (c) England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: On 19 July we published national guidance that applies to all National Health Service hospitals, including those in Newcastle upon Tyne Central and the North East region. If there is a risk that staff absence would lead to potential patient harm then staff who are fully vaccinated, 14 days after their second dose, may be brought back to work ahead of the self-isolation period, following a local risk assessment.

The following safeguards should be implemented; an immediate negative polymerase chain reaction test prior to returning to work; provision of subsequent negative daily lateral flow device tests for a minimum of seven days with test results reported to both Test and Trace and their line management; appropriate use of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, including social distancing in the workplace when not undertaking clinical work; and the use of personal protective equipment in line with current IPC guidance.

These guidelines give employers the 'right to allow' not to 'compel' staff to return to work. Where staff can work from home or care can be delivered online or by phone this should continue to be the preferred option.

■ Hospitals: Ventilation

Bridget Phillipson:

[35609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 290800 on Hospitals: Ventilation, what budget has been made available for enforcement activities in respect of ventilation in hospitals in each of the last ten years; what enforcement action has been taken in respect of ventilation in each of the last ten years; and when he last met representatives of (a) relevant NHS Trusts and (b) trade unions recognised within the NHS to discuss the ventilation of hospitals.

Bridget Phillipson:

[35610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 29801 on GP Surgeries: Ventilation, what budget has been made available for enforcement activities in respect of ventilation in GP surgeries in each of the last ten years; what enforcement action has been taken in respect of ventilation in each of the last ten years; and when he or other Ministers in his Department last met representatives of (a) general practitioners and (b) trades unions recognised within the NHS to discuss the ventilation of GP surgeries.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The Care Quality Commission's (CQC) enforcement activity is funded by Grant-in-Aid from the Department. However, the CQC has advised that information on the budget specifically for enforcement activities is not held in the format requested.

The CQC can consider ventilation as part of an inspection of a hospital or general practitioner practice and has a range of tools it can use on a proportionate basis, in line with its enforcement policy. However, the CQC do not record centrally the specific reason for taking regulatory action and to obtain information relating to enforcement on ventilation issues could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. There have been no specific meetings to discuss ventilation.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[23092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether any research has been carried out into the reasons for which the number of patients having IVF treatment compared to the number of successful cycles has not improved in recent years.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: Recent data show that the number of in vitro fertilisation cycles and birth rates have both increased over time for all patients under 43. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority's annual statistics on trends in fertility treatment is available at the following link:

www.hfea.gov.uk/about-us/publications/research-and-data/fertility-treatment-2019-trends-and-figures

■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

Jim Shannon:

[33227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of the role of single-use technology in (a) controlling and preventing infections and (b) reducing the risk of hospital-acquired infections following the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Throughout the pandemic NHS England and NHS Improvement have published a variety of guidance which encompasses the robust sterilisation and decontamination of reusable medical equipment and use of single-use equipment. The guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/primary-care/infection-control>

The purchase and use of single-use equipment is determined at individual National Health Service trust level to take into account their own facilities, workforce, finances and patient population when choosing the most appropriate medical equipment to use.

■ Integrated Care Systems

Feryal Clark:

[35951]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the role of a (a) self care and (b) pharmacy is represented within all Integrated Care Systems.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance is being drafted to support the development of integrated care systems (ICSs). The role of ICSs is to align action between partners to improve outcomes and tackle inequalities, enhance productivity, make best use of resources and strengthen local communities.

Each integrated care board (ICB) and their partner local authorities will be required to establish an integrated care partnership (ICP), bringing together primary care, social care, public health and others where appropriate. The member of the ICB drawn from primary medical services providers should bring perspectives from all primary care partners. The ICP will be tasked with promoting partnership arrangements and developing a plan to address the health, social care and public health needs of their system. The ICB and local authorities will have regard to that plan when making decisions.

In support of these new arrangements commissioning of primary care functions will be delegated to ICBs, whilst national contractual arrangements, which currently include promoting and enabling self-care by community pharmacy, will continue to be developed at a national level.

■ Intensive Care

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[28198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many items of ICU clinical consumables his Department plans to dispose of as part of its work on rebalancing the ICU clinical consumables stock.

Edward Argar:

Work on rebalancing the intensive care unit (ICU) consumables stockpile is focussed on preserving and realising the value of stock under management through usage, sales and appropriate donations. Product currently identified as inappropriate for sale or donation is scheduled to be disposed of through recycling and energy recovery.

This currently represents one million items or 0.11% of the total number of products held in the ICU consumables COVID-19 stockpile.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[28199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the ICU clinical consumables stockpile has reached level (a) three or (b) four severity for stockpile levels in 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: The intensive care unit consumables stockpile has been at or above target levels throughout 2021.

■ Long Covid: Screening

Chi Onwurah:

[\[35638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of adopting the University College London recommendations of 15 July 2021 for a UK National Screening Programme for people with symptoms of long covid.

Jo Churchill:

'Long' COVID-19 is a relatively new condition and we continue to learn more about the best way of providing support for people experiencing the long-term effects of infection. National Health Service guidance advises that those with long term symptoms should first contact their general practitioner to decide on the best care pathway, including whether a specialist assessment by a Post COVID-19 clinic is needed. These clinics offer a range of diagnostic tests to address the multi-system nature of 'long' COVID-19.

■ Lung Cancer

Jim Shannon:

[\[36639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what research his Department has undertaken to quantify the indirect costs of lung cancer and its impact on the economy.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not undertaken research to quantify the indirect costs of lung cancer and its impact on the economy.

■ **Lung Cancer: Diagnosis**

Jim Shannon:

[\[36638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure more people with lung cancer are diagnosed at an earlier stage in line with the Long Term Plan.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are prioritising delivery of NHS Long Term Plan commitments that also support COVID-19 recovery, including projects such as targeted lung health checks. This lung health check is available in 19 locations, with a further four sites by September.

We expect to diagnose 6,000 cases of lung cancer at an earlier stage, an increase of more than 30%.

■ **Lung Cancer: Screening**

Jim Shannon:

[\[36636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the results of the NELSON trial on low dose CT screening for current and former smokers; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has begun to update the recommendation on screening for lung cancer following the publication of the NELSON trial. A search for new published peer reviewed literature since 2007, the date of last review, will be undertaken, with data from the NELSON trial forming part of the evidence base.

The UK NSC will then host a three-month consultation, expected to open in autumn 2021. The UK NSC will then review the evidence, alongside comments submitted and make a recommendation on whether population screening for lung cancer should be introduced.

Jim Shannon:

[\[36637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the planned timescales are for (a) the National Screening Committee review of low dose CT scans for lung cancer and (b) his Department receiving that Committee's recommendations on that matter.

Jo Churchill:

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has begun to update the recommendation on screening for lung cancer following the publication of the

NELSON trial. As per the UK NSC's published evidence review process, a search for new published peer reviewed literature since 2007, the date of the last review, will be undertaken, with data from the NELSON trial forming part of the evidence base.

The UK NSC will then host a three-month consultation which is expected to open in autumn 2021. The UK NSC will review the evidence and submissions and make a recommendation on whether population screening for lung cancer should be introduced which will be shared with the Department.

■ **Lynfield Mount Hospital Bradford: Finance**

Philip Davies:

[\[32336\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet the Bradford District Care Trust to discuss the need for investment at Lynfield Mount Hospital.

Edward Argar:

We have no current plans to do so.

On 17 July we launched the process for trusts to express an interest in being selected for funding for eight new hospitals to be built by 2030 in England.

The Department welcomes applications from all trusts, including Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust, who meet the criteria. Local health systems have received confirmation of their capital funding for 2021/22 which enables them to progress priority investments agreed with local health partners.

■ **Malta: Travel Restrictions**

Hilary Benn:

[\[33122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of UK nationals who may be affected by the Government of Malta's decision to deny entry to UK travellers who have had one dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India in each month that that decision takes effect.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: No specific estimate has been made.

However, following discussions with officials the Maltese Government confirmed on 15 July that all COVID-19 vaccines approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency would be accepted and United Kingdom travel advice was updated.

■ **Maternity Services**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[23315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) the transition to a midwifery-led Continuity of Carer model is adequately resourced and (b) women who are pregnant after the death of a baby are prioritised for access to that model.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have committed to the rollout of Midwifery Continuity of Carer, so that it becomes the default model of care for women using maternity services across England by March 2023. NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided Local Maternity Systems with £90.05 million from 2018 to 2021 to fulfil transformational objectives, including implementing Continuity of Carer models. An additional £96 million was announced earlier this year in response to the emerging findings from the Ockenden Report, the majority of which will be invested in additional midwives and obstetric capacity.

Upcoming NHS England and NHS Improvement guidance will include advice on the implementation of maternal medicine-focused Continuity of Carer teams, which could be used to accommodate women deemed higher risk due to previous loss, whilst still offering continuity of the midwife caring for them.

■ Medical Records: Data Protection**Jim Shannon:**[\[13067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking with the devolved Administrations to ensure that NHS data is protected; and whether GP surgeries will be in contact with their patients to offer an opt out option from the sharing of their data.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: The General Practice Data for Planning and Research programme's scope covers England only.

We are working with general practitioners (GPs) to effectively communicate the benefits of this new data collection and the ability of patients to opt-out if they choose to do so. We are developing an engagement and communications campaign to ensure that the healthcare system and patients are aware and understand what is planned.

Margaret Greenwood:[\[13089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the announcement of the delay until 1 September 2021 of the implementation of the General Practice Data for Planning and Research (GPDPR) service, what the new date is by which patients can opt out.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 June 2021]: We confirmed on 19 July that data extraction will not now begin until a number of tests have been met. These include creating the technical means to allow general practitioner data that has previously been uploaded to be deleted when someone registers a type 1 opt-out. For that reason, patients will have the ability to opt-in or opt-out and the dataset will always reflect their current preference.

■ Medical Research Charity Partnership Fund

Rachael Maskell:

[31453]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the proposal by the Medical Research Charity Partnership Fund to increase funding in medical research.

Edward Argar:

The Department is liaising with medical research charities to understand the impact of the pandemic and to identify how we can work together to ensure patients continue to benefit from charity-funded research. Most recently, the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced a £20 million initiative to support charity-funded early career researchers who play an essential role in delivering research which benefits patients and the wider public. The Government is committed to continue its support to research charities through the National Institute for Health Research, which helps to deliver vital health and care research across the country.

■ Medical Treatments

Vicky Foxcroft:

[21293]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NICE technology appraisals have been delayed as a result of operational challenges in 2021; and if he will place in the Library a list of the affected appraisals.

Jo Churchill:

The 19 topics listed as follows have been delayed as a result of operational challenges in 2021.

- TUBEROUS SCLEROSIS COMPLEX (SEIZURES) – CANNABIDIOL;
- Waldenstrom's macroglobulinaemia – zanubrutinib;
- Head and neck cancer (untreated, metastatic squamous cell) - nivolumab (with ipilimumab);
- Breast cancer (triple negative) - pembrolizumab (neoadjuvant, with chemotherapy);
- Renal cell carcinoma (metastatic, untreated) - nivolumab (with cabozantinib);
- Multiple sclerosis (relapsing-remitting) - diroximel fumarate;
- Upadacitinib for treating active psoriatic arthritis after inadequate response to disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs);
- Gastric cancer (resect) - pembrolizumab (with chemotherapy and surgery);
- Dermatitis (atopic, moderate, severe, aged 12 and over) – upadacitinib;
- Tralokinumab for treating moderate to severe atopic dermatitis;

- TUBEROUS SCLEROSIS COMPLEX (SEIZURES) – CANNABIDIOL;
- Dermatitis (atopic, moderate, severe, aged 12 and over) – abrocitinib;
- Cough (refractory, chronic) – gefapixant;
- Renal cell carcinoma - pembrolizumab (adjuvant);
- Polyps (nasal), rhinosinusitis (chronic, severe) – mepolizumab;
- Ulcerative colitis (moderate, severe) – ozanimod;
- Ankylosing spondylitis (active) – upadacitinib;
- Lung cancer (non-small-cell, resected) - atezolizumab (adjuvant);
- Ankylosing spondylitis (active) – tofacitinib; and
- Hepatocellular carcinoma (advanced, treated) - cabozantinib (review of technology appraisal 582).

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

Saqib Bhatti:

[\[33367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review entitled First Do No Harm published in July 2020, what recent steps he has taken to progress implementation of the recommendation for a redress agency for people harmed by medicines and medical devices.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government response to the Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review was published on 21 July. The Government stated that it did not accept recommendation three to establish a redress agency as set out in the report. The Government and others have previously established redress schemes without the need for an additional agency.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron:

[\[15175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 4 March, 12 April and 12 May 2021 on the Catchupwithcancer campaign, reference JB31721.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 17 June 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 11 August 2021.

Mr John Baron:

[\[32288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 1 April, 30 April, 9 June and 23 June 2021 on the Medical Cannabis Under Prescription campaign with reference JB32121.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 6 August 2021.

John Spellar:

[\[34429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Warley dated 13 May 2021 on Mr Ahmed and test and trace.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 9 August 2021.

Mr John Baron:

[\[34457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 1 April 2021 and chase up correspondence of 15 April 2021 and 1 July 2021 regarding a constituent with reference JB32116.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 10 August 2021.

■ Mental Health

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[30403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a (a) new duty for Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to promote parity of esteem between mental and physical health and (b) requirement for a mental health representative on every ICB.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: A specific assessment has not yet been made on a duty for integrated care boards (ICBs) to promote parity of esteem between mental and physical health. The principle of parity of esteem was enshrined in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Legislation will set out minimum membership of ICBs and which will include representatives from National Health Service providers and we fully expect mental health trusts to play a central role in decision-making. Local areas will also have the flexibility to determine any further representation in their area, whether on the ICB or within the integrated care partnership.

■ Mental Health Services

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[27267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he will appoint an independent commissioner to oversee the closure of inappropriate inpatient care units and increased funding for community care to ensure that people can move from those institutions and be supported closer to home.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: We do not currently have any plans to do so. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care providers in England and has a key responsibility in the overall assurance of safety and quality of health and adult social care services. All providers of regulated activities, including National Health Service and independent providers, must register with the CQC and follow a set of fundamental standards of safety and quality below which care should never fall. The CQC has a wide range of enforcement powers that it can use if the provider does not meet them. These include cancelling registration. The NHS Long Term Plan commits to increased investment in intensive, crisis and forensic community support for people with a learning disability and autistic people by 2023/24.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[33891\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 17864 on Mental Health services, what timeframe he has agreed with NHS England and NHS Improvement for the review of the implementation of Serenity Integrated Mentoring and similar models in trusts.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department has not agreed a specific timeframe with NHS England and NHS Improvement.

■ Mental Health Services: Care Leavers

Stella Creasy:

[\[32380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what (a) steps his Department is taking to support local authorities in signposting care leavers to appropriate mental health support and (b) assessment he has made of the effectiveness of existing signposting.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: We are currently working with local authorities and National Health Service trusts to develop and modernise arrangements for care leavers including signposting to appropriate mental health provisions.

In March 2021, we published the Mental Health Recovery Action Plan to ensure approximately 22,500 more children and young people can access community health services.

■ Mental Health Services: Children

Sarah Champion:

[\[34505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the average waiting time for children to complete neurodevelopmental assessments in England.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: It is not possible to estimate reliably the average waiting time for children to complete neurodevelopmental assessments in England from data currently held by NHS Digital.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Karin Smyth:

[\[35738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that families of the most vulnerable children do not have to travel long distances in order to support those going through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Tier 4 inpatient units.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

As part of the standard operating procedure for child and adolescent mental health services, the National Health Service aims to admit a patient to the nearest clinically appropriate unit in the first instance, while managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both service capacity and the number of children and young people requiring specialist in-patient care.

NHS-led provider collaboratives for children and young people's mental health services will be key partners in ensuring that admissions are placed close to home.

■ Mental Health Services: Young People

Karin Smyth:

[\[35740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of existing (a) service provision and (b) capacity to meet the mental health needs of young people.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Care Quality Commission makes an annual assessment of health and care services in England and publishes its findings through the State of Care report. The most recent 'The state of health care and adult social care in England 2019/20' finds that 71% of National Health Services (NHS) mental health core services were rated as good and 11% as outstanding. The report does not provide a breakdown for services for children and young people, or young people specifically.

On capacity, the NHS Digital publishes quarterly data through the NHS Mental Health Dashboard. It includes the proportion of children and young people who have had at least two contacts with NHS-funded community mental health services, based on estimated prevalence available in 2016, namely the Office for National Statistics

report Mental health of children and young people in Great Britain, 2004. In 2019/20, 36.9% of children and young people with a diagnoseable mental health condition had at least two contacts with such services. This exceeds the aims of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health to increase access for children and young people from 25% to at least 35% of expected prevalence by 2020/21.

We know that the pandemic has had an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of many children and young people. This is why we are investing an additional £500 million in 2021/22 to address waiting times for mental health services, give more people the mental health support they need, and invest in the NHS workforce. As part of this investment, we have committed to accelerate key commitments in the NHS Long Term Plan. We continue to work with Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement to understand the impact of the pandemic on people's mental health, including commissioning regular surveys via NHS Digital to monitor this over the course of the pandemic.

■ Mental Health: Young People

Karin Smyth:

[35741]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the finding that young people, particularly young women, have experienced greater declines in their mental health than others during the covid-19 outbreak, as set out in the Institute for Fiscal Studies report, The mental health effects of the first two months of lockdown and social distancing during the covid-19 pandemic in the UK, published on 10 June 2020; and what steps he is taking to support young (a) men and (b) women so affected.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

While we have no current plans to make a specific assessment, we are working with the National Health Service, Public Health England and other stakeholders to gather evidence and assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19 across all demographics.

The COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan, details the actions taken across the Government to support people's mental wellbeing and to prevent the onset of mental health difficulties, including for all young people. This includes our campaign through Every Mind Matters to raise awareness of the guidance and tools available to support children and young people's mental wellbeing; £79million to significantly expand children's mental health services; and £13 million to accelerate the improvements to mental health support for 18 to 25 year olds in the NHS Long Term Plan. This funding is for 2021/22 and in addition to funding through the NHS Long Term Plan.

■ Microplastics: Health

Selaine Saxby: [\[28372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment the National Institute for Health Research has made of the merits of funding projects to establish the potential effect of microplastics on human health.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health Research is funding research on microplastic toxicity in humans through the Health Protection Research Unit in Environmental Exposure, which is led by Imperial College London and Public Health England. This work will be reported in peer reviewed academic journals in due course.

■ Ministers: Coronavirus

Fleur Anderson: [\[35920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which Government Ministers have taken part in the covid-19 daily testing pilot scheme.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: We do not hold information on the occupations of people taking part in the workplace daily contact testing pilot evaluation scheme. Information for the daily contact testing clinical study, trialling home testing for members of the general public, is also anonymised.

■ Motor Neurone Disease: Drugs

Justin Madders: [\[35705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding has been awarded to research bodies to investigate potential drug combinations for the treatment of symptoms of motor neurone disease.

Edward Argar:

The Department funds research through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The NIHR has invested over £10 million in motor neurone disease (MND) research over the last five years. This includes research on potential treatments to improve survival rate, function and quality of life for people with MND. The NIHR has spent £2.4 million on research to investigate drug combinations for the treatment of MND. The NIHR is also funding research on drug combinations to treat MND through NIHR research infrastructure, although the information requested is not available at individual study level.

■ NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme 2020

Layla Moran: [\[34568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2020 to Question 70487, how many and what proportion of claims to the NHS and

Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme have been successful (a) in 2020, (b) in 2021 and (c) to date.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: In 2020, there were 280 claims to the NHS and Social Care Coronavirus Life Assurance Scheme. Of these, 242 were successful. Two cases had been rejected as they did not meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme, and the remainder were under consideration.

In 2021, there have been 342 new claims to the Scheme to 21 July when the latest data was released. Of these, 279 have been successful. As of 21 July 2021, there have been 622 claims to the Scheme. Of these, 521 claims have been successful. These figures are inclusive of claims received and accepted in 2020. Eight cases have been rejected and the remainder are under consideration.

■ NHS and Social Services: Pay

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he made of the average pay differential between NHS staff and care staff in each of the last 10 years.

Helen Whately:

It is not possible to make a conclusive assessment of the average pay differential between health and care staff as roles are not directly comparable. The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who set their pay, independent of central Government, which differs from national collectively agreed terms and conditions on which most staff are employed within the National Health Service.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to close the pay gap between people working in (a) the NHS and (b) social care.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of placing health and social care staff on comparable (a) pay scales and (b) terms and conditions.

Helen Whately:

The Department currently has no plans to place care staff on National Health Service pay, terms and conditions. The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who set their pay, independent of central Government. This differs from national collectively agreed terms and conditions on which most staff are employed within the NHS.

We are providing councils with access to over £1 billion of additional funding for social care in 2021-22 to ensure key pressures in the system are met, including the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage. An increase in the rate of the

National Living Wage means many of the lowest paid care workers will have benefitted from at least a 2.2% pay rise from 1 April.

■ **NHS Test and Trace: Serco**

Alex Norris: [\[1187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long the contract with Serco for NHS Test and Trace has been extended beyond the initial 14-week period.

Alex Norris: [\[1189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to further extend the contract with Serco for NHS Test and Trace; and whether a further extension would breach the maximum value as stated in the original contract.

Alex Norris: [\[1190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the cost to the public purse is of the contract with Serco for NHS Test and Trace for the (a) initial 14-week period and (b) subsequent extensions of that contract.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 18 May 2021]: The Department has two contracts with Serco in relation to COVID-19. The first is for the provision of facilities management services to support the operation of testing sites. The contract was let in March 2020 for an initial term of six months to September 2020. The final cost was £47.9 million. It was extended from 1 October 2020 to 30 April 2021 for an expanded service with a final outturn against the budget of £208 million of £209.3 million. This was as a result of additional support required such as testing at Dover. A contract extension was agreed to ensure service continuity of the facilities management service until 23 July 2021 whilst a new procurement exercise was undertaken. The value of this extension is £97 million.

Following a competition on the Crown Commercial Services Framework for Facilities Management, Serco was awarded a contract on 25 June to continue providing these services with a value of up to £322 million for a 12 month period with an option to extend for six months. Given the number of site transitions this involves, we are currently finalising a further contract extension of 24 days to ensure that all sites will be fully transitioned and mobilised under the new contracts by 16 August.

The second contract is for the National Health Service call handling service to support the tracing initiative. The contract had a maximum value of £410 million to cover the initial period and any and all extension periods undertaken up to a period of 12 months. The contract was extended for its full term to the end of May 2021. The actual outturn expenditure on this contract was £358 million. The contract has been extended for a period of six months from 1 June to the end of November for a maximum value of £66 million.

The contract has been extended for a limited period so that there would not be a gap in the tracing service during a crucial time in the pandemic.

■ NHS: Arts

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[21820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the use of creative arts therapy for NHS treatments.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans to do so.

■ NHS: China

Sir Mike Penning: [\[29738\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level of risk of the NHS working with Chinese companies that have links to the Chinese state; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: The Department works jointly with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the investment security community across government as contributors to the investment screening regime. As an open economy, we welcome foreign trade and investment that adheres to our laws. While we have made no specific assessment, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Investment Security Unit coordinates expertise from across Government to ensure that where risks arise from instances of foreign investment, the necessary assessment is made on a case by case basis.

■ NHS: Contracts

Sir Mike Penning: [\[29740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) he and (b) his officials have had discussions with (i) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and (ii) officials in that Department on suppliers to the NHS with reference to the National Security and Investment Act 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

We have worked jointly with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the investment security community across Government as contributors to the investment screening regime. The Department has also consulted with agencies and partner organisations to provide input for the development of National Security and Investment Act 2021.

■ NHS: Counter-terrorism

Sarah Owen: [\[27334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 28 June 2021 to Question 20546 on NHS: Counter-terrorism, what the (a) selection process,

(b) role description and (c) balance of focus between healthcare and safeguarding is for the seven NHS England Regional Serious Violence and Contextual Safeguarding Leads.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: The selection process for Regional Serious Violence and Contextual Safeguarding Leads is the established NHS England and NHS Improvement recruitment process, following fair and open procedures. The role description includes the system assurance of several statutory functions which the National Health Service is required to implement, including Prevent; female genital mutilation; modern slavery and human trafficking; tackling serious violence; preventing domestic abuse; and stopping violence against women and girls. The Regional Serious Violence and Contextual Safeguarding Leads focus on all nuances of neglect, abuse, exploitation and violence as indicated with their community safety partnerships, national crime agency data and counter terrorism reports.

■ **NHS: Drugs**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[13226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to scale up domestic manufacturing of (a) medicines and (b) covid-19 vaccines.

Edward Argar:

In April 2021, the Government launched the £20 million Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund to incentivise companies to invest in the United Kingdom. In addition we are working with industry on building robust and resilient UK supply chains for the future. We have invested over £350 million to secure and increase our capabilities to manufacture vaccines in order to respond to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

■ **NHS: Finance**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[36601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure financial transparency of primary care providers to clinical commissioning groups, including on partner incomes.

Jo Churchill:

It is a contractual requirement for general practitioner (GP) practices to publish the mean earnings of partners, salaried GPs and any locum who has worked in the practice for over six months.

GPs and partners with total National Health Service earnings above £150,000 per annum will be required to report those earnings by submitting self-declarations annually. The pay threshold at which earnings will have to be reported will change annually with inflation.

■ **NHS: Mental Health Services****Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[35828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many calls have been made to the NHS staff mental health hotline in each month since its launch in April 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The information requested is shown in the following table.

MONTH	NUMBER OF CALLS
April 2020	1,538
May 2020	1,229
June 2020	895
July 2020	698
August 2020	453
September 2020	553
October 2020	550
November 2020	551
December 2020	571
January 2021	829
February 2021	518
March 2021	536
April 2021	411
May 2021	417
June 2021	499
July 2021*	292

Note:

*Data to 21 July 2021.

■ NHS: Protective Clothing

Bill Esterson:

[\[30347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS Supply Chain's response of 29 June 2021 to FOI Request SCCL-FOI-2021-063, which of the 16 companies set out in that FOI response that supply the NHS with rubber gloves from Malaysia receive rubber glove supplies from (a) Top Glove, (b) Supermax, (c) Brightway Holdings, (d) WRP, (e) Ansell, (f) Kossan and (g) Hartalega.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 14 July 2021]: The Department has procured rubber gloves to supply the National Health Service from the following suppliers on the NHS Supply Chain Framework, sourced from the providers in the following table.

SUPPLIERS	SOURCES
Ansell Healthcare Europe	Ansell
Medicare Products	Kossan
Medline Industries Ltd	Hartalega
Supermax	Supermax

■ NHS: Reorganisation

Rachael Maskell:

[\[27235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department plans to (a) consult NHS staff on its proposals for NHS reorganisation and (b) help ensure that those staff understand the impact of that reorganisation on the services they provide.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: The Health and Care Bill includes proposals to place integrated care systems (ICSs) on a statutory footing. These proposals build on recommendations for legislation made by NHS England in 2019, following an extensive engagement exercise involving National Health Service staff, patients and other health and care organisations which received over 190,000 individual responses.

Every area in England is already covered by an ICS which is a partnership organisation. As the transition to statutory ICSs continues, local organisations and systems will be responsible for sharing and disseminating information to staff and consulting on the proposed transfer at the appropriate time. This transition will be characterised by care for people without distracting them from the critical challenges of recovery for the NHS and tackling population health. NHS England has developed a set of national human resources principles and made an employment commitment

to support this transition, which will look to provide employment stability and minimise disruption wherever possible.

■ **NHS: Software**

Jonathan Ashworth:

[29049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 20414 on NHS: Software, what data his Department holds on the number of new downloads of the NHS Covid-19 App in each month from January 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: Data on the number of daily downloads of the NHS COVID-19 app are held by the Department and since February 2021 this data has been published weekly. There have been over five million downloads of the app since January 2021 and this information is available at the following link:

<https://stats.app.covid19.nhs.uk/>

This information shows the number of unique user downloads in England and Wales. It does not include repeat downloads, such as following deletion or to multiple devices from the same user account. The trend in cumulative downloads since December 2020 is also shown.

Layla Moran:

[34031]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the average time in (a) days and (b) hours it takes for NHS Test and Trace to (i) trace and (ii) speak to contacts of individuals who report a positive covid-19 PCR test result; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: No recent estimates have been made.

Chi Onwurah:

[35632]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which organisation (a) developed and (b) owns the copyright for the facial recognition software for the NHS App; what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the NHS App was tested on a diverse range of faces; and if he will set out under what circumstances data collected by that App will leave (i) the device, (ii) the NHS and (iii) the UK.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The facial verification software for the NHS App was developed by iProov who also own the copyright. iProov have developed their services using datasets which are highly diverse across age, ethnicity and gender and their services are continually performance-tested to ensure a high-level coverage across all face types.

NHS login and NHS App store and process personal data within the United Kingdom and European Economic Area. NHS Digital use two approved identity verification suppliers to check the user submitted photographic identity document. This data is

processed outside of the device but remains within the control of NHS Digital as the data controller and within the UK. Data leaving the UK is heavily restricted. There are two data processors engaged by NHS Digital to support delivery of the NHS App who process data outside the UK.

■ **NHS: Staff**

Steve McCabe:

[\[33110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) trade unions and (b) the NHS on the potential effect of the establishment of wholly-owned subsidiaries by NHS Trusts on pay and conditions of healthcare workers.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: As part of the Department's regular engagement with trade unions and NHS England and NHS Improvement, issues on the potential effect of the establishment of wholly-owned subsidiaries by National Health Service trusts on pay and conditions of healthcare workers have been raised on an ad hoc basis.

Under powers granted under the NHS Act 2006 S46 (5), NHS organisations have been responsible for deciding locally the most appropriate structures they need to deliver services to their patients and to support their operations. Where NHS organisations decide locally to set up a wholly-owned subsidiary, staff who are compulsorily transferred from the NHS to the subsidiary will be protected under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006. This protects pay and terms and conditions at the point of transfer.

■ **Nurses: Training**

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[28928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to pay student nurses for the hours they have worked through their student placements during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

The Government worked with the National Health Service to ensure that all nursing students who opted in to paid placements during the COVID-19 pandemic were paid a salary and received automatic NHS pension entitlement at the appropriate band.

Nursing students not on paid placements continued with their academic learning and clinical placements wherever possible. Health Education England worked with health and education providers to minimise disruption to education. Clinical placements allow students to acquire the necessary skills and experience under supervision, to meet education outcomes. Students are not usually paid for their clinical placements. Paid placements were introduced temporarily as part of the Government's emergency response to the pandemic.

Jon Trickett:[\[34439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurses were trained in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Helen Whately:

The following table shows Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) data on people who trained in England and joined the nursing register for the first time in each financial year between 2017 and 2020. To join the nursing register, students complete pre-registration training on a nursing degree course before applying to the NMC following graduation.

2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
17,807	19,222	20,871	19,949

Source –The NMC Register in England 2021

Note:

Each year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

■ Nutrition

John Stevenson:[\[10317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an estimate of the number of calories per day by which a person's diet will be reduced as a result of the restrictions proposed by the Government on (a) foods high in fat, salt or sugar, (b) broadcast advertising of those foods and (c) online advertising of those foods.

Jo Churchill:

Obesity is a complex problem caused by many different factors to which there is no single solution. We know that regular overconsumption of a relatively small number of calories leads to individuals becoming overweight or obese. Taking action to help reduce this excess calorie consumption will decrease obesity prevalence and obesity related ill health over time. "Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives" takes forward a wide range of measures that all contribute towards this goal, including by reshaping the food environment, providing people with a healthier choice and encouraging them to take it.

The Government published its response to the 2019 consultation 'Introducing further advertising restriction on TV and online for products high in fat, sugar and salt' and the 2020 consultation 'Introducing a total online advertising restriction for products high in fat, sugar and salt' on 24 June, confirming we will introduce a 9pm TV watershed for high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) product advertising, as well as a restriction of paid-for HFSS advertising online. We have estimated the restrictions could remove up to 7.2 billion calories from children's diets per year in the United Kingdom which, over the coming years, could reduce the number of obese children by more than 20,000.

■ **Organs: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[34543]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish data his Department holds on the (a) short and (b) long term effect of covid-19 on organs.

Jo Churchill:

Data on the short and long-term effect of COVID-19 infection on organs is not collected centrally.

■ **Palliative Care**

Fleur Anderson:

[29928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that those suffering with terminal medical conditions have dignity at the end of their lives.

Helen Whately:

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out how the provision of healthcare is being updated to give people more control over their own health and more personalised care, including at end of life. The establishment of the Personalised Care Institute has made training available to help staff identify and support patients and to introduce proactive and personalised care planning for everyone identified as being in their last year of life. This enables meaningful conversations to take place and allows staff to help patients and families, address their concerns and to explain the breadth of services available in the local area. Clinicians should continue to utilise existing guidance from the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence which includes specific reference to maintaining comfort and dignity in the last days of life. 'Care of dying adults in the last days of life' is available at the following link:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng31/resources/care-of-dying-adults-in-the-last-days-of-life-pdf-1837387324357>

■ **Patients: Coronavirus**

Chris Grayling:

[36542]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the level of inpatient hospitalisations of people reported to be infected with the covid-19 virus who had been identified as having had that virus prior to submitting themselves for admission to hospital.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has made no specific assessment.

However, data on the number of people who are hospitalised due to COVID-19 is available at the following link:

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

■ Period Poverty

Sarah Champion:

[\[35664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether period poverty will be addressed in the Government's women's health strategy; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of bringing forward policies to tackle period poverty in the devolved nations.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: Menstrual wellbeing is being considered as part of Women's Health Strategy. A call for evidence was launched to inform the Strategy and included questions on menstrual health. We are currently analysing the responses. No assessment has been made of the potential merits of bringing forward policies to tackle period poverty in the devolved administrations. However, officials share learning on the initiatives being taken to address period poverty across all four nations.

■ Pharmacy: Medical Records

Sir George Howarth:

[\[36529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 July 2021 to Question 23078 on Pharmacy: medical records, whether (a) his Department and (b) NHS bodies plan to publish its assessments of the potential merits of giving pharmacy write access to medical records; and if he will make it his policy to hold a consultation on providing that access to pharmacies.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's plans for developing interoperable IT systems to provide read and write access across health and care settings were set out in 'The future of healthcare: our vision for digital, data and technology in health and care' published in October 2018. There is agreement across stakeholders that read and write access to patient records, where they are involved in the patient's direct care, is necessary for pharmacists to play the increased role envisaged by the NHS Long Term Plan and the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.

NHSX is engaging with stakeholders including pharmacy contractors, IT suppliers and the public, including testing proposed digital solutions and considering issues such as patient consent and data security. However, there are no plans for a public consultation.

■ Physiotherapy: Children

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[34470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve access to physiotherapy appointments for disabled children; and what steps he is taking to ensure that NHS Trust meet their targets for referrals to such appointments.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[34472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Disabled Children's Partnerships Left Behind report, what progress has been made on ensuring that every disabled child can access (a) physiotherapy, (b) occupational and speech and language and (c) other therapies they need; and what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled children are able to catch-up on the therapies they missed during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: As part of COVID-19 recovery planning we are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services, including therapies, to disabled children. In 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement published guidance making clear that restoration of essential community services, including therapeutic support, must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years old and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or are going through an assessment for one.

We have invested £6.6 billion from March to September 2021 to help National Health Service recovery and asked that systems ensure health inequalities are tackled in their recovery plans. We have also provided an additional £1 billion in 2021-22 to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children, to access NHS services.

■ **Plastics: Medical Equipment**

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[31382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the volume of single-use plastics consumed through (a) PCR and (b) lateral flow covid-19 tests; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: We have not made a formal assessment. However, NHS Test and Trace continues to work on exploring alternatives to current lateral flow devices which are as safe and effective but are made of predominantly recyclable or biodegradable materials.

■ **Pregnancy: Coronavirus**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[34580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the process is for ensuring health professionals (a) are discussing with pregnant women the risks and benefits of the covid-19 vaccine and (b) have up to date information on the risks and benefits of the vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with regional teams and providers to ensure that advice on vaccination in pregnancy,

including the risks and benefits of vaccination to pregnant women, is being offered antenatally and that information materials are available across antenatal and primary care settings. To ensure that healthcare professionals are having these discussions, NHS England and NHS Improvement have asked maternity and primary care services to support all general practitioners, practice nurses, midwives and obstetricians to give objective, evidence-based advice to women on vaccination in pregnancy at every antenatal contact. For healthcare professionals, there is also a checklist to aid discussions on the potential benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination in pregnancy, and to gain informed consent. This is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/04/C1293-COVID-19-vaccination-in-pregnancy-vaccinator-checklist-version-2-19-May-2021.pdf>

As part of their professional development, healthcare professionals and medical staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the latest guidance on matters of clinical importance. This could be through a range of mediums including clinical guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, journal reviews, circulars, bulletins, Royal Colleges guidance, information from the General Medical Council and guidance from Public Health England.

■ Primary Health Care

Rachael Maskell:

[27233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the level of pressure on primary care (a) services and (b) staff, including GPs, in the context of (i) increased service demand as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and (ii) the proposed reorganisation of the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: We recognise the increased pressure general practitioners (GPs) and practice staff are under, we have made an additional £270 million available for primary care services from November 2020 until September 2021. Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are also encouraged to make use of the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme, representing an average of 12 to 13 additional full time equivalent members of staff in post for each PCN. GPs can now refer patients to community pharmacies which can help reduce pressures on practices.

The NHS Health and Care Bill is intended to remove bureaucracy and support integration, including by supporting primary care services and more closely integrating them into integrated care systems (ICSs). The Bill builds on the National Health Service's response to COVID-19 and reflects many of the NHS's own requests for legislative changes. Additionally, the transfer of primary medical care commissioning to ICSs builds on existing collaborative commissioning arrangements.

Feryal Clark:

[35950]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that local health leaders are supported to enhance opportunities for people to care for themselves in their local areas.

Jo Churchill:

Supported self-management or self-care is part of the NHS Long Term Plan, to encourage, support and empower people to manage their ongoing physical and mental health conditions. In 2019, NHS England published an action plan for delivering personalised care 'Universal Personalised Care: Implementing the Comprehensive Model' which includes supported self-management and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/universal-personalised-care-implementing-the-comprehensive-model/>

A range of guides have been produced to support healthcare professionals and organisations leading local implementation of personalised care to deliver on the Comprehensive Model, including materials on care co-ordination, health coaching and supported self-management. In addition, NHS@home is a programme of work transforming health and care services so that people are supported to keep well, recover and manage their health and wellbeing at home. It aims to improve the use of technology to support more people to better self-manage their health and care at home. This provides more convenient, high quality and timely alternatives to face to face care, where this works for the individual and when clinically appropriate.

■ Public Places and Public Transport: Protective Clothing

Catherine West:

[28273]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for the guidance on the voluntary use of face coverings whilst on public transport and in public spaces.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: In June 2020, Public Health England (PHE) used an established methodology to complete a rapid review of the evidence related to face coverings in the community and COVID-19 and concluded that "the beneficial effects of wearing masks may be increased when combined with other non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as hand washing and social distancing." A second review published in January 2021 corroborated the findings of the first and found consistent evidence that the use of face coverings in community settings reduced the spread of COVID-19.

These reviews also looked at laboratory simulations in which the filtration efficacy of face coverings was tested. All face covering materials tested were deemed to offer some protection to the wearer through filtration of aerosol and droplet transmission compared with no barrier at all, and mouth and nose cover reduced droplet spread from the wearer. The review noted that this evidence derives from laboratory

conditions and only simulates the COVID-19 virus, so may not take into account conditions in the community.

PHE's review findings supports the voluntary wearing of face coverings as they can have beneficial impacts for wearers and others around them. The Government recommends their use in crowded and enclosed space where through guidance.

■ Public Transport: Protective Clothing

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[31378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if will make an assessment of the potential merits of maintaining the requirement for face coverings to be worn on public transport beyond 19 July 2021.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[31475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of mandating the wearing of face coverings on public transport beyond 19 July 2021 in the context of recent rising numbers of cases of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 15 July 2021]: The legal requirements to wear a face covering will be lifted in all settings on 19 July in line with step four of the roadmap. However, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Government expects and recommends the wearing of face coverings when coming into contact with people in enclosed and crowded spaces, such as public transport. This will reduce the risk of individuals and others around them transmitting COVID 19.

The Government's guidance on face coverings will be published in due course. This guidance will enable people to make informed decisions about how to manage the risk to themselves and others.

■ Qured

Dan Jarvis:

[\[3876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the quality of the testing service provided by Qured; how many complaints his Department has received on that company's service relating to covid-19 hotel quarantine; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 24 May 2021]: Qured has demonstrated compliance with the relevant minimum standards for their commercial provision of testing. This includes progressing through the three stage United Kingdom Accreditation Service process for providing sample collection and/or test analysis services. The Department is continuing to monitor all providers, including Qured, including assessment of their delivery, customer service and testing services.

The information requested in the number of complaints is not held centrally. However, we are monitoring issues raised by the public about private test providers, raising complaints with the relevant provider.

■ Radiotherapy

Olivia Blake: [\[32554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many radiotherapy machines currently used by the NHS are over 10 years old.

Grahame Morris: [\[33205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many radiotherapy machines currently used by the NHS are more than 10 years old.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: As at 31 March 2021, approximately 63 Linear Particle Accelerators (LINACs) in routine National Health Service use were aged 10 years or more. Approximately two thirds of these have a locally agreed replacement plan that is due to be implemented in 2021-22.

■ Rare Diseases: Genetic Engineering

Jim Shannon: [\[35642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the UK Rare Diseases Framework, whether he has had discussions with NICE on concerns arising from the first gene therapy for a rare disease to go through NICE's appraisal process having been rejected.

Jo Churchill:

We have had no specific discussions. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is responsible for developing its recommendations independently and in accordance with its methods and processes. NICE has 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.

■ Respite Care

Jeremy Hunt: [\[33182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that carers have access to breaks from their caring responsibilities.

Helen Whately:

The Care Act 2014 secured important rights for carers, including an assessment of, and support for, their specific needs where eligible. Local authorities have been able to access the £1.49 billion Infection Control Fund which has been used to help day services reopen safely or be reconfigured to work in a COVID-19 secure way. We have also committed at least £6.9 billion in 2021-2022 to the Better Care Fund, which

includes funding that can be used for respite services. In addition, we have worked with the Social Care Institute for Excellence to publish guidance for day care managers, commissioners, and providers, to help them make decisions on the safe operation of day services.

We will continue to work with local authorities, in collaboration with Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, to ensure, where possible, the safe resumption of these services.

■ Sickie Cell Diseases: Health Services

Feryal Clark: [\[35948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding his Department plans to provide to help improve the lives of patients with haemoglobinopathies, including transfusion-dependent β -thalassaemia.

Jo Churchill:

The Government published the United Kingdom Rare Diseases Framework in January 2021, outlining the key priorities for rare diseases including improved access to specialist care, treatments and drugs. In October 2019, NHS England specialised commissioning concluded a review of haemoglobinopathy services, which resulted in the development of new Haemoglobinopathy Co-ordinating Centres and the multi-disciplinary National Haemoglobinopathy Panel of clinical experts which aim to improve outcomes for patients with haemoglobinopathies which includes thalassaemia patients.

■ Social Services

Marsha De Cordova: [\[28322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of publishing a Social Care People Plan.

Helen Whately:

We are engaging with frontline staff, sector leaders and our partners on how we can best support those who work in social care through professionalisation, wellbeing and recognition.

■ Social Services: Career Development

Rachael Maskell: [\[33976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to encourage (a) school age children and (b) adults to pursue a career in social care.

Helen Whately:

We are working closely with the Department for Education and Skills for Care to make social care a more attractive career option. We are supporting apprenticeships, traineeships and other development programmes in social care and have provided

the Prince's Trust with £20 million to support up to 10,000 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds into employment in the health and social care sector.

We ran a national recruitment campaign across broadcast, digital and social media and we are working with the Department of Work and Pensions to promote adult social care careers to jobseekers. The Department has provided £27 million to expand the Think Ahead programme to train 360 graduates and career switchers to become mental health social workers and distribute approximately £12 million a year through the Workforce Development Fund to support people working in adult social care to undertake training and qualifications.

■ Social Services: Fees and Charges

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[36599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help improve the affordability of social care.

Helen Whately:

We are committed to reforming the adult social care system, including the provision of affordable personalised care and will bring forward proposals in 2021.

■ Social Services: Job Satisfaction

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[36600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help improve employee satisfaction in the social care sector.

Helen Whately:

The Department is working with the social care sector to improve employee satisfaction through supporting wellbeing and increasing recognition for staff. To support the wellbeing of social care workers, we have worked alongside the National Health Service and other organisations to provide a package of emotional, psychological and practical resources for the workforce. This includes support helplines, guidance, bereavement resources and a bespoke package of support for registered managers.

We have also identified carers, paid and unpaid, as essential workers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to give them much-needed acknowledgment of their critical role in keeping people safe and supported.

■ Social Services: Migrant Workers

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[27253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on reviewing the effect of EU withdrawal and the end of free movement on social care staffing levels.

Helen Whately:

While 7% of the existing workforce identify as European Union citizens, they have been able to apply to remain in the UK under the EU settlement scheme and so we do not expect a sudden loss of this workforce. The flow of EU workers into the sector annually is small comparable to the size of the workforce; fewer than 5% of all workers joining the sector in a direct care role in 2019/20 had arrived from the EU in the previous 12 months. Therefore, we do not anticipate that the end of transition will have an immediate impact on workforce supply. We are confident that employers will be able to recruit domestically to outnumber any decreased flow of workers from the EU and we are working closely with counterparts across Government to encourage people with the right skills and values to work in the sector.

■ **Social Services: Pay****Chi Onwurah:**[\[34495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that adult social care workers are paid a wage which meets the (a) the Real Living Wage standards and (b) wage of equivalent NHS roles.

Helen Whately:

The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay, independent of central Government. Local authorities work with care providers to determine a fair rate of pay based on local market conditions.

■ **Social Services: Reform****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[31340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent progress the Government has made on social care reform.

Helen Whately:

We are working closely with local and national partners to ensure our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives, including those with lived experience of the care sector. The Government is committed to reforming the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals in 2021.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[35607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the Department plans to publish a social care plan.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to reforming the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals in 2021.

■ Steroid Drugs: Misuse

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[28230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with stakeholders on the recognition of topical steroid withdrawal as an official condition by the NHS.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[28231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the NHS on guidance for GPs and patients on the correct use and dosage of topical steroids.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[28232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to modify the labelling of topical steroid medications to include clear warnings against over-use.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is conducting a review of topical steroid withdrawal. The review is discussing alterations to labelling, guidance and communications with health care professionals. We have consulted on these topics with healthcare experts in the field including those in the National Health Service, patient representatives and other stakeholders. We are considering updates to the product information and further communications to health care professionals and the MHRA expects to issue more information on this in the next few months.

■ Surgical Mesh Implants

Aaron Bell: [\[25976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have had ventral mesh rectopexy surgery; and how many are experiencing complications as a result of that surgery.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: The information is not collected in the format requested.

Aaron Bell: [\[25977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has plans to investigate a potential link between the properties of polypropylene mesh and foreign body reaction, fibromyalgia and autoimmune disorders.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 8 July 2021]: There are no plans to investigate the link between the properties of polypropylene mesh and foreign body reaction, fibromyalgia and autoimmune disorders.

The Department has commissioned NHS Digital to undertake a retrospective audit of complications from pelvic mesh from a defined cohort of women. This was announced in the Government's response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Review.

Planning is at an early stage and the requirements for this audit are currently being gathered from a range of stakeholders and patient representatives.

■ Test and Trace Support Payment

Dame Angela Eagle: [\[33850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people who have applied for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment to date were ineligible to receive that payment.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: This information is not currently available as it is being collated from lower tier and unitary local authorities and centrally validated.

■ Thalidomide Trust

Mr Gregory Campbell: [\[35525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when discussions with the Thalidomide Trust on support for ongoing health needs beyond 2022-23 will conclude.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: On 3 March 2021, we committed to continue the Thalidomide Health Grant beyond 31 March 2023. This commitment includes an initial payment of approximately £39 million for the first four years after the current grant ends. Future funding figures will be confirmed every four years following an assessment of need.

■ Tobacco

Alex Norris: [\[32481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when Public Health England's investigation into menthol cigarettes will conclude; whether the testing of those products has commenced; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Public Health England's testing of tobacco products, as part of the Department's investigation of possible breaches of the prohibition of menthol cigarettes, is ongoing. We expect this work to be completed by the end of the year.

We expect the tobacco industry to comply with the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations in regard to the menthol cigarette ban that was introduced in May 2020. HM Revenue and Customs is able to apply a number of sanctions against retailers found selling illicit menthol tobacco.

Mr David Jones:

[\[36588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to conduct further reviews of e-cigarettes and other novel nicotine delivery systems after his Department has published its eighth evidence review on those matters in March 2022.

Jo Churchill:

Further plans for reviewing the evidence for e-cigarettes and other novel nicotine delivery systems are being considered and will be outlined in the new Tobacco Control Plan for England which will be published later this year.

■ **Tobacco: Sales**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[29951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timescale is for Public Health England completing its investigation into the sale of menthol cigarettes; and if he will publish preliminary findings of that investigation.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England has issued an invitation to tender for the testing of a range of tobacco products. We anticipate the testing will be completed by the end of the year and we will consider publication when the testing has concluded.

■ **Transplant Surgery: Coronavirus**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[35649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of an increase in covid-19 infections and hospitalisations over summer 2021 on the ability of patients who require a transplant to receive one.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement and NHS Blood and Transplant are working closely with transplant units to optimise organ utilisation, including facilitating a patient's move to an alternative unit where possible. NHS England and NHS Improvement have published guidance to local systems to support the restoration and recovery of solid organ transplants and regional teams have developed recovery plans. This includes streamlined pathways for the provision of solid organ transplantation and the associated critical care capacity, informed by different COVID-19 scenarios.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[23039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to allow people who have been fully vaccinated against covid-19 arriving into England from amber destinations to avoid the need for self-isolation from 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Certain categories of international arrivals who are fully vaccinated do not have to quarantine or take a day 8 test when travelling from 'amber list' countries. This currently includes individuals vaccinated under the United Kingdom vaccine rollout and travellers who have been vaccinated in the United States or European Union with a European Medicines Agency, Swissmedic or United States Food and Drug Administration authorised vaccine.

Travellers will still be required to take a pre-departure test and a test on day two, with any positive results requiring isolation in line with domestic social distancing regulations. This will be sequenced to continue to manage the risk of importing variants.

Daisy Cooper:[\[32518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July 2021 to Question 27366 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what steps he has taken to ensure that AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured by the Serum Institute of India and distributed to patients by the NHS are being accepted by EU countries for the purposes of travel.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Residents of the United Kingdom who have received the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured in India will be able to travel to European Union countries using the NHS COVID Pass, which has been available for international travel since May.

Justin Madders:[\[35710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2021 to Question 29826 on Coronavirus: Vaccination and in the context of UK travellers reportedly refused entry by Malta, what discussions he has had with EU officials on vaccination certificates.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Following our discussions, the Maltese Government confirmed on 15 July that they will accept all COVID-19 vaccines approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and all United Kingdom travel advice was updated.

We are actively engaging with other Member States and organisations, including the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the World Health Organization.

Layla Moran:[\[35872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of PCR tests of arrivals from amber list countries have been sequenced for new variants in each month of 2021 to date.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: This information is not available in the format requested. NHS Test and Trace publish this data on three weekly cycles aligned with risk assessments and decisions within the international travel traffic light system.

Fleur Anderson:[\[35915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that participants of the Novavax trial are treated equitably with regards to international travel.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are working with clinical research sites to add participant information into the National Immunisation Management Service to allow participants to access their NHS COVID Pass for domestic and international travel. Discussions are ongoing with other countries, the G7, the European Commission and the World Health Organization to shape the approach taken around the world to sharing health status for travel, including vaccination status.

Travel: Quarantine**Hilary Benn:**[\[23057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of CTM's performance in dealing with complaints on the operation of the quarantine hotel booking service.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 1 July 2021]: Whilst there has not been a formal assessment of Corporate Travel Management's (CTM) complaint's process, the Managed Quarantine Service has weekly meetings with CTM's senior leadership where operational performance issues are discussed and escalated as appropriate. Performance against the contract is managed and assessed according to the terms of the contract. Overall performance, including in relation to complaints, is discussed regularly between Departmental officials and CTM and any areas that need improvement are addressed.

Hywel Williams:[\[24909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what quality assurance assessment procedure he has in place to ensure hygienic and comfort standards in covid-19 quarantine accommodation for arrivals from red-list countries.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 5 July 2021]: All hotels complete a formal induction and inspection before they become available as a managed quarantine facility. Hotels have clear standard operating procedures in place, including spot checks and instructions on cleanliness, fresh linen and towels left outside of the room door every third day and provision of suitable disposable cleaning products and equipment so guests can clean their rooms. There are provisions for guests to have personal clothes cleaned.

Local liaison officers on site can deal with any issues that arise and respond to customer feedback.

Justin Madders:

[\[29827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 6 July to Question 13987, what steps he has taken to centrally validate the data on the passengers entering from red list countries who have been successful in applying for exemption from the hotel quarantine requirements.

Jo Churchill:

Processing the data for passengers arriving from 'red list' countries who are exempt from quarantine requires the collation of information from various sources depending on the relevant exemption and the number of passengers. Due to the quantity and complexity of these requests, the exemptions team is reviewing the current process and is conducting regular exercises to ensure duplication and errors are removed; improving cross team engagement and data sharing to facilitate the processing and validation of exemption cases data; implementing internal service level agreements to decrease processing time for decisions making on exemptions, enabling the data to be more easily verified; and developing an end-to-end process map and action plan to improve data quality and efficiency.

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[33883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what minimum service standards apply to the quarantine exemption team; and how many and what proportion of requests are dealt with within the target response time.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 20 July 2021]: There is no specific minimum standard for the exemptions team due to the different types of exemptions that exist and the large number of passengers entering into managed quarantine each week from 'red list' countries. Each exemption request is considered on an individual case by case basis. Due to the quantity and complexity of these requests the exemptions team are reviewing the current process to centrally validate data and enhance collation capabilities.

Layla Moran:

[\[35869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 180586 on Travel: Quarantine, what estimate he has made of the number of people arriving in the UK who have entered covid-19 hotel quarantine as a proportion of total arrivals from red list countries since that quarantine measure was introduced.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The information is not held in the format requested.

Apsana Begum:

[\[35936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reasons only those fully vaccinated under the NHS covid-19 vaccination programme are able to travel without having to quarantine on their return to England.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is taking a phased approach to amending border requirements, firstly for inbound arrivals from 'amber list' countries who have been fully vaccinated under the United Kingdom programme. Work is ongoing to determine which non-UK vaccines could be recognised in this country.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[36748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the Government requires people who have received both covid-19 vaccinations abroad to quarantine when returning to the UK from a country on the amber travel list, while those who received both vaccines in the UK and have also returned from an amber list country are not required to quarantine.

Jo Churchill:

We are taking a phased approach to amending requirements for vaccinated passengers and exploring plans to remove quarantine for vaccinated non-United Kingdom residents from 'amber list' countries later this summer. The Test to Release scheme remains an option for travellers returning from 'amber list' countries to shorten their quarantine period.

We are working with medical and public health experts and international partners to broaden this scheme to more countries. We will provide an update in due course on the approach for individuals vaccinated in other countries, including those who have been vaccinated with vaccines not approved for use in the UK.

■ Trodelvy

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[35722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the cancer treatment drug Sacituzumab Govitecan, also known as Trodelvy, will be available for prescription and use in the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

Trodelvy (sacituzumab govitecan) does not yet have a marketing authorisation for use in Great Britain and is not yet available for routine prescribing. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is currently considering a marketing authorisation application for Trodelvy through the accelerated process for Project Orbis medicines. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is also currently developing guidance for the National Health Service on whether Trodelvy represents a clinically and cost effective use of NHS resources. It expects to publish draft guidance in spring 2022. Interim access arrangements may be considered for medicines licensed through the Project Orbis pathway where NICE guidance is not

anticipated to be published in line with the three month timeframe. NICE and NHS England and NHS Improvement are actively engaging with Gilead to see how interim access arrangements may be applied.

■ Vaccination: Birmingham

Liam Byrne:

[\[28969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide written instructions to NHS Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group requiring them (a) to liaise with hon. Members in the planning of community vaccinations and (b) to provide hon. Members with at least seven days notice of planned community vaccination sessions.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 12 July 2021]: There are no plans to do so. Whilst it is encouraged that clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) do liaise with local leaders and hon. Members, CCGs are autonomous organisations. As such, there is no formal guidance on the level of interaction CCGs should have with hon. Members and this should be discussed at a local level.

■ Veterans: Disability

Justin Madders:

[\[35702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending free prescriptions to veterans other than holders of a Valid War Pension Exemption Certificate in cases where the prescription is for an accepted disability.

Justin Madders:

[\[35703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of the cost of prescriptions on veterans' mental health outcomes.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Exemptions from National Health Service prescriptions charges for veterans have been extended beyond valid war pension exemption certificate holders to Armed Forces Compensation Scheme recipients. If the prescription is not for their accepted disablement there would be a charge if they were under 60 years old, unless there was another exemption in place. No assessment has been made of the effect of the cost of prescriptions on veterans' mental health.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Eritrea****Neil Coyle:****[34509]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to paragraph 6.11 of Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2019 Human Rights and Democracy report on the use of national service in Eritrea, what assessment her Department has made of the reasons for Eritreans seeking asylum in the UK since 2019; and what assessment her Department has made of the change in the level of asylum applications from Eritreans between 2019 and 2021.

Kevin Foster:

All asylum and human rights applications from Eritrean nationals are carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations.

Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw. The Eritrean Country Policy and Information Notes (available on gov.uk) outlines our position.

We cannot comment on individual cases however our assessment states the vast majority of Eritreans base their asylum claim on their desertion from, or evasion of, compulsory national service as well as the potential consequences of such (for example: leaving the country illegally).

The Home Office publishes data on the number of applications for asylum in the UK, broken down by nationality, in its quarterly Immigration Statistics release. The number of applications made by Eritreans in each year are available in table Asy_01C (Main Applicants; Asylum, volume 1).

Latest edition available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2021/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement>

■ Asylum: Greek Islands**Stephen Flynn:****[33327]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish information on which legal routes are available to asylum seekers in camps in Greece's Aegean Islands who are seeking to be reunited with family in the UK.

Chris Philp:

The UK already provides a safe and legal route to bring families together through its refugee family reunion policy. The current refugee family reunion policy allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here, if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. Over 29,000 visas have been issued under this policy in the last 5 years. Under the family reunion policy, we do not restrict where someone has to be in order to make an application.

As set out in the New Plan for Immigration, the Government committed to review safe and legal routes to the UK and has a statutory duty to conduct a public consultation on family reunion for UASC in the EU. We have now completed the consultation as part of the wider consultation on the New Plan for Immigration. We have carefully considered the responses and a report, laid in Parliament on 22 July 2021, on the outcome of the review of safe and legal routes confirms the UK wants to be bold and ambitious in the safe and legal routes it provides.

[New Plan for Immigration - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

■ Asylum: Housing

Helen Hayes:

[33992]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2021 to Question 28270 on Asylum: Housing, if she will place in the Library a complete copy of the review of initial accommodation for single adult asylum seekers undertaken by Human Applications.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 23 July 2021]: The Home Office contracted an independent organisation, Human Applications, to conduct a rapid review of initial accommodation for single adult asylum seekers, including hotels and the former military barracks. This was to provide assurance of compliance with public health guidelines to prevent the transmission of Covid 19. Human Applications completed their visits, and they have now submitted a report with their findings and recommendations.

We have already shared a report summary with our partners, including non-Government Organisations and Strategic Migration Partnerships. We have also held workshops with our accommodation providers to allow them to action specific findings. There are no plans to place a copy of the report in the library.

■ Ben Needham

Alex Sobel:

[36738]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will provide finances for a reward for information on the case of British national Ben Needham who disappeared from the Greek Island of Kos on the 24th July 1991.

Kit Malthouse:

As this is an ongoing investigation, the decision to offer a reward for information, and other tactics deployed to further the work needed to bring a resolution to the case, is an independent operational matter for South Yorkshire Police.

■ British Nationality: Ilois

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[36582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Chaggosians with family in the UK will be eligible for UK citizenship under the new discretionary adult registration route.

Kevin Foster:

This proposed adult registration clause in the Nationality and Borders Bill would allow the Home Secretary discretion to grant citizenship in circumstances where a person could have become British but for historical legislative unfairness, an act or omission by a public authority, or exceptional circumstances of the particular individual.

This is one of a number of measures which need to be approved by Parliament, and so we cannot be specific at this time how the discretion will be used.

■ Counter-terrorism: Religious Buildings

Richard Fuller:

[\[35592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the impact on places of worship of the requirements of the Protect Duty; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of mitigation measures for people in voluntary positions in places of worship and other organisations potentially required to comply with the Protect Duty.

Kevin Foster:

The responses to the Protect Duty consultation, which closed on 2nd July, provides a basis for Government to consider the scope and requirements of the Protect Duty, alongside assessing the impacts on those parties potentially within scope. These considerations will also consider the potential for unintended consequences and indirect implications of introducing the Duty.

The Government is mindful places of worship differ significantly in the nature of their function and operation from other locations potentially within the scope of the Protect Duty proposals. This is balanced against the threat posed by terrorism, and a need to ensure there are effective security measures at public places, regardless of their nature.

The Government will be carefully considering the issues raised within the consultation and our engagement events, including those discussed with representatives of different faith communities, before considering next steps.

■ Crime and Violence: Young People

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[35622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to stop young people becoming involved in crime and violence.

Kit Malthouse:

It is vitally important that we prevent young people from being drawn into violent crime. The Government understands the importance of tackling this issue from all angles – whether that is providing support to prevent young people from getting involved in crime, or providing the police with the tools they need to bring knife offenders to justice.

Since 2018, we have invested £105.5m into multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in 18 areas most affected by serious violence. The VRUs bring together local partners to deliver an effective, joined up approach to tackling violent crime and its drivers – and they have reached over 100,000 young people in their first year.

We are investing up to £23m this year in new early intervention programmes that will help stop young people from being drawn into violence, and our Creating Opportunities Forum will provide meaningful employment-related opportunities and raise the aspirations of young people at risk of being drawn into serious violence and knife crime.

In addition, our £200m 10 year Youth Endowment Fund is testing what works to divert young people away from serious violence.

This year, we have provided an extra £30m this year for the police forces with the highest rates of serious violence in England and Wales. This funding is supporting the police to deter and disrupt knife crime in areas that need it most.

However, we know there is still more to do. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill includes a duty on public sector bodies to take a joined-up approach to addressing serious violence; the requirement for local agencies to review the circumstances when an adult homicide takes place involving an offensive weapon; and Serious Violence Reduction Orders, which give the police the authority to stop and search known knife and weapons carriers.

■ Criminal Records**Sarah Olney:****[36723]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent future losses of crime records.

Kit Malthouse:

Following the deletion of a number of No Further Action Cases the Home Secretary and I commissioned an independent review, led by an external panel chaired by Lord Hogan-Howe, to investigate how this happened and to ensure the necessary lessons are learned to avoid similar incidents in the future.

The review sets out a wide range of recommendations for both the Home Office as well as the Police to address the underlying factors that led to this unacceptable incident. Both the Home Office and the Police have accepted all the recommendations in full and work is already underway to take the necessary steps to respond to them.

A summary of the review was published in the House on 24 May.

■ Demonstrations: Greater London

Fleur Anderson:

[\[35911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the Government's policy is on protecting the right to protest in (a) London and (b) Parliament Square.

Kit Malthouse:

The freedom to peacefully protest across the country is a fundamental right that this Government is proud to support.

However, this Government will strengthen police powers to tackle non-violent protests that cause significant disruption to essential services. This is why we are introducing powers in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to establish a fair balance between the rights of protesters and the rights and freedoms of others.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime

Jane Hunt:

[\[36809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to prevent (a) new county lines from starting up and (b) previous lines being resurrected by new prison leavers.

Kit Malthouse:

Since 2019 we have invested over £65m to tackle county lines and drug supply. Through our county lines programme we have surged our activity against these ruthless gangs. This has already resulted in more than 1,100 lines closed, over 6,300 arrests, and more than 1,900 vulnerable adults and children safeguarded.

The police have a range of orders available to respond to county lines activity, including Drug Dealing Telecommunications Restrictions Orders (DDTROs). Through our County Lines programme the National County Lines Coordination Centre has established a dedicated orders team to promote and maximise the use of civil orders to tackle county lines, with a particular focus on DDTROs.

We are also working collaboratively with HMPPS to ensure there is a co-ordinated and robust response to disrupt county lines, as well as safeguarding vulnerable individuals from being involved in this offending.

■ Fire Services: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of a rise in cases of covid-19 on the (a) capacity and (b) response capability of the Fire and Rescue Service in (i) North Yorkshire and (ii) England.

Kit Malthouse:

It is the responsibility of each fire and rescue authority to determine their operational response based on its analysis of risk and local circumstances, and drawing on national operational guidance provided by the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC).

This remains a priority for services as they deal with tackling the challenges that have arisen during this pandemic.

The Home Office has worked closely with the NFCC throughout the pandemic to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on fire and rescue services in England.

■ Fire Stations: Yorkshire and the Humber**Jon Trickett:****[34442]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many fire stations there were in Yorkshire in (a) 2010 and in (b) 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The number of fire stations in North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, the three fire and rescue services that make up the Yorkshire region were

a) 108 in 2010

b) 97 in 2020

Source and further detail is available in table FIRE1403 here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959623/fire-statistics-data-tables-fire1403-110221.xlsx

Operational matters (including where to locate fire stations) and the response to them are for each individual fire and rescue service (FRS) to determine, along with their associated Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). Every fire and rescue service is obliged to carry out its own risk assessments and identify appropriate control measures to protect its staff and communities. The Integrated Risk Management Plan for each FRS is published by the FRA. The National Fire Chiefs Council, through their Central Programme Office, provide operational guidance spanning a wide range of activity to assist fire and rescue services in their work.

■ Fraud**Mr Jonathan Lord:****[35624]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps his Department is taking to tackle fraud and economic crime.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to protecting people from all types of fraud and pursuing those who perpetuate these crimes wherever possible. It is for this reason that as part of the 2020 Spending Review, the Government committed a further £63m to the Home Office to tackle economic crime, including fraud. In May, we published a Statement of Progress on the Economic Crime Plan which committed to developing a

comprehensive Fraud Action Plan. This will outline how we plan to further strengthen how we combat fraud and will be published after the 2021 Spending Review.

As part of the Police Uplift Programme to recruit an additional 20,000 officers by 2023, we have prioritised more investigators in the City of London Police to fulfil their role as a world class fraud specialist force. We have also channelled additional officer resource into the Regional Organised Crime Unit network to work on a host of serious and organised crime threats including fraud.

We have also been working closely alongside the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) who launched their Suspicious Email Reporting Service last year. This system has proved an instant success with the public, with over 6.5 million reports received and the removal of over 50,500 scams and 97,500 websites taken down since its inception in April 2020.

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

http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud. This information is being used by law enforcement partners, alongside crime reports to identify, disrupt and stop fraudsters.

■ Home Office: Email

Cat Smith:

[35731]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she or any of the Ministers of her Department use personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office Ministers have confirmed they do not use personal accounts to conduct government business.

■ Human Trafficking

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[35620]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to tackle people smuggling.

Chris Philp:

The Government stands resolute in its commitment to tackle Organised Immigration Crime (OIC). We continue to pursue the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) who facilitate illegal travel to the UK and who exploit vulnerable migrants, knowingly putting people in life-threatening situations.

In March 2021, the Government published the New Plan for Immigration containing provisions to establish legislation to deter illegal entry into the UK, thereby breaking the business model of criminal people smuggling networks and protecting the lives of those they endanger. In July 2021, the Government introduced this legislation through the Nationality and Borders Bill.

We continue to take action against the highly dangerous and illegal entry methods facilitated by these gangss. Police patrols on French beaches and enhanced intelligence sharing between our security and law enforcement agencies has helped to prevent around 8,000 people from making the Channel crossing to the UK so far this year

The Government has taken steps to tackle organised crime on social media platforms, reducing the space in which gangss operate. In March 2021, I met with the National Crime Agency and senior representatives from social media companies to discuss how they can more effectively tackle organised crime online and a planned approach is being finalised.

Reinforcing this commitment, in June 2021 the Home Secretary wrote to CEOs of key social media companies urging them to do substantially more to proactively identify and remove posts promoting organised crime , particularly illegal Channel crossings.

■ National Crime Agency: Expenditure

Kevin Hollinrake:

[35778]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much and what proportion of the National Crime Agency's budget has been spent on tackling economic crime in each of the last three years.

Kit Malthouse:

The National Crime Agency (NCA)'s overall budget is distributed across the agency according to need and operational priority. As serious and organised crime threats change, the agency retains the ability to flex its resources to react. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of budget allocated to tackling economic crime as there are a number of agency wide capabilities and functions that all commands have access to. We are, however, able to provide the total expenditure by the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) which provides a partial figure of expenditure for our overall response to tackling economic crime.

The NCA Annual Report and Accounts provide the following Gross Expenditure over the past three years:

2018/19 - Gross expenditure for the Prosperity Command - £22.0m (Note the NECC was formally launched on 31 October 2018, before which the NCA's Prosperity Command fulfilled some of the same functions. In the 2019/20 Annual Report, an apportionment of £6.7m in 2018/19 was made for the NECC.)

2019/20 - Gross expenditure for the NECC - £30.0m

2020/21 – Gross expenditure for the NECC - £35.5m

An important element of tackling economic crime and illicit finance is by denying criminals the benefit of their crimes. This disrupts organised crime groups and illicit finance flows and on this we have achieved some significant successes. The NCA's success in denying criminal assets over the same three years totals £646.5m, which could have derived from any serious and organised crime threat. This demonstrates

one element of our impact across all illicit finance for which we have readily available data.

■ **National Crime Agency: Staff**

Kevin Hollinrake:

[\[35777\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many full-time equivalent staff have been employed by the National Crime Agency to tackle economic crime in each of the last three years.

Kit Malthouse:

In terms of the operational response, the Agency has a wide range of capabilities and functions that operate across different threat areas including economic crime. We are unable to provide a figure for the number of full-time equivalent staff who have been employed by the National Crime Agency (NCA) to tackle economic crime for the past three years as many units contribute to the efforts in different and varying amounts.

However, we are able to report on the number of staff within the Economic Crime Command which includes the National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) and the UK Financial Intelligence Unit (UKFIU).

The following table contains the approximate number of full time equivalent (FTE) staff for the Economic Crime Command, UK Financial Intelligence Unit and NECC since 2018. This is therefore a partial figure that does not reflect, for example, officers in Intelligence and Investigations Commands who conduct work in this threat area.

	ECC (NECC AND UKFIU) FTE (APPROXIMATE)
2019 FY end	240
2020 FY end	300
2021 FY end	350

An important element of tackling economic crime and illicit finance is by denying criminals the benefit of their crimes. This disrupts organised crime groups and illicit finance flows and on this we have achieved some significant successes. The NCA's success in denying criminal assets over the same three years totals £646.5m, which could have derived from any serious and organised crime threat. This demonstrates one element of our impact across all illicit finance for which we have readily available data.

■ **Offenders: Deportation**

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[35621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to remove foreign national offenders.

Chris Philp:

The Government is clear foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them.

Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity and since January 2019 we have removed 7,985.

For non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, deportation will be pursued where it is conducive to the public good including where a person receives a custodial sentence of 12 months or more, commits an offence that caused serious harm or is a persistent offender. European Economic Area (EEA) and Swiss citizens, and their family members, who are protected by the EU Withdrawal Agreement Act 2020 are considered for deportation on public policy and public security grounds where it concerns conduct (including any criminal convictions relating to it) committed on or before 31 December 2020.

Our New Plan for Immigration and provisions in the Nationality and Borders Bill will make it easier to deport foreign criminals with no right to be in the UK and keep our citizens safe. Further information can be found in [New Plan for Immigration: policy statement \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Organised Crime**Kevin Hollinrake:**[\[35779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate Sir Craig Mackey made of how much additional funding would be required to enable UK law enforcement to successfully tackle serious and organised crime.

Kit Malthouse:

My department published the key findings of Sir Craig Mackey's Review on 16 March 2021. The recent Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy set out the Government's priorities for tackling serious and organised crime in response to Sir Craig's Review, including strengthening the NCA and increasing regional and local policing capacity. We will assess future funding needed as part of the next spending review.

Police: Colombia**Jon Trickett:**[\[34438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the National Crime Agency has provided any training to the Mobile Anti-Disturbances Squadron / Escuadrón Móvil Antidisturbios (ESMAD) unit of the Colombian National Police.

Kit Malthouse:

The NCA works with law enforcement counterparts around the world, including in various South American countries. In Colombia, the NCA works with a number of Colombian departments including the Colombian National Police and the Office of the Attorney General of Colombia. This activity is focused on reducing the threat to the

UK from the cocaine trade in Colombia and the region, as well as disrupting the money laundering and other criminal economies linked to drugs trafficking and other organised crime. All of NCA's activity overseas, including the provision of security and justice assistance to partners is conducted in accordance with International Human Rights Legislation and HMG policy.

■ **Police: Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[34535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of a rise in cases of covid-19 on (a) policing and (b) public safety in (i) North Yorkshire and (ii) England.

Kit Malthouse:

It is the responsibility of each police force to determine their operational response based on its analysis of risk and local circumstances, and drawing on national operational guidance provided by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). This remains a priority for forces as they deal with tackling the challenges that have arisen during this pandemic.

The Home Office has worked closely with the NPCC throughout the pandemic to monitor the impact of covid on police forces and to ensure they have the tools and capacity to continue to respond to keep the public safe.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[36681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what additional support she will provide to the police in managing crowded areas in summer 2021 in response to the increased covid-19 infection rate.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office has been working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure forces have sufficient resourcing and guidance to operate safely. This includes managing crowded areas, such as during protests and other events. The NPCC also issued guidance to forces on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure that officers carrying out critical services are not put at risk.

We will continue to work extremely closely with police, alongside the NPCC, to ensure forces receive the equipment and guidance they need, when they need it, in order to carry out their jobs safely.

■ **Refugees: Climate Change**

Helen Hayes:

[\[36704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) assessment she made of the potential effect of climate change on the displacement of people and (b) steps her Department is taking to prepare for future increases in refugees seeking safety in the UK in light of that issue.

Chris Philp:

Climate change is not recognised under the 1951 Refugee Convention and, therefore, cannot be used as a justification for requesting or granting international protection.

Evidence shows that climate extremes and environmental degradation are often amplifiers of other principal migration drivers (economic, social and political), but decisions to migrate are rarely mono-causal. As climate change increases its impact on migration it is imperative that efforts are redoubled to limit warming and to help vulnerable people to adapt to change. Climate change is a reality that requires greater and more coordinated adaptation and mitigation planning.

Slavery: Victim Support Schemes**Thangam Debonnaire:****[35721]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many criminals and terrorists have been identified as applying for the support available to victims of modern slavery since 2016.

Victoria Atkins:

There is more information on referrals available at: [Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

There is also information available on issues (including modern slavery) raised by people in immigration detention available at: [Issues raised by people facing return in immigration detention - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Violence Reduction Unit**Helen Hayes:****[36698]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to support the work of the London Violence Reduction Unit's work during Summer 2021.

Victoria Atkins:

Over three years, the London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has been allocated £21 million from the Home Office's Serious Violence Fund (SVF) to bring together key partners across health, education, policing, the criminal justice system, amongst others to identify the drivers of serious violence in London and deliver a tailored response to tackle them.

The VRU have utilised this funding to deliver a wide range of interventions which supported over 2750 young people in 2020/21. This includes innovative projects like the DIVERT programme, which engages with young people in custody immediately following a serious violence incident at a 'teachable moment' when they are expected to be most likely to change their behaviour.

This £21 million investment includes a £7 million allocation for London in the 2021/22 financial year. We have worked closely with the VRU on the development of their

proposals for the year ahead, collaborating to ensure that effective interventions, structures, and partners are in place to respond to the root causes of violence across London's 32 boroughs. These proposals have since been agreed and activity is being delivered throughout the summer months.

Future funding decisions are subject to the ongoing Spending Review, and we will engage with HM Treasury on proposals in due course as part of the departmental settlement. Whilst we cannot pre-empt the potential outcome of that process, we do recognise the need for VRUs to function as long-term, sustainable organisations and are working hard to achieve this.

■ Violence Reduction Units: Finance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[34487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to (a) change funding for Violence Reduction Units and (b) fund only for knife crime and serious violence reduction.

Kit Malthouse:

Over three years, through the Serious Violence Fund (SVF), the Home Office has invested a total of £242 million in the 18 police force areas in England and Wales that are most affected by serious violence.

£105.5 million of this has been invested in multi-agency Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) in these areas, whilst the remaining £136.5 million of the SVF has been invested to support the police in taking targeted action to respond to serious violence, including knife crime. Northumbria PCC has been allocated £4,800,000 since 2019 to set-up and develop their VRU, whilst Northumbria Police has been allocated £4,750,685 for operational activity.

The 18 areas in receipt of the SVF have been selected for funding based on their volumes of hospital admissions relating to injury with a sharp object, which represents the most consistent and reliable data source for serious violence. Collectively, these areas have accounted for 80% of total relevant admissions, allowing the SVF to focus on a significant majority of the serious violence problem across England and Wales. Total allocations to the selected areas reflect the proportion of relevant admissions in each area.

Future serious violence funding and potential allocation models will be carefully considered in the context of Departmental priorities through the upcoming Spending Review process. Whilst we cannot pre-empt the potential outcome of that process, we do recognise the need for VRUs to function as long-term, sustainable organisations delivering a 'whole-systems' approach to tackling serious violence and are working hard to achieve this.

■ Visas: Pre-school Education

Tulip Siddiq: [36714]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason early years workers including nursery staff were not included in the shortage occupation list for the Skilled Worker visa; and what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of that decision on the early years and childcare sector.

Kevin Foster:

The independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) reviewed the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) in September 2020 and did not recommend adding early years workers to the UK SOL. A copy of the report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-shortage-occupation-list-2020>

The MAC found there was a low vacancy rate for primary and nursery teachers and a lack of evidence of shortage, although Gaelic medium teachers remain on the Scotland-only SOL.

An occupation does not need to be on the SOL to be sponsored for a Skilled Worker visa. Upon advice from the MAC, the Government broadened the eligibility of the route, enabling more roles to qualify in early years education and other sectors.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ Building Safety Bill

Bob Blackman: [35606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the proposed timescale for an Accountable Person to be able to commence building safety works under the provisions of the Building Safety Bill.

Christopher Pincher:

The Building Safety Bill sets out requirements on Accountable Persons to make a full assessment of and take reasonable steps to manage prescribed building safety risks, which are defined in the Bill as the spread of fire and structural failure.

The draft transition plan, developed with the HSE, published alongside the Bill, sets out expected timeframes for the provisions in the Bill coming into force.

We currently expect the provisions relating to the new duties on Accountable Persons to come into force around 18 months after the Bill gains Royal Assent.

■ Building Safety Fund

Apsana Begum: [35939]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the average time from an application to the

Building Safety Fund proceeding to the second stage to funds being released to the building owner.

Christopher Pincher:

Detailed information on the Building Safety Fund application process and estimated timelines can be found in the Building Safety Fund application guidance available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-application-process.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit correctly completed applications as soon as possible. The quicker an applicant submits their application correctly, the quicker their application will be processed. A poorly completed full application will result in delays.

■ **Buildings: Insurance**

Andrew Lewer:

[\[34577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions his Department has had with relevant stakeholders on the potential response of managing agents' professional indemnity insurers to building and fire safety works obligations under the Building Safety Bill.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government understands that those involved in the construction industry are struggling to obtain adequate professional indemnity insurance (PII) for fire safety work.

We have been engaging with industry to investigate these challenges and those arising from the increased obligations outlined in the Building Safety Bill. This includes developing an industry survey with the Construction Leadership Council to provide a robust evidence base on the construction PII market.

We are working across Government and with industry to find possible solutions that may improve the availability of PII for construction professionals.

■ **Coal: Mining**

Catherine West:

[\[35813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an assessment of the environmental impact of the proposal to build a coal mine in Cumbria.

Catherine West:

[\[35814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the compatibility of the proposal for a new coal mine to be built in Cumbria with the UK's upcoming role as President of the COP26 summit.

Christopher Pincher:

A public inquiry, overseen by an independent Planning Inspector, is scheduled to begin in September. The inquiry will hear the evidence for and against the proposal, and once completed, the Inspector will prepare a report and recommendation for Ministers, based on that evidence. As this application will come before Ministers for decision it would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

■ **Construction: Fraud****Fleur Anderson:**[\[36798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps is he taking to tackle rogue contractors and builders.

Christopher Pincher:

Through the Building Safety Bill and secondary legislation we are placing a duty on anyone carrying out design or building work on any building to ensure that they and the people they appoint are competent for their role, or are being appropriately trained and supervised. For high-rise buildings, the new regime will make sure there is someone clearly responsible for safety during the design, build and occupation of a high-rise building. The new Building Safety Regulator will provide enhanced oversight across all buildings, and enforce the new regulatory regime for higher-risk buildings.

Where defective work is done despite these changes, the Building Safety Bill extends the limitation period under section 1 of the Defective Premises Act 1972, from six to 15 years, more than doubling the period of time for compensation claims to be brought for defective work following completion. The Bill also extends the scope of the Defective Premises Act to all work done on residential premises, not just the work to provide the dwelling in the first place.

In addition, the existing Government endorsed TrustMark Scheme identifies local traders who have undergone independent checks for both trade competence and good trading practice, providing consumers with increased confidence and ability to choose registered businesses, including builders, who adhere to and maintain high standards.

■ **Council Housing: West Yorkshire****Jon Trickett:**[\[34450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many council homes have been completed in West Yorkshire in each of the last 20 years.

Christopher Pincher:

The number of affordable housing starts and completions, broken down by tenure, local authority area, provider and whether they are a new build or acquisition can be found in the affordable housing statistics open data through the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply> .

■ Floods: Chester

Mike Amesbury:

[\[34578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the level of financial support required for Cheshire West and Chester Council following the flood damage caused by Storm Christoph.

Luke Hall:

Cheshire West and Chester Council receive unringfenced funding through the local government finance settlement to spend on local priorities

Following Storm Christoph MHCLG officials worked with local authority partners and the Environment Agency to determine the extent of the impacts of flooding from Storm Christoph and if additional financial support was appropriate. Government support for recovery costs is predicated on the Flood Recovery Framework, which is activated when impacts are severe and widespread. Further financial support was not judged necessary on this occasion.

■ Freehold and Leasehold

Fleur Anderson:

[\[35923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to (a) monitor and (b) ensure that the public pledge of 27 June 2019 made by freeholders for leaseholders is being upheld.

Eddie Hughes:

We understand the difficulties and frustrations for existing leaseholders who are unhappy with the ground rent they are required to pay and feel their leases should be changed.

The *Public Pledge for Leaseholders* is a voluntary code signed by over 60 freeholders, developers, investors and property agents. The signatories to the pledge who are freeholders committed to contacting existing leaseholders with ground rents that doubled more frequently than every 20 years, to offer to amend to increases based on RPI.

The Government asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to investigate potential mis-selling of homes and unfair terms in the leasehold sector. We are pleased that the CMA is taking enforcement action in relation to two key issues. First, to tackle certain instances of mis-selling of leasehold property. Second, to address the problems faced by homeowners from high and increasing ground rents. On 23 June the CMA announced commitments secured from Aviva and Persimmon to amend their practices regarding doubling ground rents and houses sold as leasehold.

Aviva have committed to remove ground rent terms that the CMA considers unfair and repay homeowners who saw ground rents doubled. It will also remove terms that were originally doubling clauses that have been converted to RPI-based ground rent terms.

The CMA also recommended improvements to the quality of information available to consumers early in the buying process. Specifically, Persimmon has agreed to extend the timeframe that prospective buyers are given to exchange contracts after reserving a property, and to provide people with more upfront information about the annual costs of buying a home. This addresses concerns that the reservation period – i.e. the period of time during which a potential buyer must take a number of steps to progress the purchase – is too short and can pressure the buyer into making a decision.

These commitments are a hugely important step and demonstrate our determination to support affected leaseholders. We urge other developers to follow suit.

■ Homelessness: Prisoners' Release

Jess Phillips:

[\[36663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the Government plans to bring into force all the provisions under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to better meet the needs of homeless female prison leavers.

Eddie Hughes:

This Government is committed to ending rough sleeping this Parliament and fully enforcing the Homelessness Reduction Act.

We are working across government and with the Ministry of Justice to address the barriers offenders face in securing suitable accommodation and are aware of the specific complex needs of women prison leavers.

To reflect this we have updated the Homelessness Code of Guidance to ensure local authorities are equipped to identify the specific support needs of women leaving prison.

The Ministry of Justice has committed over £20 million to supporting prison leavers at risk of homelessness into temporary accommodation and will support individuals into long-term settled accommodation. My department secured funding at the 2020 Spending Review to support prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rented sector tenancies. The Ministry of Justice has also opened Approved Premises for women.

■ Housing: Construction

Jim Shannon:

[\[35644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when the Government plans to publish its response to the raising accessible housing standards consultation that concluded on 1 December 2020.

Jim Shannon:

[35645]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether all new homes will be required to meet the accessible and adaptable standard following the consultation on raising accessibility standards for new homes, which concluded on 1 December 2020.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer of 18 June to Question UIN 13060.

■ **Housing: Fire Prevention**

Justin Madders:

[35704]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with property developers in response to the Competition and Markets Authority agreement with Persimmon on freehold costs.

Eddie Hughes:

Ministers meet a range of stakeholders from the development industry on a regular basis. However, no meetings with developers have specifically covered the CMA's agreements with Persimmon. The commitments secured by the CMA are a hugely important step and demonstrate our determination to support affected leaseholders. We urge other developers to follow suit.

■ **Housing: Insulation**

Jon Trickett:

[34441]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many homes in West Yorkshire have cladding that falls below the safe standard levels.

Christopher Pincher:

Information on the number of high-rise (over 18m) residential and publicly-owned buildings with ACM cladding systems unlikely to meet Building Regulations by local authority, is published in Web Table 3 of the [Building Safety Programme data release](#).

For high-rise residential buildings with unsafe non-ACM cladding, the Department is continuing to work with building owners to progress applications for the Building Safety Fund at pace so more remedial works can begin as swiftly as possible. We expect applicants to the Building Safety Fund to start works on site by 30 September 2021 where possible. Information on registrations to the Building Safety Fund by local authority can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics>.

We have begun a pilot data collection project for 11-18m residential buildings to identify materials in use and to inform the design of a wider national 11-18m data collection exercise. We will be publishing further details.

The Building Safety Bill will bring about a fundamental change in both the regulatory framework for building safety and construction industry culture, ensuring those responsible for buildings ensure fire and structural safety risks are properly managed.

■ Housing: Standards

Alexander Stafford:

[35966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will bring the Future Homes Standard forward to 2023.

Christopher Pincher:

The 2025 timeline delivers on our net zero commitments, while ensuring that new homes are delivered in sufficient numbers in the places that we need them, providing the good quality, warm homes that consumers expect, and continuing to keep energy bills low.

However, we are not waiting until 2025 to take action. In the short term, we will be implementing an interim 2021 Part L uplift for new homes as swiftly as possible. This is a key stepping stone that will enable us to successfully implement the Future Homes Standard.

We have also listened to calls for a swifter and more certain pathway to 2025 and our work on a full technical specification for the Future Homes Standard has been accelerated. We therefore intend to consult on this in 2023 and introduce the necessary legislation in 2024, ahead of full implementation of the Future Homes Standard in 2025.

■ Housing: West Yorkshire

Jon Trickett:

[34451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many houses by housing type have been completed in West Yorkshire in each of the last 20 years.

Christopher Pincher:

Annual estimates of housing supply, including new build completions, in West Yorkshire, are shown in Live Table 123, at the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>

Estimates of the proportion of new build housing by type, based on building control reported new build dwelling completions, for England and the Yorkshire and Humber region, are shown in Live Table 254, at the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-house-building>

Estimates of housing type are not available for West Yorkshire.

■ Leasehold: Insulation

Kim Johnson:

[\[35952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what financial support he plans to make available to leaseholders in homes with unsafe cladding seeking to take legal action against the developers of their homes.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government's proposed changes to the Defective Premises Act 1972 as part of the Building Safety Bill will more than double the time available to seek compensation for substandard building work from six to 15 years. These new measures will provide a legal route to redress that is not currently possible for hundreds of buildings, potentially benefitting thousands of leaseholders.

The Government has been clear that those responsible must pay towards the cost of remediating defective buildings. It is fundamental that the industry that caused this issue contributes to setting things right. Some parts of the industry have done the right thing, funding remediation of serious historic defects, but this is not happening in all cases. In many cases, those who caused the problems are evading responsibility. That is why the Government is taking action, providing a route to redress so that those who caused these problems can be held accountable.

Under the Defective Premises Act, compensation can be claimed by the person who originally commissioned the work, or by any person subsequently acquiring a 'legal or equitable interest' in the dwelling. This includes the freeholder of a block of flats, as well as leaseholders. The Government's position is that it is freeholders who are responsible for ensuring their buildings are safe, and that they should meet the costs of remediation without passing them on to leaseholders wherever possible.

The Building Safety Bill further protects leaseholders by imposing a legal requirement on building owners to explore alternative ways to meet the cost of remediation works before passing these onto leaseholders, along with a requirement (in regulations) to provide evidence to leaseholders. Alternative sources of funding which must be explored before passing costs on include recovering costs from applicable warranty schemes, or from the developers or contractors who were responsible for the defects. Claims under the Defective Premises Act are one additional route that we expect building owners to explore, and our reforms will extend that option to hundreds of blocks where it is not currently possible.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Mark Tami:

[\[36532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many applications his Department received to the Levelling Up Fund by the closing date for first round applications of 18 June 2021.

Mark Tami:[\[36533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many applications his Department received to the Levelling Up Fund by the closing date for first round applications of 18 June 2021 from local authorities in Wales.

Luke Hall:

I am delighted to say that the first round of the Levelling Up Fund received significant interest from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland bidding authorities across the three investment priorities of the Fund. Bids are currently being assessed in line with the published assessment process. Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund will be announced later in the year and bidding authorities will be informed in due course.

■ Local Government Finance

Chi Onwurah:[\[34498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has plans to make an assessment of the potential effect of reductions in funding for local government on regional health disparities, including life expectancy.

Luke Hall:

The Government carefully considers how its policies will affect communities across the country. For example, each year, we conduct an assessment of the equality impacts of the annual Local Government Finance Settlement and publish a statement on the Gov UK website. As the equality statement makes clear, this year the Government made available an increase in overall Core Spending Power of 4.6% in cash terms and ensured that no local authority saw a reduction in Core Spending Power compared to 2020-21, which benefitted all those with protected characteristics. These increases build on the largest year-on-year increase in spending power in a decade in 2020-21.

Reducing health inequalities will also be a core aim of the new Office of Health Promotion (OHP). The OHP will systematically tackle the top preventable risk factors, improving the public's health and narrowing health inequalities. It will set health improvement priorities for government, and will work with the whole of government, the NHS, local government, industry and wider partners to deliver on these priorities.

■ Local Government: Buildings

Bridget Phillipson:[\[35611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 29805 on Local Government: Coronavirus, what budget has been made available for enforcement activities in respect of ventilation of council-managed buildings in each of the last ten years; what enforcement action has been taken in respect of ventilation of council-managed buildings in each of the last ten years; and when he most recently discussed the ventilation of council-managed buildings

with (a) the Local Government Association, (b) other local government representative bodies and (c) trade unions recognised in English local government.

Luke Hall:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is responsible for enforcing health and safety law in council operated buildings.

HSE allocates resources based on planned levels of activity to deliver its published strategy and plans. It does not allocate budgets by specific risk areas such as business premises ventilation, but inspectors will take action to respond to poor ventilation if identified during regulatory activity.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the risks associated with poor general ventilation in a workplace increased due to the risk of transmitting coronavirus. HSE has carried out more than 300,000 interventions since the start of the pandemic, to check how employers are implementing measures to reduce transmission of coronavirus at their sites, including whether employees are working in poorly ventilated spaces. Where contraventions are identified, HSE inspectors will take action to secure compliance by providing verbal advice, written correspondence or serving enforcement notices.

HSE has also updated their guidance to support employers in addressing the issue of ventilation- www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/equipment-and-machinery/air-conditioning-and-ventilation/index.htm.

HSE does not collate information about enforcement action taken specifically in respect of ventilation in council managed buildings.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) continues to lead the Government's significant and regular engagement with councils and local government sector bodies including the Local Government Association to ensure information is getting to councils and that we are made aware of any areas of concern:

- Ministers host regular teleconferences for local government leaders, chief executives and local resilience forums, with other Ministers from across government also present to give updates and answer questions.
- MHCLG continues to discuss priorities and support measures with councils in each of the nine English regions.
- MHCLG hosts regular engagement with local government sector bodies.
- MHCLG's Local Government Bulletin - a daily email sent to over 5,500 local government stakeholders.
- Ministers from MHCLG regularly speak to and meet with Mayors, both bilaterally and as part of the M9 Group of Mayors.

Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on gov.uk.

■ Monuments: World War II**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[36576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of a civilian memorial to the people who lived under Nazi occupation in Jersey and the Channel Islands during the Second World War.

Luke Hall:

There are a number of memorial plaques to the people who suffered under Nazi occupation in the Channel Islands. For example, Jersey erected a memorial in the late 1940s to occupied civilians, and erected liberation memorials to them in 1985 and 1995, 2000 and 2016. Guernsey has erected liberation memorials in memory of its occupied citizens in 1985, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2020.

■ Oxford-cambridge Arc**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[34576\]](#)

To the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the team working on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc Spatial Framework has undertaken analysis of the different approaches to environmentally-friendly planning by local authorities along the Arc; and if they will publish this analysis.

Christopher Pincher:

Environmental sustainability is at the heart of our approach to the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, with a core focus for the Spatial Framework development being sustainable green growth.

The natural environment does not fit within administrative boundaries, so a cross-boundary approach is intended to make it easier to deliver against environmental priorities across the whole area. This includes working closely with local partners across the Arc including local planning authorities.

To ensure sustainability is embedded in the Spatial Framework we are producing a Sustainability Appraisal to address environmental issues alongside social and economic issues as the framework and its policies develop. This will inform decision-making and help achieve improved sustainability outcomes. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared as part of our public consultation this summer. This provides more information on our approach and on the Arc's environmental assets.

Two further stages of public consultation on the Spatial Framework will follow, including a second consultation on policy options, and a third consultation on the draft framework. Each stage will be supported by the Sustainability Appraisal and evidence to explain our approach to policy development.

We also appreciate the significant work that has already been undertaken by local partners to develop an evidence base to support planning. We will review the existing

evidence and use the most relevant, up-to-date and reliable analysis, to help inform the Spatial Framework's development.

■ Planning Permission

Steve Reed:

[33231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an estimate of the number and proportion of homes identified in (a) adopted local plan housing land allocation in England and (b) in that allocation that do not yet have full planning permission.

Luke Hall:

[Holding answer 19 July 2021]: Our Planning for the Future white paper sets out how we will reform the planning system to make it more efficient, effective and equitable.

Adopted local plans throughout England collectively make provision for an average of around 200,000 homes per year. However, with regard to the status of specific site allocations in plans, my Department does not currently hold this information. Through our reforms, we are bringing forward a digital transformation of the planning process, with clear data standards and new digital tools to make planning more transparent and accessible; as part of this work, we are actively looking at ways to capture data on key aspects of local plans, including site allocations, to address key strategic questions like this.

■ Private Rented Housing: West Yorkshire

Jon Trickett:

[34455]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate her Department has made of the average monthly cost of private rent in West Yorkshire in 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

For the latest year (to March 2021) the average monthly private rent in the West Yorkshire metropolitan area was £643 per month (mean) or £595 per month (median).

Full rental estimates are available through the following dataset:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland>.

■ Public sector: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[34534]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the easing of covid-19 restrictions on 19 July 2021 on the delivery of statutory public services.

Luke Hall:

The relationship between cases and hospitalisation has changed; and while cases will continue to rise as set out from the start of the Roadmap, the vaccination programme has substantially weakened the link between infection and serious illness or death

Local authorities in England have a statutory duty to provide a range of services to their communities and have business continuity plans in place in order to continue to deliver these services and mitigate against any disruptions.

■ **Shared Ownership: Pets****Apsana Begum:****[35937]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps the Government is taking to help support pet ownership among those living in shared ownership properties.

Christopher Pincher:

There is nothing within the Government's Shared Ownership model which prohibits pet ownership. Instead, decisions on pet ownership lie with the landlord and will be set out as part of people's lease agreements.

Pet owners should, therefore, check the details of their lease with the relevant Shared Ownership provider prior to purchase. Help to Buy agents will be able to supply contact details for local Shared Ownership providers. A full list of Help to Buy agents can be found on the Government's Own Your Home website.

The Government is in the process of introducing a new model of Shared Ownership that will be more consumer friendly, fairer and more accessible. As with the current version of Shared Ownership, there will be nothing within the new model that prohibits pet ownership.

■ **Waking Watch Relief Fund****Shabana Mahmood:****[36606]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 16 July 2021 to Question 29765 on High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention, how much and what proportion of the £30 million Waking Watch Relief is (a) allocated, (b) spent and (c) unspent.

Christopher Pincher:

Data on the Waking Watch Relief Fund, including the amount of funding allocated and approved, has been published at: www.gov.uk/guidance/waking-watch-relief-fund#waking-watch-relief-fund-data.

The majority of the Fund is administered by local and regional authorities, who are responsible for providing the allocated funding to buildings in their area.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Email

Florence Eshalomi:

[\[35980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether (a) she and (b) other Ministers of her Department have used personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Greg Hands:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: 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.

■ Department for International Trade: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones:

[\[35887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many Black and ethnic minority staff are employed by her Department.

Greg Hands:

As of 31 March 2021, the Department for International Trade, including UK Export Finance, employs 610 people who identify as Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority from a reportable population of 3103 (19.65%). This includes only those on our domestic payrolls and UK based staff working overseas.

■ Free Trade

Mr Jonathan Lord:

[\[35619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent progress she has made with her G7 counterparts on advocating for free and fair trade throughout the world.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In May, G7 Trade Ministers united in their commitment to free and fair trade; to a global trading system with open markets; and to ensuring the multilateral trading system is reformed, responding to the needs of the British people and others around the world.

Ministers committed to protect individuals from forced labour in global supply chains, and to work together in tackling market distorting practices that threaten the integrity of the rules-based trading system.

■ Trade Agreements: Eswatini**Emily Thornberry:** [\[36590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications for her international trade policies of recent reports of human rights abuses including the use of (a) live ammunition, (b) tear gas and (c) water cannon against pro-democracy protestors in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Emily Thornberry: [\[36591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the compatibility of recent reports of human rights abuses in the Kingdom of Eswatini with that country's commitments under Annex VII, Part 1, Article 3 of the UK-SACUM Economic Partnership Agreement.

Emily Thornberry: [\[36592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she plans to take under the terms of Annex VII, Part 1, Article 3 of the UK-SACUM Economic Partnership Agreement in response to recent reports of human rights abuses in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom is concerned by the recent events in Eswatini. When considering the essential and fundamental provisions in an Economic Partnership Agreement, we consider the economic and developmental impact to that partner and its people.

We raise the need to uphold rights and responsibilities with governments around the world, and we want to continue encouraging trade too – helping those most in need by providing valuable employment and lifting them out of poverty – as more trade, more jobs and more prosperity need not come at the expense of British values.

■ Tradeshaw Access Programme**Simon Jupp:** [\[36810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans her Department has to announce a replacement scheme for the Tradeshaw Access Programme.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade will announce further details on plans for a revised trade show support programme when discussions with HM Treasury are concluded.

The £38m Internationalisation Fund, launched last year, provides matching grants for export support including attendance at trade shows.

JUSTICE**■ Berwyn Prison: Ambulance Services**

Greg Smith: [\[36788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many times the Ambulance Service was called out to deal with incidents at HMP Berwyn in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

Greg Smith: [\[36789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many times (a) the Police and (b) other enforcement services were called out to deal with incidents at HMP Berwyn in (i) 2017, (ii) 2018, (iii) 2019 and (iv) 2020.

Alex Chalk:

In line with policy at HMP Berwyn, when a medical emergency procedure is activated it is standard response for the communications room to call for an ambulance. This is in partnership with the prison's healthcare providers – Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Welsh Ambulance Service Trust. HMPPS does not hold information about the number of times the ambulance service has been called to attend the prison as the information is held by the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust.

HMP Berwyn works closely with colleagues in the police and have a dedicated police team on site to support with incidents where required. Information about the number of times the police and other enforcement services have been called to attend HMP Berwyn is held by the police.

■ Berwyn Prison: Staff

Greg Smith: [\[36787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many staff, not directly employed by the prison, were employed at HMP Berwyn by the end of each year for (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020; and whether he plans for that number to increase over the next three years.

Alex Chalk:

HMPPS does not hold information about the number of non-directly employed staff who work at HMP Berwyn. This information is held by the individual service providers or supplier and each would have their own plans for potential future recruitment.

■ Court Orders

Feryal Clark: [\[35945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will provide a list of relevant orders and the type of conviction that leads to each said order.

Chris Philp:

On conviction of an offence in the Crown Court or a magistrates' court, the court may impose orders on the offender. These are known as ancillary orders. Some ancillary

orders are aimed at redressing the harm caused by an offender, others aim to prevent future re-offending or repeat victimisation.

In certain situations, the court must impose an ancillary order, in other situations it is up to the court to decide whether an ancillary order is appropriate or necessary, taking into account the circumstances of the offence and the offender.

Sentencing guidelines, issued by the independent Sentencing Council, identify ancillary orders that are particularly likely to be relevant to individual offences. Further information on ancillary orders, including a non-exhaustive list of such orders, is available on the Council's website at:

<https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/explanatory-material/magistrates-court/item/ancillary-orders/1-introduction-to-ancillary-orders/>

■ Grendon Prison and Spring Hill Prison: Travel

Greg Smith:

[36783]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what information his Department holds on the average daily distance travelled by prison officers and staff working at HMP Springhill and HMP Grendon from their home to place of work.

Alex Chalk:

The information requested is not held and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

■ Khairi Saadallah

Matt Rodda:

[35864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what progress the review has made on the handling and supervision of Khairi Saadallah.

Alex Chalk:

This was a terrible crime, and the Court imposed a whole life order on Khairi Saadallah.

The Probation Service has completed a Serious Further Offence (SFO) review into how Saadallah was managed, which has been shared with those bereaved relatives and surviving victims who requested it. The SFO review identified some improvement actions in relation to risk assessment practice and case recording, which are being delivered as part of a formal action plan.

Additionally, there was a review into how we can more effectively support terrorism-risk offenders with mental health problems and so better address risk. The findings are aligned with the Rapid Review of Mental Health Provision for Offenders, commissioned by the Criminal Justice Task Force.

An independent reviewer is also undertaking a Serious Case Review looking at how the relevant agencies worked together under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to manage the risk he posed.

■ Magistrates: Retirement

Justin Madders:

[35708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his timetable is to bring forward legislative proposals for the increase in magistrates' retirement age.

Chris Philp:

Measures to raise the mandatory retirement age of judicial office holders, including magistrates, from 70 to 75 have been brought forward as part of the Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill, introduced in the House of Lords on 19 July 2021.

The Bill also includes a transitional provision to enable magistrates between the age of 70 and 75 on commencement of the new mandatory retirement age to apply to return to the bench, subject to business need. The process by which such applications are to be made and considered will be set out in the autumn and we will be contacting eligible retired magistrates to invite them to express their interest in re-joining the bench.

■ Ministry of Justice: Directors

Cat Smith:

[35727]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, which of his Department's non-executive directors were appointed through open competition.

Chris Philp:

All Ministry of Justice Non-Executive Board Members were recruited according to the guidance set out in the Corporate governance code for central government departments.

The Ministry of Justice announces the appointments (including reappointment dates) of Non-Executive Board Members, as well as their experience, in the Annual Report and Accounts. Our current Non-Executives are covered in the following Annual Report and Accounts:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/936835/moj-annual-report-accounts-2019-2020.pdf

■ Powers of Attorney: Repayments

Daisy Cooper:

[34612]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many refunds went unclaimed for power of attorney fees overcharged by the Office of the Public Guardian when the refund scheme closed on 31 January 2021.

Chris Philp:

The LPA refund scheme officially ran from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2021, however OPG are still accepting written requests for a refund from customers. The online application form is no longer in use and OPG are no longer advertising the scheme.

As of June 2021, £16,463,993.76 worth of refunds have been made and 324,937 claims have been received.

Daisy Cooper: [\[34613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will take steps to notify all those entitled to refunds for overcharged deputyship fees in advance of closing the refund scheme in October 2022.

Chris Philp:

Information about the deputyship refund scheme is currently available on Gov.UK. Although this information will be removed in October 2022, the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) will still accept applications after this date.

Eligible customers who were still receiving supervision received their refund automatically from OPG.

It is not OPGs intention to contact customers who are no longer under supervision, as in most cases such customers are likely to have died or changed address, in which case it is for the executors or representatives of the estate to apply for a refund. OPG ran an awareness campaign to encourage customers no longer under supervision to apply for a refund.

■ Prisoners' Release

Sir John Hayes: [\[31287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many prisoners convicted of serious violent crimes were released halfway through their sentence in 2020-21.

Sir John Hayes: [\[31289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average custodial sentence length is for prisoners convicted of a serious violent offence.

Sir John Hayes: [\[31291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many standard determinate sentences enabling halfway release were handed down in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Alex Chalk:

In order to answer these questions, it would be necessary to establish the number of serious violent offenders affected by the Release of Prisoners (Alteration of Relevant Proportion of Sentence) Order 2020 but this could only be done at disproportionate cost.

Most offenders given a standard determinate sentence (SDS) must be released automatically at the halfway point of the sentence. Since the implementation of this Order, however, anyone sentenced on or after 1 April 2020 and given an SDS of 7 years or more for serious sexual or violent offences where the maximum penalty is a life sentence is required to spend two-thirds – rather than half – of that sentence in prison before being released on licence.

Data on sentencing outcomes by offence, including average custodial sentence length, is published here:

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

■ Prisons: Construction

Greg Smith: [36784]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many pre-constructed concrete sections per week have been delivered to the (a) Five Wells and (b) Glen Parva sites from the commencement of construction to date; and over what time period those deliveries took place.

Greg Smith: [36785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number directly employed permanent jobs that will be created at each of the new Five Wells and Glen Parva prisons; and how many of those jobs have been filled to date.

Greg Smith: [36786]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of indirectly employed jobs that will be created at each of the new Five Wells and Glen Parva prisons; and whether any of those positions have been filled to date.

Alex Chalk:

The total number of pre-constructed concrete sections delivered to Glen Parva to 21 July 2021 is 5,951. Delivery has been variable between the first delivery which took place on 26 January 2021 and the latest update. This averages out at 234 panels per week. The deliveries to the site are still ongoing.

HMP Five Wells has incorporated 15,183 pre-constructed concrete panels during the installation period between September 2019 to September 2020, averaging out at 290 panels a week. The reason for the variance between the number of panels delivered to each site is due to the difference in delivery stage between the projects. HMP Five Wells has fully completed its pre-cast concrete installation at the point of reporting whereas Glen Parva is still ramping up installation process as of 29 April 2021.

We estimate that there will be around 600-700 permanent jobs created at both HMP Five Wells & Glen Parva once they are open. We will not have a final number of jobs created until these prisons are open. An operator has not yet been appointed for Glen Parva and the Department does not currently collect granular workforce data from private prison providers, which includes HMP Five Wells. To publish this data or require the provider to do so would require significant changes to the contracts of all private prison providers and we currently have no plans to do this.

We have interpreted 'indirectly employed jobs' as those not employed by the prison operators but indirectly via contractors or part of the supply chain for prison operation. We do not hold this information.

■ Prisons: South East**Ms Lyn Brown:****[36598]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Onley, published on 20 July 2021, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of capacity in Category D prisons in London and the South-East; and what assessment he has made of the effect on the (a) rehabilitation and (b) resettlement of prisoners in custody a large distance away from their families.

Alex Chalk:

In recent months we have taken a number of units out of use that no longer meet current fire safety standards. This has inevitably had an impact on the availability of category D (open) places in London and the South-East. In the short term, these reductions in places are being offset by installation of good-quality temporary units at a number of critical sites, while we plan for their replacement on a permanent basis.

We have committed more than £4 billion to make significant progress in delivering 18,000 additional prison places across England and Wales by the mid-2020s, and expansion of the category D estate is included in this. We are currently assessing which sites may be suitable for expansion.

Open prisons are classified as a national resource, meaning that some prisoners are held in open conditions outside of their immediate home region. However, open prisons have a successful track record of supporting prisoners realise their release plans despite the geographical distance from home that can affect some prisoners. All open prisons have established links with local employers to provide access to job opportunities while in custody through Release on Temporary Licence. Through collaboration with New Futures Network, there is also a national network of organisations that facilitate employment in custody and after release. In all cases, open prisons work to ensure that, where possible, the job can be retained on release. Alternatively, they may be released with transferrable skills that are to a recognised industry standard that would enable them to be employed in their home area.

We recognise that closeness to home is important for maintaining family ties, however given restraints in existing geography and infrastructure, we are not always able to hold prisoners close to home while having access to the right services or opportunities. The Model for Operational Delivery for Resettlement prisons covers resettlement for both Category C and Category D prisoners to ensure there is equality in service delivery regardless of where they are located within the estate. Onley is a training and resettlement prison and like other closed prisons is able to provide prisoners with a range of opportunities for rehabilitation and resettlement while they are waiting for an open prison place to become available.

■ Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre

Mr David Lammy:

[35489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many meetings (a) he has and (b) Ministers of his Department have had with the operator of Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre since inspectors issued an Urgent Notification in respect of that Centre in December 2020.

Alex Chalk:

Following the invoking of the Urgent Notification protocol at Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre (STC) last December, Ministers called an urgent meeting with senior representatives from the provider MTC. HMPPS officials were then instructed to deploy to Rainsbrook to scrutinise actions taken by MTC in response to the Urgent Notification. Subsequent meetings were conducted between officials, with regard to monitoring the Urgent Notification action plan. As this is a contracted service the YCS/HMPPS contract management and commercial teams have met internally and with MTC on a regular basis.

We ordered the provider to take the immediate action necessary to address the unacceptable failings at Rainsbrook, including a focus on ensuring all children in the Reverse Cohorting Unit had a suitable amount of time out of their room. Whilst inspectors acknowledged that this issue had been addressed, and that the Youth Custody Service had strengthened its oversight of the STC, a second Urgent Notification was invoked on 18 June following a full inspection of the centre with reference to separate serious concerns.

We have now transferred all children from Rainsbrook to alternative appropriate accommodation. Separately, we are also considering the future of the centre, with a further announcement to be made on this position in due course following conclusion of the current commercial matters.

■ Rape: Trials

Hilary Benn:

[35503]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will list the circumstances in which the name of the victim of an alleged rape may not be disclosed to the defendant.

Kit Malthouse:

The disclosure of a victim's name to a defendant charged with a criminal offence is a fundamental aspect of ensuring the defendant can prepare a defence at court and thus receives a fair trial.

The one circumstance in which the name of the victim of an alleged rape would not be disclosed to the defendant during proceedings in a criminal court would be if, following an application by the CPS, the court made a witness anonymity order under section 88 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 in respect of the victim who was due to give evidence in the case and whose name had not already been disclosed during the investigation or earlier stages of the proceedings. The court must apply a number

of stringent tests before granting such an order. These include that the proposed order is necessary, that it is in the interests of justice that the witness should testify and, having regard to all the circumstances, the effects of making the order would be consistent with the defendant receiving a fair trial.

Victims of rape are currently granted lifetime anonymity under the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 and although this does not include anonymity from the defendant, publishing details of the victim, such as their name, address, place of education or work, is a criminal offence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh: [\[36685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to the policy paper entitled Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland's past, CP 498, published on 14 July 2021, what plans the Government has to bring forward legislative proposals to end judicial activity in relation to Troubles-related conduct across the spectrum of criminal cases, and current and future civil cases and inquests.

Mr Robin Walker:

As outlined in the command paper published on 14 July, the Government wants to bring forward legislation that focuses on reconciliation and information recovery, delivers for victims and veterans, and ends the cycle of reinvestigations into the Troubles which is not working for anybody.

The Government's proposals are intended to inform ongoing intensive engagement with the Irish Government, Northern Ireland parties and other stakeholders with an interest in this issue. All elements of these proposals - and any alternative proposals - are subject to ongoing consideration and discussion.

Louise Haigh: [\[36686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans he has to seek the consent of the Northern Ireland Assembly for legislative proposals to address the legacy of the past.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government intends to request legislative consent for its legislative proposals relating to the legacy of the past. The Government is also committed to working with the Northern Ireland parties, as well as the Irish Government and other stakeholders, as part of an ongoing intensive process of engagement, with a view to finding agreement on the way forward.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Alcoholic Drinks****Jim Shannon:**[\[36633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to ban alcohol consumption on commercial flights.

Robert Courts:

The Government supports the industry's approach to managing drunk and disruptive passenger behaviour, including the UK Aviation Industry Code of Practice on Disruptive Passengers, initiatives such as the 'One Too Many' awareness campaign and the introduction of tamper-proof bags for duty free alcohol sales. It is important that passengers drink responsibly and are aware of the penalties of being drunk on an aircraft. The Government continues to work in collaboration with the Civil Aviation Authority, airports and airlines to consider further measures needed to tackle this issue. At this time the Government does not plan to make an assessment of alcohol consumption bans on flights but will continue to keep this under review.

■ Department for Transport: Levelling Up Fund**Mark Tami:**[\[36534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications his Department received to the Levelling Up Fund by the closing date of 18 June 2021 for amounts (a) up to and (b) over £20 million.

Andrew Stephenson:

The first round of the Levelling Up Fund received significant interest from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland bidding authorities, across the three investment priorities of the Fund. Bids are currently being assessed in line with the published assessment process. Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund will be announced later in the year and bidding authorities will be informed in due course.

Mark Tami:[\[36535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many applications his Department received to the UK Levelling Up Fund by the closing date of 18 June 2021 from local authorities in Wales.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Levelling Up Fund received significant interest from Local Authorities in Wales, across the three investment priorities of the Fund. Bids are currently being assessed in line with the published assessment process. Outcomes from the first round of bids for the Levelling Up Fund will be announced later in the year and bidding authorities will be informed in due course.

■ Driving Licences

Philip Davies: [35576]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average time taken by the DVLA to issue driving licences was in each of the last five years.

Philip Davies: [35578]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the longest time is that the DVLA has taken to issue a driving licence in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean:

The information requested cannot be retrieved in the format requested in the time available. Officials from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency will write to the Honourable Member when the information is available.

Philip Davies: [35577]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the guidance issued by the DVLA on the process for issuing and reissuing driving licences.

Philip Davies: [35579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many driving licences the DVLA has issued in each of the last five years.

Rachel Maclean:

Guidance on how to apply for a driving licence is published on GOV.UK and can be found [here](#).

The volume of driving licences issued in each of the last five years is shown in the table below:

YEAR	NUMBER OF DRIVING LICENCES ISSUED
2016 – 2017	10.4 million
2017 – 2018	11.2 million
2018 – 2019	10.6 million
2019 – 2020	11.2 million
2020 – 2021	8.8 million

Apsana Begum: [35931]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the average amount of time the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency retains original identity documents for driving licence applications from applicants whose identity cannot be verified with the UK Passport Agency, from receipt of that document until it is returned, in (a) 2019 and (b) 2021.

Apsana Begum:

[35932]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on the length of time it takes for an application to be successful of Driver and Vehicle Licensing Association delays in returning Biometric Residence Permits to driving licence applicants.

Apsana Begum:

[35933]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to tackle DVLA delays in processing applications by changing the requirements for original identity documents to be sent for applicants whose identity cannot be verified with the UK Passport Agency.

Rachel Maclean:

Currently, paper driving licence applications are likely to take between six and ten weeks to process. However, on selected transactions, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency returns original documents as soon as the application is opened to reduce the impact of processing delays and is working to expand this further.

Driving licence applications where the applicant is required to submit a biometric residency permit (BRP), are also likely to take between six and ten weeks to process. The BRP will be returned to the applicant as soon as the application has been processed. The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found [here](#).

If a driving licence applicant's identity cannot be verified by HM Passport Office or via another secure service, the requirement for original identity documents remains a critical part of protecting the driving licence application process from potential fraud. There are no plans to remove these requirements.

Daisy Cooper:

[36776]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to stop the most common driving licence renewal internet searches returning advertisements for third-party scam websites charging £50 to £100 to check and renew licences.

Rachel Maclean:

The paid placement of third party sites in search engine listings continues to be an issue which Government is trying to address with the search engine providers. Currently third party sites are legitimately allowed to provide an alternative service for customers. Some of these sites charge additional fees for checking and forwarding the applications.

The services that are paid for via these sites can be obtained cheaper and, in many cases, free of charge on GOV.UK. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) frequently reminds the public through awareness articles, postings on social media sites and a variety of media outlets to use the official channel for all DVLA services. Both digital and paper reminders and renewal forms are annotated with reminders to use GOV.UK as the only official place to find DVLA services and information.

Where a third party site is identified as operating outside of the guidelines the DVLA will work with the relevant authorities to seek compliance. Failure to comply may lead to the site being removed.

■ **Driving Tests: Scunthorpe**

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on learner drivers of the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency's decision to discontinue driving theory tests in Scunthorpe.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35970\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what impact assessment his Department or the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency conducted on the decision to discontinue driving theory tests in Scunthorpe.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential implications for learner drivers of the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency's decision not to take-up the offer made by North Lincolnshire Council's offer to provide an alternative location for driving theory tests in Scunthorpe.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps (a) his Department and (b) the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency plans to take to ensure that people with low incomes will not be negatively affected by the decision to discontinue driving theory tests in Scunthorpe.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35973\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps (a) his Department and (b) the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency plans to take to ensure that people with disabilities will not be negatively affected by the decision to discontinue driving theory tests in Scunthorpe.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35974\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps (a) his Department and (b) the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency plans to take to ensure that young people in North Lincolnshire will not be negatively affected by the decision to discontinue driving theory tests in Scunthorpe.

Holly Mumby-Croft: [\[35975\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment officials in (a) his Department and (b) the Driver and Vehicle Safety Agency (DVSA) have made of the potential effect of the decision by the DVSA to discontinue driving tests in Scunthorpe on young people in North Lincolnshire.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has launched a new driving theory test booking service for England, Scotland, and Wales for theory tests taken from 6 September 2021. The DVSA's priority remains to deliver a theory test that ensures candidates have the correct knowledge and understanding to be able to drive safely on our busy, modern roads.

The structure and content of the theory test will not change, but new software will mean it has a different look and feel. These changes will give the DVSA greater control of managing test content and enable it to update and improve questions and clips more quickly.

Third party suppliers will deliver the actual test to the public, and so from September there will be changes to the theory test centre estate. As the contract has been awarded to more than one company, the number of theory test centres will increase from 180 to 202 across Great Britain. The increased number of theory test centres will result in a more even distribution of test centre locations and will make theory tests more accessible, especially to those in remote areas of the country.

In creating a more even distribution, the location of many theory test centres will change and some places that currently have a theory test centre will no longer do so from 6 September.

The theory test centre in Scunthorpe, Unit 2A, Haldenby House, 1 Berkeley Roundabout, will be one of the affected locations. There are no current plans for a theory test centre in Scunthorpe, but the DVSA thanks the North Lincolnshire Council for its offer of help should that change. The nearest theory test centre for candidates will be in Doncaster and Grimsby.

The DVSA's key performance measure is that a candidate should not have travel more than 40 miles (rural) or 40 minutes (urban) to get to a test centre unless they choose to travel further.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**Dr Luke Evans:****[35909]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to expand electric car charging provision across the (a) A road and (b) motorway network in (i) Leicestershire and (ii) the UK.

Rachel Maclean:

In May 2020, the Government published an ambitious vision for rapid charging infrastructure along strategic roads in England over the next decade. This vision includes targets for the number of high-powered (150kW+) chargepoints that will be located across motorways and major A roads to meet the future demand from electric vehicles (EVs). In the short term, the Government expects to see six high-powered chargers at every motorway service area in England by 2023, installed by the private sector. The Government regularly engages with motorway service area operators to monitor progress against this charging provision. In the longer term, to ensure the

private sector can continue to expand the charging network at pace in the 2020s, the Government will invest £950 million through the Rapid Charging Fund to future-proof grid capacity along England's motorways and major A roads to prepare for 100% uptake of zero emission cars and vans ahead of need. Since the management of motorways and major roads is a devolved matter, equivalent funding for the Devolved Administrations will be made available through the Barnett Formula. We also recently consulted on improving the consumer experience at public chargepoints. This includes opening public chargepoint data; improving the reliability of the network; streamlining the payment methods offered to drivers; and increasing pricing transparency. We will publish 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.

■ **Hammersmith Bridge: Repairs and Maintenance**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[35910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Leader of Hammersmith and Fulham Council and (b) the Mayor of London on securing a viable long term funding arrangement to repair Hammersmith Bridge.

Rachel Maclean:

Following the Government's investment of £4m toward emergency mitigation works, the Board responsible for the Case for Continued Safe Operation made the decision to reopen Hammersmith Bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic on 17 July. This is a very welcome development, especially for the people and businesses that use the Bridge.

The next step to permanent reopening lies with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF), as asset owner, who must submit a satisfactory business case to the Department for Transport. The submission of such a case is a condition for the release of any Government contribution to the cost of repairing the Bridge.

The Government has set out a clear commitment to support LBHF in finding a long-term solution for the Bridge. As agreed in the Transport for London extraordinary funding and finance agreement of 1 June 2021 the Government will contribute up to 1/3 of the total costs, but no more.

The Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce, chaired by Baroness Vere of Norbiton, met on 20 July. The Leader of LBHF and London's Deputy Mayor for Transport were present.

■ **Heathrow Airport: Parking**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[36646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of parking charges for aviation workers at Heathrow airport.

Robert Courts:

Staff parking charges at Heathrow Airport are set in line with the principles set out in the under the terms of Heathrow Airport Limited's licence, granted to the airport by the CAA.

These principles include that prices should be set to enable only the recovery of costs, with no profit margin; that pricing must be supported by transparency of costs and revenues; and that any "over" or "under" recovery in one year must be accounted for setting the following year's charges.

High Speed Trains: Europe**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[35854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will commit to commencing bilateral international negotiations on the creation of new high-speed rail routes between the UK and Europe.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Government already engages with international partners, as well as private operators, to encourage the future growth and expansion of international rail passenger services from the UK. It also stands ready to engage with other partners and private operators to facilitate potential new routes where there is a commercial proposition to do so.

The UK is also actively participating in discussions through multilateral organisations, such as the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe's (UNECE) Working Party on Rail, regarding the promotion and development of international rail.

High Speed Two: Pay**Philip Davies:**[\[35580\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 24147, on High Speed 2 Railway Line: Construction, what the highest salary is of a person at HS2 Ltd; and how many HS2 Ltd staff are earning over (a) £100,000 and (b) £150,000.

Andrew Stephenson:

The highest earning individual at HS2 Ltd is the Chief Executive, Mark Thurston. We publish information regarding remuneration of those earning over £150,000 annually: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-officials-high-earners-salaries>

High Speed Two: Workplace Pensions**Philip Davies:**[\[35581\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 6 July 2021 to Question 24147 on High Speed 2 Railway Line: Construction, what estimate he has made of the pension liabilities incurred by people employed by the HS2 project.

Andrew Stephenson:

HS2 Ltd has a Group Personal Pension plan in place for its employees so there are no future liabilities. The annual provision for employer contributions to that plan are published in the Annual Report & Accounts.

For further information please follow the below link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-ltd-annual-report-and-accounts-2020-to-2021>

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences**Andrea Jenkyns:****[35784]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reducing the number of steps in the process for a driver to become licensed to operate a large goods vehicle.

Rachel Maclean:

The government has just announced there is to be a consultation on a series of measures designed to help increase the number of HGV drivers, this includes the potential removal of the requirement to hold a full rigid lorry licence before taking a test in an articulated vehicle. The forthcoming consultation will help to inform the merits of the proposals.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests**Andrea Jenkyns:****[35783]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of when the backlog of large good vehicles licence testing will be cleared.

Rachel Maclean:

DVSA meet regularly with the vocational training industry to understand the current and future demand for vocational driving tests so that the Agency can better plan the additional capacity that is needed. DVSA are currently making available an average of 3,000 vocational tests per week compared to 2,000 pre-pandemic.

Operational steps to further increase capacity have been recently announced and, subject to a forthcoming consultation, additional regulatory measures will significant add further to test capacity. Regular progress updates will be made available.

Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Qualifications**Andrea Jenkyns:****[35790]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing grants to people wishing to undertake large goods vehicle driving qualifications.

Rachel Maclean:

We know that the costs of training can be a barrier both to new entrants and business. We are already supporting the industry train new drivers, including through apprenticeships and support for jobseekers.

The new apprenticeship which includes training for a Category C+E licence, which is available from 2 August, will attract £7,000 in funding. There is also an incentive payment of £3,000 available for new apprentices who have an employment start date of 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021.

A number of proposals to further support the training of heavy goods vehicle drivers have been put forward by industry sources and we are reviewing these proposals. We wish to support the sector in overcoming these barriers to joining this vital industry.

Large Goods Vehicles: Parking**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[35785\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that overnight parking facilities for large vehicle drivers are reopened following the easing of covid-19 restrictions.

Rachel Maclean:

Motorway Service Areas in England, which are privately owned and operated, remained open during COVID restrictions, and overnight parking therefore remained available at these sites. In addition, other lorry parks are also privately owned and operated businesses, and decisions on opening are a matter for them.

Although most legal restrictions have been lifted, the Government continues to provide guidance for businesses in managing the continuing risk of the pandemic.

Public Transport: Coronavirus**Rachael Maskell:**[\[35762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, (a) what steps he plans to take to monitor the levels of transmission of covid-19 on public transport and (b) if he will make (i) mask wearing and (ii) social distancing mandatory on all public transport in the event that covid-19 infection levels rise.

Rachel Maclean:

It is not possible to systematically identify where infection occurs in individual positive cases and it is therefore not possible to provide definitive data on the different locations where transmissions occur, for example on public transport.

On 19 July, many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed through the pandemic were lifted. This included the requirement to wear face coverings on public transport and the social distancing rules (2m or "1m+"). Instead of legal mandate, the Government expects and recommends that people continue to wear face coverings in crowded areas, which includes public transport.

Emma Hardy:

[\[35860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what risk assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of removing the legal requirement to wear face coverings on public transport during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

Since 19 July, whilst many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed through the pandemic have been lifted, guidance will remain, making it clear this is not yet a return to normal. The Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport. 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: Fares

Catherine West:

[\[35810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to reduce the cost of public transport to encourage members of the public to drive and fly less.

Rachel Maclean:

The National Bus Strategy, published on the 15 March, will deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered, to make local bus services more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated with simpler fares. We expect Local Transport Authorities to produce Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) by the end of October 2021, setting out an ambitious vision for travel by bus in their area, meeting the goals and expectations in the strategy.

New national rail flexible season tickets were announced as part of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, reflecting modern working patterns and saving many passengers hundreds of pounds. The tickets went on sale on 21 June and became available for passengers to use on 28 June.

Great British Railways will use its leadership to simplify the current mass of complicated fares and tickets. Passengers will have simpler digital ticketing, be able to purchase tickets through a single industry website and app. There will be greater convenience for passengers through contactless travel in urban areas using contactless bankcards and smartphones.

■ Railway Signals: Surbiton

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[36731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2021 to Question 16199 on Railway signals: Surbiton, what progress has been made on (a) Network Rail's review to understand the cause of the signal failure and limit the impacts

of a similar future event; (b) South Western Railway's review of their communications plan to ensure that passengers are kept well informed in the event of any future disruption; and what recent assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of those reviews.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Following the recent disruption at Surbiton, Network Rail undertook a review of the causes and mitigations to avoid a similar event occurring in future. Consideration is being given to whether the signalling system needs upgrading earlier than currently planned. At the same time South Western Railway are progressing a number of projects to improve their messaging to customers.

■ **Railways**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Integrated Rail Plan will be published before the parliamentary summer recess.

Andrew Stephenson:

We intend to publish the Integrated Rail Plan soon. Given the long-term significance of the IRP, it is important that Government carefully considers the priorities and evidence from metro mayors, council leaders, and representatives from the North and Midlands as well as the National Infrastructure Commission's Rail Needs Assessment, ahead of setting out our plans.

■ **Railways: Coronavirus**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason mandatory face coverings will no longer be required on the rail network after 19 July 2021.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34556\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to increase levels of passenger confidence on the rail network as covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to ensure passenger and staff safety on the rail network, in the context of the fourth step of the covid-19 roadmap.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with rail operating companies to ensure service levels will match a potential increase in rail passengers following the fourth step of the covid-19 roadmap.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The success of vaccine deployment has paved the way for the gradual lifting of restrictions. Whilst many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed

during the pandemic have been lifted at Step 4 of the roadmap, cautious guidance remains. Guidance sets out that the Government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport.

Throughout the pandemic, the Department has continued to work with the rail industry to ensure passenger confidence remains high. The Government has published updated Safer Travel guidance which sets out steps operators can take to identify risks arising from COVID-19, which should inform decisions on controls put in place to keep passengers safe and maintain and increase passenger confidence. Such measures can include increasing the ventilation and airflow through vehicles and carriages where possible, continuing with increased cleaning regimes, in particular around high focus touch points, as well as encouraging and recommending the use of face coverings.

The safety of passengers and staff has been a priority for the Department throughout the pandemic. The Government has published updated Safer Travel guidance which sets out steps operators can take to identify risks arising from coronavirus, which should inform decisions on controls put in place to keep passengers and rail staff safe. Such measures can include increasing the ventilation and airflow through vehicles and carriages where possible, continuing with increased cleaning regimes, in particular around high focus touch points, as well as encouraging and recommending the use of face coverings. The Government has also published guidance for passengers which advises people on how to keep themselves, fellow passengers, and staff safe while travelling.

Since the start of the pandemic, travel patterns have shifted significantly. The Department is working with industry partners to develop attractive timetables that reflect changing travel habits, deliver excellent performance, and offer good value for money for the taxpayer. As we are implementing a further easing of restrictions, the industry will continue to collaborate to ensure key flows, including commuter routes, benefit from appropriate levels of service.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[35850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support he is providing to (a) train operators and (b) local authorities in the event that they decide to continue requiring the use of face coverings after the final step of the Government's covid-19 roadmap has been implemented.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

It is for train operators and local authorities, including those with devolved powers relating to public transport such as Transport for London, to decide how to manage the transport services they provide, taking account of the Government guidance on safer transport as well as local needs and situations. Government recommends and encourages the use of face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces where people come into contact with others they don't normally meet, including on public transport.

■ Railways: Electrification

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[34560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to assess how to achieve cost reductions in rail electrification.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We welcome the work of the Rail Industry Association and others on this. When delivering future schemes, we need to ensure that the supply chain has the capability to deliver electrification effectively, at pace, and at the reduced costs that the rail industry says it can deliver at.

For our part, as individual schemes are developed and bottom-up costs identified, we and Network Rail must learn the lessons from previous schemes and implement them to ensure that electrification is delivered more efficiently than in the past.

■ Railways: North Yorkshire

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[36732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 June 2021 to Question 16196 on Railways: North Yorkshire, whether part of the 28 single track kilometres of new overhead line electrification will be installed between Colton Junction and Church Fenton.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Work is underway to install the 28 single track kilometres of new overhead line equipment between York and Church Fenton, this includes the section between Colton Junction and Church Fenton.

■ Railways: Parking

Mark Tami:

[\[35517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact of car parking charges and fines at car parks associated with railway stations on the number of drivers completing part of their journey by rail.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport has not conducted a specific assessment relating to the impact of car parking charges and fines at station car parks. Station car parks are managed and run by train operating companies and Network Rail based on the needs of passengers and the local community, including the availability of other nearby car parks or limitations posed by either being in city centre or rural locations. The Department encourages a wide range of modes of travelling to and from stations, to improve active travel connections to stations.

■ Railways: Public Consultation**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[35852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether Great British Railways will undertake local public consultations on (a) changes to services, (b) infrastructure improvements and (c) building new lines and other new projects.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Great British Railways will be organised around regional divisions responsive and accountable for the whole system in their areas. Regional divisions will need to decide priorities for investment and collaborate to operate an integrated network.

Local teams will bring decision-making closer to the people and places that the railway serves. They will be responsible for the day-to-day delivery on routes of the network and will be integrated across track and train, bringing together infrastructure, customer service, station management and train operation into one team, in partnership with operators.

■ Railways: Suicide**Justin Madders:** [\[35701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of (a) Network Rail and (b) other rail operators on the increase in (i) suicides, (ii) attempted suicides and (iii) injuries on mainline rail from 2017 to 2020.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Secretary of State regularly engages with Network Rail, Transport for London and train operators to discuss fatalities on the rail network. The number of suicides each year is relatively static averaging about 300 per year. We support the extensive work taking place within the rail industry to both prevent, and attempt to drive a reduction in incidents.

Justin Madders: [\[36664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential link between the number of unmanned train stations in the UK and the 283 suicides that occurred on mainline rail in 2019-20.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

British Transport Police regularly analyse suicide patterns. The causes of these tragic events are complex and the most significant risk factors relate to mental health. My officials and I work with industry, the British Transport Police and charities to ensure that vulnerable people can be identified and provided the support they need. Staffing and staff training plays a key role in our response, and industry colleagues make approximately 2,000 lifesaving interventions each year which means six lives are saved for everyone lost.

■ Restoring Your Railway Fund

Damien Moore: [\[36742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when a decision will be made on successful projects in the latest round of the Restore Your Railway scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We have assessed the bids to round three of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund and expect to announce the outcomes this summer.

■ South Western Railway: Rolling Stock

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[35851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Class 701 Arterio fleet will be introduced on the South Western Railway network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

South Western Railways will be introducing their new Class 701 units from late 2021.

■ Transport: Young People

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[35787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage young people to enter the transport industry.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department for Transport is leading efforts to promote training and career opportunities for young people in the transport sector. This will help ensure we can deliver the huge investment we are making in our transport system and help build the skilled workforce for the coming decades. Some of the steps we are taking include:

- Continuing to work with the Department for Education to ensure that Adult Education policy and Further Education reform proposals reflect the needs of the transport industry, and will work with our stakeholders to use the Department for Work and Pensions Kickstart scheme.
- Supporting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activity including by being a founding signatory of the Department for Education's 'Tomorrow's Engineers Code', which aims to increase and support the number of young people taking up STEM subjects, making careers in engineering accessible and a reality for future generations.

In the coming months we also plan to publish a Transport Labour Market and Skills Discussion Paper. This will set out the labour market and skills challenges and opportunities for the transport sector post Covid and how we plan to build a pipeline of talent for the future. We will use this as the basis of consultation with industry and other stakeholders to find out what more we can do to make progress in this vital area.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Paul Blomfield:**[\[36622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on negotiations to extend the quarantine-free covid-19 travel rules for double-vaccinated travellers from Amber list countries to include people who have received their full WHO-recognised vaccinations in a country other than the UK.

Robert Courts:

We are working closely with international partners on reopening travel and will provide an update in due course on how to safely reopen travel for fully vaccinated people from overseas.

TREASURY**■ Armed Forces: Transport****Taiwo Owatemi:**[\[34617\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the cost to the public purse was of his use of military transport between Birmingham and RAF Northolt.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Treasury makes payments to suppliers, including other government departments, in line with published policies. The Treasury's performance against these policies and further detail can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?organisations%5B%5D=hm-treasury&parent=hm-treasury>.

■ Bank Services**Drew Hendry:**[\[36666\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made on (a) whether HMRC guidance issued in relation to the US Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FACTA) complies with GDPR legislation and (b) the proportionality of the application of FACTA for joint accounts where UK nationals are not subject to FACTA rules.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have assessed that their FATCA guidance is GDPR compliant.

It is proportionate to report a joint account under FATCA because a US citizen or resident is an account holder. The name and other details of any joint account holder who is not a US citizen or resident are not reportable.

■ Bank Services: Coronavirus

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[36662\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the changes by the major banks to interest charges on personal overdrafts relative to levels before the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The pricing of financial products, including the interest rates charged on overdrafts, is a commercial decision for firms and the Government does not seek to intervene in, or make assessments of, such decisions.

In April 2020, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) required firms to have implemented new rules governing how they can charge for overdrafts. These included mandating that firms cannot charge more for unarranged overdrafts than arranged overdrafts, banning fixed daily and monthly charges, and a package of measures to improve the transparency of pricing. FCA analysis found that 7 out of 10 overdraft users would be better off or see no change to their overdraft costs as a result of the FCA's rules.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the FCA announced a series of temporary proposals to provide emergency support for consumer credit customers who were facing short-term cash flow problems as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. On overdrafts, firms were expected to provide up to £500 interest free buffer for customers, if requested, and make sure that customers did not see increased overdraft fees.

In September 2020, the FCA announced updated guidance to ensure that firms continued to provide tailored support for users of consumer credit and overdraft products who continue to face payment difficulties due to Covid-19. Where a customer needs further support, firms are expected to use measures such as reducing or waiving interest, agreeing a programme of staged reductions in the overdraft limit, or supporting customers to reduce their overdraft usage by transferring the debt.

In 2022, the FCA will carry out a post-implementation evaluation of the remedies it introduced on overdrafts.

■ Brexit: Costs

Jim Shannon:

[\[36635\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate his Department has made of the final cost to the public purse of implementing the Withdrawal Agreement and the UK's departure from the EU; and if he will make statement.

Steve Barclay:

I laid the "*European Union Finances 2020: statement on the 2020 EU Budget and measures to counter fraud and financial mismanagement*" (CP472) on 15 July 2020.

Annex E details the costs of implementing the Withdrawal Agreement and the financial settlement. HM Treasury estimate that the current value of the financial settlement is £37.3bn. This remains within the Government's previously published reasonable central range, adjusted to take into account the UK's 31 January 2020 exit date.

■ Carbon Emissions: Taxation

Luke Pollard:

[\[36764\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will hold discussions with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to introduce a carbon tax for carbon intensive food imports.

Kemi Badenoch:

As a global leader on decarbonisation, the UK recognises the importance of ensuring that policy interventions to cut domestic emissions do not lead to increased emissions elsewhere.

A range of approaches could potentially help to address this risk, of which carbon border adjustment mechanisms are one. However, it is important any policy complies with our international obligations, including under the World Trade Organization and our Free Trade Agreements.

Treasury ministers and officials are in regular contact with colleagues across the government on all matters related to the Net Zero transition.

■ Civil Service: Pay

John McDonnell:

[\[35482\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraph 4.1 of the Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance 2020-21 published by the Cabinet Office on 18 May 2020, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of HM Revenue and Customs' work with its recognised trade unions on the development of its pay business case for years 2020-21 to 2022-23.

Jesse Norman:

The Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance 2020-21 encourages departments to work constructively with trade unions on the development of their overall pay, reward and workforce strategies as a matter of course. HMRC have followed the Cabinet Office procedure for pay cases including conducting formal negotiations with trade unions in late 2020.

The outcome was a pay settlement agreed with trade unions and endorsed by Union members in a series of ballots held in February 2021.

John McDonnell:

[\[35483\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to paragraphs 3.2 and 4.1 of the Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance 2020-21, published by the Cabinet Office on 18 May

2020, which elements of the HM Revenue and Customs pay business case for years 2020-21 to 2022-23 have been disclosed to its recognised trade unions.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC have collectively agreed their pay and working arrangement reforms with their recognised departmental unions, ARC and PCS. Union members voted in favour for HMRC's pay and contract reform offer and HMRC have started to implement reforms.

HMRC conducted an intensive period of negotiations with trade unions to reach the collectively agreed position, based on proposals set out in the original business case. The final position agreed during these talks was then put to union members at Trade Union organised ballots, where it was strongly supported.

■ **Debts Written Off: Developing Countries**

Helen Hayes:

[\[36703\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) assessment he has made of the potential merits of cancelling debt for low income countries to help them prepare for the effects of climate change and (b) discussions he is having with private financial institutions on this issue.

John Glen:

Tackling climate change is a key priority for the UK. Holding the G7 and COP26 Presidencies this year, the UK is seeking to increase global climate action and help to deliver the long-term transition to a net zero, resilient and environmentally sustainable global economy. We recognise that governments' existing fiscal pressures have been exacerbated by the pandemic, impacting countries' abilities to pursue their development priorities, including the increasingly urgent and evident issues of climate change and biodiversity loss. The UK has committed to double our International Climate Finance to at least £11.6bn between 2021 and 2025, and we are working with partners to ensure the wider \$100bn target is met in June. G7 Finance Ministers committed to increase and improve our climate finance contributions through to 2025, including increasing adaptation finance and finance for nature-based solutions.

We are also pushing for action on debt sustainability as constrained fiscal space and debt vulnerabilities can frustrate efforts to invest in climate action. That is why the UK fully supports the extension of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative to the end of 2021 and is committed to the success of the G20's Common Framework. Under the Common Framework, private sector creditors will be required to implement debt restructurings on at least as favourable terms as official creditors. We regularly work with our international partners in the G7, G20 and Paris Club on debt issues, including private sector participation in debt restructurings. We also engage with the private sector through the Institute of International Finance (IIF) at Paris Club meetings.

■ Imports: Customs

Neil O'Brien:

[35879]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how long on average imported goods are taking to clear customs checks; and what assessment he has made of trends in the time taken for imported goods to clear customs since January 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government's priority is to keep goods moving and avoid delays at the border. HMRC use a risk based, intelligence-led response to compliance issues working alongside Border Force.

There are a number of different customs checks which could take place, and the time required for a check will vary significantly based on:

- The type of check required;
- The nature of the import and the associated risk;
- The type and quantity of goods examined;
- The amount of time a trader or their agent takes to provide information at points in the process.

The information requested is therefore not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

HMRC have not carried out an assessment of trends in the time taken for goods to clear customs.

The Government has put in place a number of measures to facilitate trade with the EU and to avoid disruption at ports, including publishing comprehensive guidance on the new arrangements for trade with the EU and operating a staged approach to customs controls in Great Britain. Until 31 December 2021 most traders importing non-controlled goods from the EU can make a simplified declaration in their own records and defer making a customs declaration to HMRC for 175 days. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/delaying-declarations-for-eu-goods-brought-into-great-britain>

■ Nuclear Power: Carbon Emissions

Henry Smith:

[35599]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will review the exclusion of nuclear energy from the Green Financing Framework with respect to the (a) inclusion in the International Capital Markets Association Green Bonds Principles of nuclear energy and (b) exclusion of nuclear energy from the Government's Green Financing Framework which has been developed in accordance with the former principles.

John Glen:

The government recognises that reaching net zero emissions by 2050 will require power to be generated from low carbon sources. As set out in the Government's

Energy White Paper last autumn, nuclear power will play an important role in achieving net zero.

Nuclear energy is excluded from the UK Government Green Financing Framework, which is in line with current international market standards for sovereign green bonds. The Green Bond Principles published by the International Capital Market Association do not address the question of nuclear energy. All other major sovereigns have explicitly excluded nuclear energy in their green bond frameworks.

The Government is developing a UK green taxonomy, which will create a shared understanding of which economic activities count as environmentally sustainable and will establish an Energy Working Group to provide expert advice on the treatment of energy in the taxonomy, including nuclear power.

We will review the framework on a regular basis with the aim of adhering to best practices in the market.

■ Social Services: Finance

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[35837\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the finding of the Disabled Children's Partnerships report, *Left Behind*, published 16 July 2021, that over half of local authorities have failed to meet their targets for providing Education, Health and Care plan assessments, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on increasing long-term funding for disabled children's social care services.

Steve Barclay:

HM Treasury Ministers regularly meet with other government departments and a range of stakeholders, which includes discussions around support for disabled children and young people.

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. At last year's Spending Review, we provided councils with access to over £1bn of spending for social care through £300m of new social care grant and the ability to introduce a 3% adult social care precept. This funding was additional to the £1 billion social care grant announced in 2019 which was maintained in line with the government's manifesto.

We are also increasing education funding for children with complex special educational needs and disabilities by nearly a quarter in two years, to £8 billion this year.

We will continue to work with other government departments, including Department for Education and the Ministry of Housing, Communities &

Local Government, to ensure the upcoming Spending Review reflects the needs of children's social care services.

Stamp Duty Land Tax**Chris Grayling:** [36541]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the impact of the stamp duty holiday on revenues from stamp duty.

Jesse Norman:

The latest estimate for revenue impact of the Stamp Duty Land Tax holiday, including the extension at the Spring Budget 2021, has been published by the NAO in their COVID-19 cost tracker.

<https://www.nao.org.uk/covid-19/cost-tracker/>

Transport: Taxation**Andrea Jenkyns:** [35786]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of simplifying tax rules to support subcontract use in the transport industry.

Jesse Norman:

To maintain consistency and fairness across the tax system, subcontractors in the transport industry are subject to the same general tax rules as workers in other industries.

The Government keeps all parts of the tax system under review.

The Government has introduced a wider package of support worth billions to help businesses, including subcontractors, through the coronavirus period, which includes extensions to the furlough scheme; extensions to the COVID-19 loan schemes; grant support; enhanced Time to Pay for taxes; and VAT deferrals.

Treasury: Email**Cat Smith:** [35730]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he or any of the Ministers of his Department use personal email addresses to conduct Government business.

Kemi Badenoch:

I refer the Hon. Member to the Cabinet Office guidance to departments [on use of private emails](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-departments-on-private-email-use) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-departments-on-private-email-use). This states that civil servants and Ministers are generally provided with access to Government email systems. Other forms of electronic communication may be used in the course of conducting Government business, in line with security and record-keeping requirements.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Maternity Services: Enfield North

Feryal Clark:

[\[35946\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2021 to Question 29932 on Maternity Services: Enfield North, what (a) steps she has taken and (b) plans she has developed as a result of discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on improvements in maternal care for (a) women living in poverty, (b) Black women and (c) Asian women in the Enfield North constituency.

Kemi Badenoch:

As set out in my answer of 19 July 2021, since summer 2020 I have been working with the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health and officials in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to improve maternal outcomes for all ethnic minority women.

This has included co-hosting a roundtable discussion on maternal mortality rates for ethnic minority women in September 2020, which identified the need for more intelligent use of data to target action. Following this, officials in the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit, who are supporting me in this work, have been helping DHSC colleagues to understand how data can be disaggregated and flow more easily among NHS agencies and research bodies.

This is in addition to the wider package of measures DHSC is taking forward to improve maternal health outcomes for all women, and in particular those from an ethnic minority background and those living in areas with high deprivation.

■ Minister for Women and Equalities: Energy

Ruth Jones:

[\[25141\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what estimate she has made of the cost to the public purse of her Department's energy usage in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Equality Hub is part of the Cabinet Office, therefore I refer the hon. Member to the answer to [PQ 25146](#).

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Universal Credit: Fraud

Damien Moore:

[\[36743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure fraudulent universal credit claims are (a) identified and (b) reported as soon as possible.

Will Quince:

DWP takes fraud and error very seriously and it should be noted that, during a period when we have faced the unprecedented challenges posed by COVID-19, fraud and error in the benefits system remains low, with 95% of benefits, worth more than £200bn. paid correctly in 2020/21.

We recognise that a small percentage of Universal Credit claims made during COVID-19 are in payment incorrectly and we are now re-visiting those cases which have the highest residual risk of incorrectness. Any overpayments will be pursued and where fraud is a factor, we will consider formal action.

We continue to invest in fraud and error prevention, with the Chancellor announcing £44m at the Spring Budget to support the expansion of both our Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service and our new Enhanced Checking Service and the development of Transaction Risking as a means of identifying high risk claims.

Our work with other Government departments and law enforcement agencies, both nationally and across borders, helps ensure appropriate intelligence and resources are shared,

enabling the totality of any criminality to be identified and investigated.

Our Annual Report and Accounts published on 15 July 2021 provides more information on what we are doing to prevent fraud from occurring: [DWP annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021](#)

■ Vacancies**Stephen Crabb:****[36594]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help supply workforce for sectors experiencing labour shortages, including (a) HGV driving, (b) hospitality, (c) tourism, (d) construction and (d) agriculture, as reported by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation.

Mims Davies:

The Department is continuing to work with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the Department for Transport, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Devolved Authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as other Government Departments to fill vacancies in haulage, hospitality, construction, agriculture, tourism and other sectors experiencing labour shortages. We are working collaboratively to offer training for those who need it and secure jobs directly for those ready to move into roles.

We have worked with key Trade Associations and industry partners across high demand sectors to develop relationships that utilise DWP's Jobcentre Plus network, fosters strong local links between employers and work coaches, and gives jobseekers the skills and knowledge they need to enter the sector.

We are working with industry to provide our Work Coaches with the key knowledge they need to identify suitable candidates and to develop relationships with key

employers and stakeholders in their local areas. As a result, local Jobcentres are now directly connecting with employers in their area, to discuss their recruitment needs and to offer advice on the support available, including work trials, work experience and sector based work academies.

Two websites, JobHelp and Employer Help, were launched last year by DWP in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. JobHelp offers job search advice, showcases recruiting sectors and signposts to job vacancies to help people successfully find work. DWP continues to work with industry and sector bodies to collaborate on content that promotes working in recruiting sectors, including the haulage sector for JobHelp,

In hospitality, DWP is working closely with key employers and trade associations such as UK Hospitality and the British Beer and Pub Association to promote opportunities in the hospitality sector to DWP customers

DWP is also helping jobseekers become HGV drivers to alleviate current shortages. DWP continues to work with DfT on additional measures to support the haulage and logistics sector and to support jobseekers into sustainable, long-term employment. For example, DWP's driver training pilot is underway, as part of the wider Road to Logistics scheme that supports people to become HGV drivers and we encourage industry to access their local Jobcentre Plus network to take advantage of the range of support on offer.

To support agricultural recruitment, DWP is supporting Defra to develop and deliver a long-term recruitment strategy that supports the domestic workforce into both seasonal and long-term roles in the agriculture sector.

Stephen Crabb:

[36595]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the recruitment sector on (a) providing sufficient workforce for businesses and (b) tackling the increasing vacancy level.

Mims Davies:

The Department is continuing to work with a number of other Government Departments, Devolved Authorities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as sector and trade bodies to fill vacancies in sectors experiencing labour shortages, offering training for those who need it, and securing jobs directly for those ready to move into roles.

We regularly meet with stakeholders such as the Recruitment Employers Confederation (REC) and the Federation of Small Business (FSB) to discuss recruitment.

The Department's National Employer and Partnership Team work collaboratively with a number of recruitment agencies across the UK, notably Manpower, Capita, Reed, Adecco and Staffline. Each of these accounts have a dedicated Senior National Account Manager to support them.

The National Employer and Partnership Team also work closely with the Recruitment Employers Confederation (REC) who are the Trade Body for the sector.

All of the recruitment agencies are employing people direct, and all are reporting high levels of vacancies, including permanent jobs. The National Employer and Partnership Team work closely with the agencies to promote their opportunities to the department's growing network of Jobcentre Plus. Recent examples are Adecco recruiting for Amazon across the UK, who are placing opportunities with local jobcentres in a variety of locations. Capita are also recruiting for Go – Centric who have 1500 contact centre opportunities across the UK.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Merchant Shipping: Pensions

Matt Rodda:

[33323]

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 19 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Amanda Solloway:

~~I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 24 June 2021 to Question 18565.~~

The Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund (MNRPF) is a multi-employer pension scheme and it is therefore not possible for any single participating (current or past) employer to estimate its share of any liabilities. This is a closed pension scheme and we do not know for certain if there are either active or deferred members of MNRPF who were previously employees of UK Research Innovation (UKRI) (or its predecessor organisations - NERC/BAS/NOC). However, it is possible, as not all of the former employees who were members of this pension scheme will have reached the scheme retirement age yet. As they are no longer employees, UKRI have no record of their current pension scheme memberships or entitlements.

Matt Rodda:

[33324]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 24 June 2021 to Question 18566, on Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund Scheme, what estimate he has made of the projected average entitlement for members of the Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund pension scheme through the Natural Environment Research Council and British Antarctic Survey.

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

Amanda Solloway:

~~I refer the Hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 24 June 2021 to Question 18566.~~

The Merchant Navy Ratings Pension Fund (MNRPF) is a multi-employer pension scheme and it is therefore not possible for any single participating

(current or past) employer to estimate its share of any liabilities. This is a closed pension scheme and we do not know for certain if there are either active or deferred members of MNRPF who were previously employees of UK Research Innovation (UKRI) (or its predecessor organisations - NERC/BAS/NOC). However, it is possible, as not all of the former employees who were members of this pension scheme will have reached the scheme retirement age yet. As they are no longer employees, UKRI have no record of their current pension scheme memberships or entitlements.

DEFENCE

■ National Flagship: Procurement

Luke Pollard:

[\[36758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the proposed Royal Yacht will be classified as a warship and its construction restricted to UK shipyards.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 29 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Mr Ben Wallace:

~~The Ministry of Defence does not classify the National Flagship as a warship. It will be built in the UK.~~

The procurement of the Flagship will be compliant with the UK's obligations, under the WTO Government Procurement Agreement. Construction of the National Flagship will be limited to the UK in order to protect the essential interests of national security.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Cancer: Waiting Lists

Peter Dowd:

[\[27178\]](#)

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

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 19 July 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and Improvement are committed to clearing the cancer backlog of patients waiting over 62 days from referral to first treatment by March 2022. Progress has been made, with 2.68 million urgent referrals and over 664,000 people treated for cancer between March 2020 and May 2021. In May 2021 general practitioner urgent referrals for suspected cancer were ~~8.3%~~**14%** higher than the May 2019 baseline.

Cancer referrals have reached over 10,500 referrals per day in April and nearly 11,000 in May.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Trade Agreements: Japan

Emily Thornberry:

[\[146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the answer of 26 October 2020 to Question 106261 and the publication of transparency data on 7 May 2021, how many members of staff, and at what grades, accompanied her on her visit to Japan from 21 to 24 October 2020; what the total cost to the public purse was of that visit for all UK attendees; and what the costs were of the (a) flights, (b) accommodation, (c) internal travel and (d) subsistence expenses for that visit.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 May 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Greg Hands:

The Government does not routinely release information regarding accompanying staff on ministerial engagements.

The total cost for this visit were: £ **20,782.08** ~~18,884.38~~

A breakdown of costs is as follows:

a) Flights – £18,701.64

b) Accommodation – nil.

c) Internal travel – nil.

d) subsistence and expenses – £ **2,080.44** ~~182.74~~

■ Trade Agreements: Singapore and Vietnam

Emily Thornberry:

[\[147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many members of staff, and at what grades, accompanied her on her visit to Singapore and Vietnam in December 2020; what the total cost to the public purse was of that visit for all UK attendees; and what the costs were of the (a) flights, (b) accommodation, (c) internal travel and (d) subsistence expenses for that visit.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 18 May 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Greg Hands:

The Government does not routinely release information regarding accompanying staff on ministerial engagements.

The total cost for this visit were: £ **28,310.03** ~~25,699.24~~

A breakdown of costs is as follows:

- a) Flights – £ **20,296.24** ~~23,359.24~~
- b) Accommodation – £ **3,980.06** ~~2,340~~
- c) Internal travel – nil.
- d) subsistence and expenses – **£4,034.00** ~~nil.~~

JUSTICE

■ Family Courts: Disclosure of Information

Robert Halfon:

[\[7149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve transparency in the Family Court process.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 7 June 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Chris Philp:

Ensuring that decisions made in family proceedings are open and transparent to the public is something to which this Government ~~has given~~ careful consideration. We recognise that there is a delicate balance to be struck between ensuring that family proceedings are open and transparent to ensure adequate public scrutiny and the principle of public justice, whilst also ensuring that ~~the~~ we protect the privacy of vulnerable children and families who are party to such proceedings.

In terms of attendance at hearings, most family proceedings are held in private. However, 'accredited media representatives' have been permitted to attend most types of hearings in family proceedings for several years. In addition, a pilot scheme to allow duly authorised lawyers, attending for journalistic, research or public legal educational purposes (colloquially referred to as 'legal bloggers') access to those same types of hearings was initiated in October 2018. That pilot scheme is scheduled to end in December 2021, but it is intended that it should be replaced by permanent provision in court rules, before that end date.

In terms of disclosure of information from family proceedings, for example by reporting it in the press or online, there are various legal provisions which determine if and when it is possible to disclose such information. These include laws on reporting restrictions and contempt of court. Judges dealing with cases have discretion to allow publication of information from family proceedings. In addition, court rules include provision about when it is possible to make disclosures of information without this being a potential contempt of court.

~~This Government has taken several steps to increase transparency in family proceedings where appropriate. This has included continuing to support a pilot which~~

allows accredited representatives of media outlets to have access to proceedings. The pilot allows legal bloggers access to proceedings with permission of the presiding judge. It also allows the blogger to write about their experiences at court but requires that names and personal information are kept anonymous.

The livestreaming of some Court of Appeal family proceedings is also now possible as a result of amendments made by the Court of Appeal (Recording and Broadcasting) (Amendment) Order 2020, which extended the existing livestreaming provision to cover family proceedings. Under this scheme, members of the public may view selected Court of Appeal family cases on the internet. Members of the judiciary select suitable cases for livestreaming, having taken into account the public interest. Proceedings involving litigants in person, and those with specific reporting restrictions, will not be selected. Participants in all selected hearings will be given the opportunity beforehand to object or to obtain further information.

We have also allowed the livestreaming of Court of Appeal family proceedings. This became a permanent arrangement in June 2020 through the Live Streaming Court of Appeal SI 2020 and allows anyone to view a Court of Appeal family case on the internet (again, whilst protecting the anonymity of the parties involved).

Further recommendations for increasing transparency will be carefully considered to ensure that the children and families who use the family courts continue to be protected, whilst also ensuring adequate scrutiny is given to the family courts.

TREASURY

■ SME Brexit Support Fund

Hilary Benn:

[35505]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) total number of applications made by businesses to the SME Brexit Support Fund, (b) number of grants that have been approved, and (c) total amount of funding in grants provided to date for each region of the UK.

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

Jesse Norman:

As of 19 July 2021, 5,414 businesses completed applications for grants of up to £2,000. Of this number, 4,737 have been offered a grant.

A regional breakdown of the figures shows that businesses in England have been offered £5,862,213, in Scotland £387,387, in Wales £196,546 and in Northern Ireland £360,174.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Shootings in Plymouth

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): [\[HCWS250\]](#)

In the wake of the tragic shootings in Plymouth on 12 August, my heartfelt condolences are with the family and friends of those who lost their lives - Maxine Davison, Lee and Sophie Martyn, Stephen Washington, and Kate Shepherd - as well as with those that were injured and the people who witnessed this truly terrible event.

The Home Office and the Ministry of Justice are working closely with Devon and Cornwall Police and with victims' services to ensure that those affected by this tragedy, including bereaved families, have all the support they need.

We must do all that we possibly can to avoid something like this happening again.

The UK has some of the strictest gun control legislation in the world and comparatively low levels of gun crime. Yet while tragedies like last Thursday's are rare, their impact is profound. We constantly assess what sensible and proportionate steps we can take to help prevent such terrible loss of life.

This is now the subject of an ongoing police investigation, and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is looking at actions taken by Devon and Cornwall Police in relation to issuing a firearms licence, so it would be inappropriate to comment further on these matters while that work is ongoing.

However, as a matter of urgency, I have asked every police force in England, Wales, and Scotland to review their current firearms licensing processes - in particular the processes that they follow for returning a certificate - and ensure they are appropriate as set against the current Home Office guidance and legislation. This current guidance asks Chief Officers to ensure high-risk decisions are approved by at a sufficiently senior level. Such decisions include granting a certificate following a previous refusal or revocation, including by another force; where there is evidence of violence, domestic abuse or medical unsuitability; or where concerns have been raised by someone known to the licence holder.

The Government keeps firearms licensing controls under constant review. The Home Office is bringing forward new statutory guidance to improve how people applying for a firearms licence are assessed in future. The new guidance draws on previous lessons learned and will ensure better consistency and improved standards across police firearms licensing departments. It will mean that no one is given a firearms licence unless their doctor has confirmed to the police whether or not they have any relevant medical conditions, including an assessment of their mental health, and it will make explicit that firearms applicants may be subject to social media checks. The police will have a legal duty to consider the new statutory guidance when it is published. We plan to publish this new guidance in the coming weeks. We will keep the new statutory guidance under

review, especially in light of this terrible incident, and we will update it as necessary in due course.

The police have not declared this to be a terrorist incident. Investigations into Davison's motives for committing these terrible attacks continue. Whether or not an incident is determined to be terrorism-related is a decision made independently of the Government by the police, based on the specific circumstances and what the police finds during the investigation.

The UK has one of the most robust counter-terrorism frameworks in the world. Our definition of terrorism includes an act or the threat of serious violence to advance an ideological, religious, racial, or political cause. The Terrorism Act 2000 definition is sufficiently broad to capture modern causes of terrorism, including "incel" violence. It is this definition that is applied when determining whether specific individuals are engaging in terrorism and if incidents should be classified as a terrorist attack.

This appalling event has shaken the whole country, and in particular the people of Plymouth. Our hearts go out to them. This is something which no community and nobody should have to endure. I would also like to thank those police officers and others who attended the scene for their incredible bravery.