



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 7 September 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:33 P.M., 07 September 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

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Armed Forces

John Healey:

[\[41650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan armed forces soldiers were evacuated from Afghanistan to the UK since the start of Operation Pitting on 13 August 2021.

James Heapey:

Throughout the 14 days of Operation Pitting, over 100 RAF flights relocated many thousands of people to the UK, including Afghan nationals who were employed by Her Majesty's Government to work alongside UK forces in Afghanistan. These individuals and their families were eligible for relocation to the UK under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

Regrettably, we were not able to evacuate all those we wanted to. We owe a debt of gratitude to all Afghan armed forces soldiers who put their lives at risk working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan, and recognise the threat they may now face from the Taliban due to their ties to the UK. For this reason, the Home Office is working quickly to establish the details of the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This scheme will provide protection for those identified as most at risk, such as women and girls. The Government has committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years.

■ Afghanistan: Immigration

Hilary Benn:

[\[41667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will urgently review the application by S, the former interpreter for UK forces whose case was covered on Newsnight on 2 August 2021 and 19 August 2021, under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme.

James Heapey:

We cannot comment on individual cases without express written permission of the individual, however our commitment to Afghanistan, and those who supported our mission there, continues. The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme is not time limited, and the Government is working to facilitate the continued relocation of those who are eligible.

Since the launch of the ARAP in April 2021, we have relocated thousands of eligible Afghans and their families to the UK. During the 14 days of Operation PITTING, we broadened and accelerated the scheme as the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated, resulting in the largest UK military evacuation since the Second World War.

■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:** [\[41147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the NATO decision to withdraw from Afghanistan on the UK's national security.

Paula Barker: [\[41378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the potential security threat to the UK of a new Taliban administration in Kabul; and what steps the Government is taking in response to that potential threat.

James Heappey:

The principal threat to the UK's national security stemming from the withdrawal of NATO from Afghanistan and the new Taliban administration will centre on the extent to which Afghanistan is once again used by terrorist groups to prepare attacks against the West in general and the UK in particular. The future relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda remains unclear, but in the short term it is unlikely that they would act contrary to the Taliban's interest. We do not judge that the Taliban themselves have any intent to carry out attacks outside of Afghanistan.

The Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) will highly likely continue to target the Taliban in Afghanistan to exacerbate social and ethnic tensions whilst seeking areas for settlement and sanctuary for their fighters. The UK continues to work to counter ISKP through means other than military presence in Afghanistan, working with partners in the region to diminish the threat they pose.

■ Ajax Vehicles**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[40628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what baseline standard CT40 cannon system is being incorporated into the Ajax vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

Build Standard 8 CT40 Cannon will be integrated into AJAX vehicles for in-service use. All CT40 Cannon delivered under the UK series production contract are at this standard.

The Ministry of Defence does hold some older Build Standard 5 Cannon which have been used to support trials activity. These will not be fitted to in-service AJAX vehicles but could be repurposed for other uses once trials are complete, for example, as training aids for the Field Army.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[40690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the earliest date is for initial operating capability for the Ajax AFV.

Jeremy Quin:

I have made clear that no declaration of Initial Operating Capability will be made prior to a clear path to resolution being established for noise and vibration.

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[40691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many people comprise the crew of the Ajax Armoured Reconnaissance Vehicle; and what are the individual responsibilities of each of those crew members.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ajax reconnaissance variant has a crew of three. A driver (responsible for driving the vehicle and routine automotive maintenance as directed by the maintenance schedule), a gunner (responsible for using the sighting systems, firing the weapon system and other routine maintenance tasks as directed by the maintenance schedule) and commander (responsible for command of the vehicle, decisions on movement and use of the sighting and weapon systems, communication systems and safety).

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Ammunition**

Mr Mark Francois:

[\[40689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many rounds of caseless 40mm ammunition can be carried internally by the Ajax AFV on operations.

Jeremy Quin:

This information could prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces and so I must withhold the detail my right hon. Friend has requested.

■ **Ajax Vehicles: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[38159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much money from the public purse has been spent on the Ajax programme in the 2021-22 financial year.

Jeremy Quin:

The annual costs for 2021-22 have not yet been published. No payments have been made to General Dynamics under the terms of the Ajax contract. However, as part of the wider Armoured Cavalry Programme £4.7 million has been paid so far this year. This includes payments made in relation to Cannon Contracts (CTAI) and Bowman Equipment Purchases/Connectivity Assurance Testing (General Dynamics Mission Systems).

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[40677\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has pursued damages from (a) General Dynamics Land Systems UK and (b) General Dynamics Corporation in relation to the delivery of the AJAX Armoured Fighting Vehicle.

Jeremy Quin:

Dealings between General Dynamics Land Systems UK and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on the Ajax contract are commercially sensitive. The MOD applies contractual incentives and remedies when appropriate to do so.

The MOD has no direct contractual relationship with General Dynamics Corporation.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[40686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, at what level in his Department the (a) 2010 development contract for the Ajax AFV and (b) 2014 production contract for the Ajax AFV was signed off.

Jeremy Quin:

Both contracts received appropriate Ministerial approvals and in the case of the 2010 development contract was also agreed by the then Chief Secretary to the Treasury (March 2010).

Mr Mark Francois: [\[40698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff within Defence Equipment and Support are employed on the Ajax AFV programme; and what the (a) employment grades and (b) individual salary bands are of those employees.

Jeremy Quin:

There are currently 111 Ministry of Defence (MOD) civilian, military and contractor staff in Defence Equipment & Support directly employed on the AJAX project. This number may vary, dependent on project requirements. The project is supported by other indirect staff, such as corporate services, and a small number of senior staff who provide oversight and contribute to the project as required, as part of wider portfolios of work.

Salary Bands for the MOD civilian and military staff are detailed in the table below:

| DE&S LEVEL/MILITARY RANK | SALARY BAND |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5 | Min £65,769 Max £70,553 |
| 4 | Min £45,816 Max £77,477 |
| 3 | Min £34,850 Max £65,247 |
| 2 | Min £19,939 Max £38,284 |
| 1 | Min £19,500 Max £25,950 |
| Lt Col (OF4) | Min £75,753.60 Max £87,716.40 |
| Maj (OF3) | Min £53,975.16 Max £64,642.32 |
| WO2 (OF8) | Min £43,895.64 Max £51,274.92 |

MOD civilian salary bands are representative of the current Ajax project population. Contractor salaries are a matter for the provider.

In addition a further 12 staff (12 FTE) are assigned to the procurement of the CT40 cannon that will be deployed on Ajax.

■ Ammunition

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the 40mm ammunition being developed for CT40 is compatible with the BAES Bofors 40 Mk4 Naval Gun.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the 40mm ammunition used by the BAES Bofors 40 Mk4 Naval Gun is compatible with the CT40.

Jeremy Quin:

The 40mm ammunition for the CT40 is not compatible with the BAES Bofors 40 Mk4 Naval Gun. Neither is that used with the BAES Bofors 40 Mk4 Naval Gun compatible with the CT40.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when his Department last purchased ammunition for the L21A1 RARDEN 30mm cannon.

Jeremy Quin:

Ammunition for the L21A1 RARDEN 30mm cannon was last purchased as follows:

| TYPE OF 30MM AMMUNITION | YEAR OF LAST PURCHASE |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Practice | 2019 |
| Reduced Range Practice | 2014 |
| High Explosive Tracer | 2011 |
| Armour Piercing | 1991 |

■ Antiship Missiles: Procurement

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned timescale is for the initial operational capability for the Harpoon replacement for the Royal Navy.

Jeremy Quin:

A timescale for an initial operating capability would be determined during a future Surface to Surface Guided Weapon (SSGW) system procurement process. An Invitation to Negotiate has not been released and it would be inappropriate to comment further on future programme timelines.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles**Mr Kevan Jones:** [\[40655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance Tracked vehicles the British Army has sold in the past two years.

Jeremy Quin:

Sales of Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) (CVR(T)) vehicles in the last two financial years are as follows:

2019-20 - 67 CVR(T) sold.

2020-21 - 131 CVR(T) sold.

An additional 62 CVR(T) have been sold in the current financial year 2021-22 to date.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2021 to Question 36561 on Armoured Fighting Vehicles, for what reason that data has been made available in previous years but is now withheld; when the decision was taken to withhold that information; and which role in his Department is responsible for that decision.

Jeremy Quin:

The Armed Forces equipment and formations data is due for release on 9 September 2021.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement**Mr Mark Francois:** [\[40697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which senior officer on the Executive Committee of the Army Board is responsible for the procurement of Armoured Fighting Vehicles, including the Ajax AFV programme; and how long that individual has been in post.

Jeremy Quin:

The Deputy Chief of the General Staff (DCGS) leads the Army Portfolio Office, providing central coherence and guidance for all programmes in the Army. Lieutenant General Sir Christopher Tickell has held the role of DCGS Since August 2019.

As Director General Land in Defence Equipment & Support, Chris Bushell is a member of the Executive Committee of the Army Board and is the senior official responsible for providing procurement expertise. He took up post in December 2019.

■ Defence Equipment**Mr Mark Francois:** [\[40706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2021 to Question 36561 on Armoured Fighting Vehicles, for what reason no armed forces equipment and formations data has yet been published for 2021.

Jeremy Quin:

The Armed Forces Equipment and Formations Statistic Figures are collated and published once a year in an official statistic. Last year it was published on 10 September and this year it is due to be released on 9 September.

Defence Equipment: Communication

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of whether the BID 2510 series is fully interoperable with NATO allies, in modern mode.

Jeremy Quin:

The BID 2510 devices are designed to allow UK Armed Forces to interoperate with range of mission partners, including NATO.

Defence: Cryptography

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the Government is taking to support the UK's sovereign cryptographic industry.

Jeremy Quin:

The Defence and Security Industrial Strategy (DSIS) required cryptographic capability (referred to as Crypt-Key) is a strategic imperative for the UK and, accordingly, the UK requirement to maintain a national Crypt-Key (CK) capability.

The Ministry of Defence works closely with the National Cyber Security Centre, which is the lead for Crypt-Key, to develop a more detailed CK industrial strategy that will implement the principles outlined in the DSIS and grow the sovereign CK industrial base.

HMS Bulwark

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost to the public purse is to date of the low readiness upkeep of HMS Bulwark.

Jeremy Quin:

The recorded cost to date to the public purse for the upkeep of HMS BULWARK is £47.1 million, covering financial years 2017-18 to 2021-22.

HMS Diamond

Mr Mark Francois: [\[40719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of when HMS Diamond will return to operational service, following the completion of temporary repairs.

Jeremy Quin:

The repair to HMS DIAMOND is now complete. HMS DIAMOND sailed at the end of August and will return to operational duties with the Carrier Strike Group in due course.

■ Ministry of Defence: Babcock International**Mr Mark Francois:****[40716]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the parties and subjects of existing contracts with more than £1 million contract-value between his Department and Babcock or its subsidiaries.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) currently has 109 open contracts with Babcock International Group PLC, including known subsidiaries, with a contract value of more than £1 million.

The attached table contains the requested information. However I am withholding details of 17 contracts as disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces.

Information about the contracts that the Department places with industry is available on GOV.uk as part of our MOD Trade, Industry and Contracts statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/defence-trade-and-industry-index>.

In addition, MOD contracts worth over £10,000 are published on the Government's Contracts Finder website, which is available on GOV.uk at:

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>.

Attachments:

1. Open contracts with Babcock International Group PL [PQW_21-22_2021_09156 - Contract Table Answer.docx]

■ Multi Role Ocean Surveillance Ship**Mr Mark Francois:****[40711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned initial operating capability is for the proposed ocean surveillance ships for the Royal Navy; and what the individual acquisition cost is of those vessels.

Jeremy Quin:

The new Multi Role Ocean Surveillance Ship announced in the Defence Command Paper 2021 is currently in its pre-concept phase. No decisions have yet been taken on the likely acquisition costs or the definition of the initial operating capability for the ship.

■ Patrol Craft

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the (a) five River II Class Patrol Ships and (b) three River Class Patrol Ships; and which of those ships are (a) operationally available, (b) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit, (c) temporarily unavailable and (d) laid up and/or held at extended readiness.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37367\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the (a) four Tide Class and (b) two Wave Class Fleet Tankers in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary; and which of those ships are (a) operationally available, (b) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit, (c) temporarily unavailable and (d) laid up and/or held at extended readiness.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37368\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the three Landing Ship Docks in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary; and which of those ships are (a) operationally available, (b) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit, (c) temporarily unavailable and (d) laid up and/or held at extended readiness.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the (a) seven Sandown Class and (b) six Hunt Class Mine Counter Measure Vessels; and which of those ships are (i) operationally available, (ii) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit, (iii) temporarily unavailable and (iv) laid up and/or held at extended readiness.

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of (a) HMS Albion and (b) HMS Bulwark; and whether those ships are (i) operationally available, (ii) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit, (iii) temporarily unavailable and (iv) laid up and/or held at extended readiness.

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 |

| CLASS | UPKEEP/MAINTENANCE | OPERATIONALLY AVAILABLE | TOTAL |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| RFA Wave Class | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| RFA Landing Ship Docks | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Sandown Class | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| 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.

■ Pen Farthing

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[41827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of how private communications between Paul Farthing and his special advisor, Peter Quentin, were obtained by a national newspaper.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[41828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department’s policy is on the publication of private communications between members of the public and special advisors.

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[41829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to establish an independent inquiry on the obtaining by a national newspaper of private communications between Paul Farthing and special advisor, Peter Quentin.

Mr Ben Wallace:

The Ministry of Defence takes seriously all threatening communications, whether sent to officials or advisers, and if judged necessary they are referred to the appropriate authorities.

■ RAF Benson

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what his Department's plans are for RAF Benson.

Jeremy Quin:

Following the decision to invest in a New Medium Helicopter, the Department is in the process of reviewing basing options for this new capability. This will determine the future role of RAF Benson however, there are currently no plans to dispose of the site.

■ RAF Brize Norton

Mr Mark Francois: [\[40709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the repair of the runway at RAF Brize Norton has been completed.

Jeremy Quin:

Following the most recent works to the surface, repair of the runway at RAF Brize Norton has been completed and was handed to the Operating Authority on 7 August 2021. However ongoing maintenance will be required and will be scheduled to take place on a pre-agreed basis.

■ Saab: Lancashire

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 10 September 2020 to Question 84638 on Saab: Lancashire, if he will provide an update on Saab's investment in Lancashire, including the number of jobs created.

Jeremy Quin:

As I told the right hon. Member in my previous answer (84638), the details of the UK Technology Centre being established by Saab, including its location, are a matter for Saab. The company has committed to opening it this year and I understand that Saab will make an announcement on the location of the centre, together with the number of associated jobs, in due course, but that the company has given no undertakings that the centre will be in Lancashire.

■ Submarines

Mr Mark Francois: [\[37369\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the sea-going status is of each of the four Astute Class and Two Trafalgar Class Submarines in service; and which of those submarines are (a) operationally available, (b) undergoing maintenance and/or a refit and (c) temporarily unavailable.

Jeremy Quin:

I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 26 July 2021 to Question number 36546.

Attachments:

1. 36546 - Submarines [UIN 36546.docx]

■ Type 23 Frigates**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[40715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Type 23 frigates are currently in (a) repair and (b) refit for the Royal Navy; and which company has primary responsibility for that work on each of those frigates.

Jeremy Quin:

Four Type 23 frigates are in upkeep (refit), HMS IRON DUKE, HMS SOMERSET, HMS SUTHERLAND and HMS ST ALBANS.

The company with prime responsibility for the upkeeps is Devonport Royal Dockyard Limited, which is owned by Babcock Marine.

■ Type 45 Destroyers**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[40718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, who is paying for the Power Improvement Project programme for each of the Type 45 destroyers; and what the total estimated cost is of that programme.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence is funding the Type 45 Power Improvement Programme. The current contract value is approximately £189 million.

■ Type 45 Destroyers: Repairs and Maintenance**Mr Mark Francois:**[\[37383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the planned timescale is for the Type 45 Power Improvement Project; and when each individual ship in the class is currently scheduled to have completed its PIP upgrade.

Jeremy Quin:

HMS DAUNTLESS, the first of class to undergo the Type 45 Power Improvement Programme (PIP), is expected to complete the initial phase of the installation by Q3 2021. This follows reassessment of the programme to account for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on progress. The next phase of the programme will see DAUNTLESS undertake a rigorous trials programme in harbour and subsequently at sea.

The programme is dependent on the availability of ships to undertake the upgrade, balanced against the Royal Navy's standing and future operational commitments. It is

still the case that all six Type 45 ships are expected to have received their PIP upgrade by the mid-2020s.

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

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department is planning to retrofit the A330 with the boom air-to-air refuelling system.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[40663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what method of Air to Air Refuelling is the used by AirTanker consortiums A330 Voyager fleet.

Jeremy Quin:

RAF Voyager aircraft use a hose and drogue refuelling system. We have no current plans to fit an aerial refuelling boom system to the Voyager aircraft.

■ **Voyager Aircraft: Ministers**

Stephen Morgan: [\[41191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what hourly rate his Department charges (a) the Cabinet Office and (b) other Government departments for ministerial flights on RAF Voyager ZZ336, Vespina.

Jeremy Quin:

The amount charged to the Cabinet Office and other Government Departments for ministerial flights on RAF Voyager ZZ336 vary for each use and do not equate to any set hourly charge. Charging includes the cost of fuel uplift, aerodrome landing handling and parking fees and catering. These costs vary significantly dependent on location and duration of use. These costs are captured by the Ministry of Defence, collated and invoiced to the relevant Department after the completion of the tasking.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Advertising: Food**

Daisy Cooper: [\[41297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when he plans to publish proposals to tackle the online advertising of products that are high in fat, sugar and salt to ensure equivalence between traditional broadcasting platforms and online content providers.

Caroline Dinéage:

The Government published on 24 June 2021 its response to the 2019 and 2020 consultations on introducing restrictions for high fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) advertising across TV and online. The response outlined our intentions to introduce a 9pm TV watershed for HFSS products and a restriction of paid-for HFSS advertising

online. These restrictions are being legislated for in the Health and Care Bill currently in Parliament. The restrictions are intended to come into force at the end of 2022.

The Government will appoint Ofcom as the statutory regulatory authority who will then be able to appoint a day-to-day regulator to carry out frontline regulation. Enforcement of advertising standards by front-line and statutory regulators is an arrangement already established for broadcast advertising. In order to ensure that HFSS advertising policy is proportionate and there is parity across media, we will introduce the same enforcement arrangement online.

■ **Exercise: Morley and Outwood**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[38346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to encourage people in Morley and Outwood constituency to increase their average level of exercise in summer 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health and all generations and communities should be able to enjoy the health, wellbeing, social and other benefits of being active. Because of this, we made sure that people could exercise at least once a day even during the height of the first period of enhanced national restrictions and we opened up grassroots sport and leisure facilities as soon as it was safe to do so.

From April 2020 to June 2021, we invested over £2,985,721 of Exchequer and Lottery funding in the Morley and Outwood area through Sport England. The majority of this were investments made to the local Active Partnership (Yorkshire Sport Foundation), totalling £2,866,572.

This includes awards of £615,827 to support the Active Partnership in helping schools to open their facilities outside of the school day and during school holidays and £168,000 investment as part of our Covid response, to help reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 and the widening of inequalities, particularly targeting lower socio-economic groups, Black, Asian Minority Ethnic communities, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions.

Sport England also invested £80,000 via their Community Asset Fund in February 2021 to support the construction of a new multi-use games area to be sited on the Queen Elizabeth playing field jointly owned by Leeds City Council.

■ **Football**

Paula Barker:

[\[41372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans his Department has to empower football fans in response to failed plans by certain clubs to form a European Super League; and whether he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to prevent clubs forming breakaway leagues in the future.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government was vocal in its opposition to the European Super League (ESL) proposals, which were not in the interests of the game, and I was glad to see the withdrawal of all English teams from the project.

The Government launched the fan-led review of football governance in the immediate aftermath of the ESL. The Chair, the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford, has heard extensively with fans over the past few months including on the subject of supporter engagement. The interim report has already been published and I look forward to receiving its full recommendations in the autumn.

The Government has already taken action to prevent a future ESL breakaway. We have worked with The Football Association (FA) to amend the Governing Body Endorsement criteria document. This criteria has been amended to ensure that overseas players can now only participate in competitions that have been organised and/or sanctioned by The FA. This would exclude such players from participating in the ESL.

The Government continues to work with the football authorities to understand what further policy interventions may be possible though, including legislative options.

■ Sports: Finance**Paula Barker:**[\[41371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of state funding for grassroots sports across the UK; and what plans the Government has to increase that funding in response to achievements at the Tokyo Olympics and the European Championships.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health and all generations and communities should be able to enjoy the health, wellbeing, social and other benefits of being active. Because of this, we made sure that people could exercise at least once a day even during the height of the first period of enhanced national restrictions and we opened up grassroots sport and leisure facilities as soon as it was safe to do so.

National pride in our Olympic and Paralympic heroes has provided a source of genuine inspiration and motivation for the public. On 15th August, the Government announced that it will provide £232 million to support Team GB and ParalympicsGB athletes preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The £232 million will be invested into aspiring Team GB and ParalympicsGB athletes as well as their coaches and support staff, in addition to funding from the National Lottery.

In recognition of how the sector has been impacted by the pandemic working closely with Sport England, UK Sport and the National Lottery, the Government have provided an unprecedented £1 billion to ensure the survival of the grassroots, elite and leisure sectors.

This includes the £220m Sport England has provided directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic, including their £35 million Community Emergency Fund in supporting people to be more active, including a specific focus on those people who are inactive and engaging people from underrepresented groups.

On 26 January, Sport England also published their strategy 'Uniting the Movement' and as part of this have committed an extra £50million to help grassroots sports clubs and organisations affected by the coronavirus pandemic. This is on top of the £18m a year it spends on grassroots facilities through the Football Foundation.

The Government also announced an additional £25m for grassroots sports facilities earlier this year with the Prime Minister committing a further £50m in his Levelling Up speech on 15 July. These contributions are part of the government's ambition to deliver the pitches that every community in the UK needs by 2030.

■ **Sportsgrounds: Defibrillators**

Ben Bradley:

[41198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring defibrillators at sports venues.

Nigel Huddleston:

Events at UEFA EURO 2020 this summer demonstrated the immense value of access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and first aid training for anyone involved in sport. Sports have a responsibility to make the safety and welfare of players their top priority, including through access to life-saving first aid equipment and relevant training and education.

AEDs are already recommended best practice at all sports stadia, as set out in guidance from the Sports Grounds Safety Authority. Local authorities are able to mandate AED provision (at grounds designated under the Safety of Sports Grounds 1975 Act or sports grounds with regulated stands under the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987 Act) through medical plans included in General Safety Certificates.

At the grassroots level, all capital funding awards for sports venues made by Sport England, the Government's arm's length body for community sport, must include AED provision if it is not already available. For football facilities, support over recent years has been provided by The Football Association (The FA) and the British Heart Foundation to help ensure AEDs are available. In June 2021 I welcomed the Premier League's announcement of their new Defibrillator Fund, which will fund AEDs at thousands of football clubs and facilities across the country. Each grant recipient will be required to have at least one person successfully complete The FA Education Sudden Cardiac Arrest free online course. Sport England is working with the Football Foundation in support of the Premier League initiative to put £3 million into providing AED equipment for grassroots football clubs.

EDUCATION■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****John Penrose:****[903335]**

What plans his Department has to help secondary school pupils choose tertiary education courses informed by the (a) salaries and (b) employment rates of people completing those courses.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Careers Service website provides robust national labour market information (LMI), including average earnings and typical work hours, for individual occupations. In the Skills for Jobs white paper we set out the ambition that the National Careers Service website will be updated to become a single source of government-assured careers information for young people and adults. The revamped website will include improved and updated labour market information. We will bring together all the learning and careers routes available to people, along with improved content on work experience, the job market, and applying for roles.

We published updated statutory guidance for schools and colleges in July 2021. This includes a reminder to schools of their obligation to inform students when courses they are considering lead to poor career outcomes.

We are working closely with our partners to develop the best approach to making localised LMI available to schools and colleges. The Careers & Enterprise Company is working with local partners, including Skills Advisory Panels, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and Mayoral Combined Authorities to develop a greater understanding of local skills needs and disseminate LMI to schools and colleges. This includes promoting the use of the National Careers Service website and encouraging Careers Leaders to interpret labour market data for their students.

■ **Apprenticeships: Suffolk****Dr Dan Poulter:****[40841]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many apprenticeships have commenced in (a) Suffolk and (b) Central Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency in each year from 2009-10 to date.

Gillian Keegan:

Apprenticeship statistics by geography are published on the 'Explore Education Statistics' platform on a quarterly basis. The specific statistical publication 'Apprenticeship starts since May 2010 and 2015 by region, local authority and parliamentary constituency' is published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>.

The attached table contains the number of apprenticeship starts for the Suffolk local authority and the Suffolk and North Ipswich constituency from May 2010 to April 2021.

Attachments:

1. 40841_table
[40841_table_showing_Suffolk_and_North_Ipswich_apprenticeship_starts.xls]

■ Assessments**Robert Halfon:****[37431]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take to help ensure that there is an equitable system of assessments for qualifications in 2022.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's firm intention is that exams and other formal assessments should go ahead in 2022.

The Department recognises that those pupils taking exams next year have had disruption to their education because of COVID-19. Together with Ofqual, we are proposing adaptations to the exams and formal assessments to take that disruption into account.

The Department recently carried out a joint consultation with Ofqual on GCSEs, AS and A levels, seeking views on our proposed changes to exams in summer 2022. These include choices about the content pupils will be assessed on for some GCSE subjects, and providing advance information about the focus of exam content for other GCSE subjects, and all AS and A levels. The Department is currently considering the consultation's responses and will announce its decisions shortly.

The Department also carried out a joint consultation with Ofqual on vocational, technical, and other general qualifications (VTQs). We set out the Department's policy position and the scope of adaptations to assessments and qualifications that may be necessary to address the ongoing effect of COVID-19 in the 2021/22 academic year and consulted on the equalities effect of this policy. Ofqual consulted on the necessary changes to the Vocational and Technical Qualifications Contingency Regulatory Framework to update it for the 2021/22 academic year. The Government published its response on 6 August 2021.

In deciding on the approach to grading next year, the Department will be asking Ofqual to be as fair as possible to pupils taking qualifications in future years, and to those who took them in previous years. Ofqual will announce its planned approach to grading in the autumn term.

The Government has invested over £3 billion in a package of measures to support education recovery, including tutoring, summer schools and mental health support, as well as further training and development for teachers. This will help to ensure that exams and formal assessments in 2022 are as fair as possible.

Paula Barker:**[41368]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of whether GCSE and A-level examinations will take place without disruption in academic year 2021-22.

Nick Gibb:

The Government has made clear its firm intention that exams will take place in summer 2022. Exams are the fairest way of judging pupils' performance. The Department has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders who have all called for exams to go ahead.

There is continued uncertainty about the path of the COVID-19 outbreak, including whether further disruption to education may occur over the course of the 2021/22 academic year. Even if some public health restrictions were to be needed over the coming academic year, the Department believes it will be possible for pupils to take exams safely, but we recognise the need to have plans in place for the unlikely event that that is not possible.

The Department is working with Ofqual, exam boards, and representatives of schools and colleges to ensure that contingency arrangements are in place for scenarios where exams cannot be held for any reason, or where individual pupils are unable to sit exams due to illness or self-isolation. The Department will announce the detail of these contingency plans in the autumn term.

The Department also recognises that pupils who will be taking exams in summer 2022 have had disruption to their education in the last two academic years. Whilst we believe it is in pupils' interests that they cover as much of the curriculum as possible, we also recognise that in order to be fair, exams in 2022 will need to be adapted to take this disruption into account. The Department has recently consulted jointly with Ofqual on a range of adaptations to exams. We are currently considering the responses to that consultation and will announce final decisions shortly.

■ Assessments: Standards**Sir Mike Penning:**[\[40754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of teacher assessed grades introduced as a result of the covid-19 outbreak that are required by examination boards.

Nick Gibb:

Grades were based on a range of evidence and determined by their teachers. Teachers were best placed to understand the content students have covered and their pupils' performance in the absence of exams.

To support teachers in assessing, marking and making judgements on pupils' work, the Joint Council for Qualifications and the exam boards published guidance, training and other support materials. Where available, exemplar answers and data on past performance were provided to centres to assist teachers with marking these questions and making fair and consistent judgements of the standard of a pupil's performance. There was also a process for both internal and external quality assurance to support teachers and ensure consistency. Ofqual worked closely with awarding organisations to ensure robust and similar quality assurance processes

were also in place for vocational and technical qualifications being awarded via Teacher Assessed Grades in 2021.

■ Children in Care

Tulip Siddiq: **[41093]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many looked after children local authorities reported as being placed outside of (a) their local authority area, (b) England and (c) the UK in (i) the year January 2019 to December 2019 inclusive and (ii) each of the last five annual reporting periods for which data is available.

Vicky Ford:

The latest figures on children looked after by the locality of the placement are shown in the attached table. The children looked after collection (SSDA903 return) collects information about children who are looked after by local authorities from 1 April to 31 March, and these are the time periods presented in the table.

A range of figures on children looked after by placement location in a different format to that provided in the table are published in the table 'National – Children looked after by placement type, distance and the locality of placement' in the annual statistical release at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoptions/2020>.

The statistics on children looked after in 2020/21 will be released in November 2021 (provisional). The exact date of publication will be announced here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/looked-after-children-in-england-year-ending-31-march-2021>.

Attachments:

1. PQ41093_table
[PQ41093_table_showing_children_looked_after_by_locality_of_placement.xls]

■ Children: Education

Sarah Olney: **[38369]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding through the Government's long-term education recovery plan; and what recent representations he has received from stakeholders in the education sector on the extent to which that Government funding will ensure educational recovery for children who have lost learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has invested £3 billion in education recovery to help tackle the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. Pupils, students, parents and staff have all experienced major disruption, and we realise that continuous action is required to ensure a strong recovery in nurseries, schools and colleges.

The Department has also invested more than £400 million to provide laptops, tablets and internet access to ensure that children could be taught remotely when required.

Alongside this, we have supported the Oak National Academy, helping schools to provide high quality online lessons.

Ministers and officials have engaged extensively in recent months with a wide range of stakeholders on the approach to education recovery. The Department looks forward to continuing to engage with the sector and stakeholders on all aspects of the education recovery package, to ensure its effective implementation.

This Government has committed to an ambitious, long-term education recovery plan and the next stage will include a review of time spent in school and college and the impact this could have on helping children and young people to catch up. The findings of the review will be set out in the coming months to inform the Spending Review.

■ Department of Education: Protective Clothing

Philip Davies:

[38201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what his current policy is on the wearing of face coverings in his (a) Department, (b) departmental agencies and (c) related bodies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has followed, and continues to follow, the latest Government guidance in relation to managing the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace, including any variations between the four nations of the UK.

In England, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 'Working Safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)' guidance provides sensible precautions employers can take to manage risk and support their staff. The guidance is available via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/offices-factories-and-labs#offices-7-2>.

It is for individual employers to determine which mitigations are appropriate to adopt as they review their workplace risk assessments in light of the updated guidance. Face coverings, which are no longer required by law, are one possible mitigation employers could adopt if the situation warranted it.

The Department fully supports individuals who choose to wear a face covering in the workplace.

Other related bodies to the Department set their own policies on how their staff should work in offices and are not required to report this back centrally.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[41237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding covid-19 recovery policies for disabled children.

Vicky Ford:

We recognise that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's learning, health and wellbeing, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We are committed to supporting them and their families.

Since June 2020, we have announced more than £3 billion to support education recovery in schools, 16-19 providers and early years settings.

We have consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts to these settings in both the 2020 Catch-up Premium and the 2021 Recovery Premium. In mainstream settings, school leaders are able to target these initiatives to vulnerable children and are able to use the recovery premium to meet wider non-academic needs. Funding announced for school-led tutoring will also provide greater flexibility to schools and we anticipate that this will especially benefit children and young people with SEND in all settings, where tutors familiar to these children can support them to realise the benefits of tuition. Specialist settings were given an uplift to deliver summer schools, at three times the normal rate.

The government is committed to an ambitious, long-term education recovery plan. The next stage will include a review of time spent in school and 16-19 education and the impact this could have on children and young people's attainment and wellbeing. The findings of the review will be set out later in the year to inform the spending review. We will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on education and consider what more needs to be done to help children and young people, including those with disabilities, catch up.

■ Education: Coronavirus**Robert Halfon:**[\[37430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps will the Department take to ensure those students worst affected by absence in circumstances related to covid-19 receive targeted support in the next academic year to catch-up on any lost learning.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's £3 billion investment in education recovery includes over £900 million that schools can use to best support the children who have been most affected by COVID-19.

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the Department has acted swiftly to help minimise the effect on pupils' education, providing extensive support for schools. The UK was one of few countries to keep schools open for vulnerable children. The Department understands that the COVID-19 outbreak has caused challenges for children who may have disengaged from education. That is why we continue to work closely with local authorities and schools to help them reengage pupils, including providing best practice guidance.

The Government's recovery programmes, and targeted help through the provision of 1.35 million laptops and tablets and connectivity for over 110,000 families, have been

designed to allow nurseries, schools, and further education colleges the flexibility to support pupils most in need.

■ Free Schools: Sports

Philip Davies: [\[40787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 23 July 2021 to Question 33181 on Free Schools: Sports, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the sporting facilities at One in a Million Free School.

Nick Gibb:

One in a Million Free School currently has access to both indoor and outdoor facilities for sport, either within the school grounds or through off site arrangements. The Department has identified a site to provide additional sporting facilities for the school.

■ National School Breakfast Programme

Neil Coyle: [\[40926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the National School Breakfast Programme contract for provision up to July 2023 reaches children most at risk of hunger.

Vicky Ford:

The government is committed to continuing support for school breakfast clubs and we are investing up to £24 million to continue our national programme for the next two years. This funding will support around 2,500 schools in disadvantaged areas meaning that thousands of children from low-income families will be offered free nutritious breakfasts.

The focus of the programme is to target the most disadvantaged areas of the country, including the department's Opportunity Areas. Schools' eligibility for the programme is based on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) – a nationally recognised indicator of need – to ensure provision is directed where it is most needed. Schools will be eligible for the programme if they have 50% or more pupils within bands A-F of the IDACI scale.

When schools join the programme, they will sign a partnership agreement that requires them to identify and target those children that are most in need of support. Our provider, Family Action, will monitor attendance data at each participating school and will support those schools with their targeting where needed. This will ensure that the programme benefits those most in need of support.

■ Overseas Students: Coronavirus

Catherine West: [\[41105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether international students studying at UK universities in the 2021-22 academic year will be required to be double vaccinated with a covid-19 vaccine that is approved for use in the UK.

Michelle Donelan:

Although there is no requirement to be vaccinated in order to study at university in England, it is important that students engage with the vaccination programme to protect themselves and those around them and to break chains of transmission.

International students can be vaccinated in the UK free of charge. They should be encouraged to register with a GP and get an NHS number. They can also request to book COVID-19 vaccination appointments as unregistered patients through local GP practices.

International students must pay regard to and comply with border measures that have been introduced to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19, available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-quarantine-when-you-arrive-in-england>. They should refer to the latest information on country risk levels which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>.

NHS England has produced Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for students, which includes information about vaccinations that international students might have received before coming to England. The FAQ is available here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/publication/covid-19-vaccination-programme-faqs-on-second-doses/>.

■ Pre-school Education: Communication Skills**Saqib Bhatti:****[41356]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' report, Building back better: Speech and language therapy services after covid-19 report, published 16 March 2021, what steps he is taking to ensure that support for pre-school children's communication and language development is prioritised in education recovery plans.

Vicky Ford:

As part of the government's announcement on providing an additional £1.4 billion for education recovery, we announced a £153 million investment for high-quality professional development for early years practitioners. This includes new programmes focusing on key areas such as speech and language development, and physical and emotional development for the youngest children. This is in addition to £10 million for a pre-reception early language programme, and £17 million for the Nuffield Early Language Intervention, which improves the language skills of reception age children who need it most during the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have also been working in partnership with Public Health England and its partners (including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists), the local government association and the Early Intervention Foundation to support local area health and early years partnerships (which includes schools, nurseries, and speech and language therapists) to work in a more integrated way and improve information flow to identify speech, language and communication needs as early as possible.

■ Schools: Food**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[38333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of non-Halal and Kosher meat options in schools.

Vicky Ford:

The government sets out the required minimum standards for school food in the School Food Standards to ensure that children are served healthy, nutritious meals at school. The standards do not specify food requirements in terms of cultural and religious needs, including the type of meat used. The relevant regulations are available at:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1603/pdfs/uksi_20141603_en.pdf.

School governing boards are responsible for setting their school food policies as head teachers, governors and their caterers are best placed to make decisions about their school food policies. The government expects schools to act reasonably, providing choices that take account of cultural, religious, and special dietary needs, and to work with parents in making appropriate arrangements. Schools should consult with parents when making changes to school food provision and ensure parents have access to information on the food provided.

■ Schools: Industrial Health and Safety**Paula Barker:**[\[41384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what precautionary covid-19 related health and safety measures will be implemented in schools when the academic year begins in September 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Department's priority is for all schools to deliver face to face, high quality education to all children, pupils and students. The Department has worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England to revise the guidance for schools. 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. As pupils will potentially have mixed with many other people during the summer holidays, all secondary school pupils should receive 2 on-site lateral flow device tests, 3 to 5 days apart, on their return in the autumn term.

Schools should continue to conduct risk assessments and take appropriate action in line with the control measures. Schools should have contingency plans in place outlining the actions they would take if pupils and staff test positive for COVID-19, or how they would operate if they were advised to take extra measures to help break chains of transmission.

The evidence is clear that being out of education causes significant harm to educational attainment, life chances, and mental and physical health. In making

decisions, the Government has balanced education and health considerations, weighing the impact of these measures on teaching, wellbeing and the functioning of schools and nurseries, against the risks posed by COVID-19, in a context that has now fundamentally changed due to the success of the vaccination rollout.

■ Schools: Pay

Feryal Clark: [\[41365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to increase the pay of (a) non-teaching school staff, (b) non-teaching staff in other education settings and (c) employees of teacher supply agencies.

Nick Gibb:

The Department does not set pay for non-teaching staff in schools, further education colleges or teacher supply agencies. Employers have the flexibility to determine the most appropriate pay and conditions to suit their circumstances.

Most schools and further education colleges use the local government pay scales in conjunction with the National Joint Council terms and conditions, known as the Green Book. Employers are required to pay at least the statutory minimum wage, and the Department encourages employers to pay more when they can afford to do so.

■ Schools: Ventilation

Paula Barker: [\[41385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of improving ventilation in school buildings to help prevent the spread of covid-19.

Nick Gibb:

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) have advised the Government that ventilation should be integral to the COVID-19 risk mitigation strategy, and that this should include identification of how a space is ventilated, as well as guidance to ensure the ventilation is adequate.

On 21 August 2021, the Department announced that CO₂ monitors will be provided to all state-funded nurseries, schools and colleges from September. Backed by a £25 million Government investment, the new monitors will enable staff to act quickly where ventilation is poor and provide reassurance that existing ventilation measures are working. The programme will provide nurseries, schools and colleges with sufficient monitors to take representative readings from across the indoor spaces in their estate, assessing all spaces in a relatively short space of time. It is expected that monitors will confirm that in most cases, existing ventilation is sufficient.

The Department will also provide new guidance on how to better manage ventilation, including how using CO₂ monitors can help.

The majority of the 300,000 carbon dioxide monitors will become available over the autumn term, with special schools and alternative provision prioritised to receive their full allocation from September.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Reviews**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[37545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the SEND Review.

Vicky Ford:

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review has been making good progress, but the COVID-19 outbreak has materially altered the context for reform.

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

■ **St Andrew the Apostle School Barnet**

Theresa Villiers: [\[40731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much rent his Department is paying for the premises occupied by St Andrew the Apostle School in Barnet.

Theresa Villiers: [\[40732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will publish the contractual documents agreed with Comer Homes in respect of the construction of a new building for St Andrew the Apostle School in Barnet.

Theresa Villiers: [\[40733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to require Comer Homes to progress the delivery of the new building for St Andrew the Apostle School in Barnet.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is currently paying rent to the Comer Group of £901,250 per annum, excluding VAT, for the use of buildings and outside space as the temporary accommodation for St Andrew the Apostle School.

There is no contract between the Department and the Comer Group for the construction of the school's permanent building. The Comer Group is required by the local planning authority to provide a site for a school as part of planning approval for a residential development on their wider site.

The Comer Group has submitted a revised planning application for its proposed development which incorporates the Department's revised school designs. Subject to the approval of planning, the Department will exchange on the site and progress the construction of the school's new building.

■ Summer Schools: Coronavirus**Selaine Saxby:**[\[903333\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the 2021 summer schools programme.

Nick Gibb:

Understanding the effectiveness and success of the 2021 summer schools programme is important. We have designed a research study to help us to better understand the perceived impact of summer schools on children's wellbeing, transition to secondary school, and academic recovery. The fieldwork for this research is currently under way. We have commissioned an independent research agency to carry out the analysis and reporting of this important research. The results from this study will be published on gov.uk.

Over 2800 secondary schools signed up to participate, which is equivalent to three quarters (74%) of those eligible and over 500,000 pupils were invited to take part in courses designed to offer a mix of academic and enrichment activities to aid lost learning.

■ Universities: Coronavirus**Catherine West:**[\[41104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what additional financial support he is providing to universities to increase covid-19 testing capacity for the academic year 2021-22.

Michelle Donelan:

Asymptomatic Tests will continue to be provided free of charge by NHS Test and Trace to Higher Education Providers for testing on return and home testing until the end of September when this will be reviewed subject to the latest public health advice. Students should test twice on their arrival at an on-site testing facility or at home. Students should then continue to test twice a week until the end of September.

Higher Education providers have been supported with the recovery of costs for the set up and running of asymptomatic testing sites. Cost recovery for tests performed at test sites will continue until the end of September, when ongoing testing arrangements will be reviewed.

Home testing will be delivered through a collect model, meaning that students and staff are advised to collect their home testing kits from a location on campus, which could be an existing asymptomatic testing site or any other site considered suitable. Please note there is no cost recovery for the set up and running of LFD collect sites, which are not otherwise testing sites.

■ University of Cambridge and University of Oxford: Admissions

Alexander Stafford: [\[38478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department holds information on the number of students studying at each college at (a) Oxford and (b) Cambridge University by constituency.

Michelle Donelan:

The department does not hold the information requested for the individual colleges of Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Air Pollution: Rother Valley**

Alexander Stafford: [\[38486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the air quality statistics are for Rother Valley constituency in each year since 2010.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN) provides measurements of air pollutant concentrations throughout the UK for a range of pollutants. Currently, there are 171 monitoring sites across the UK which provide data to measure compliance with the Air Quality Standards Regulations (2010).

There are no AURN monitoring sites in the Rother Valley constituency. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council does carry out local air quality monitoring as part of the Local Air Quality Management process and produces annual reports on the status of air quality within the Borough area.

These can be accessed through the following URL:

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/download/229/2019-air-quality-report>

■ Amazon: Dunfermline

Julian Sturdy: [\[40890\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will take steps to restrict the destruction and disposal of unsold stock at Amazon's Dunfermline warehouse.

Rebecca Pow:

Businesses that handle waste, including companies like Amazon, are obliged to follow the waste hierarchy which requires action to prevent waste as the priority option. Failure to meet the legal obligation to take all reasonable steps to apply this can lead to enforcement action. Waste is a devolved matter, and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), the regulator in Scotland, is in contact with Amazon about the stock destruction allegations in Scotland. The Environment Agency, as the responsible enforcement body in England, is working with SEPA on

this, and has also written to Amazon about compliance with the waste hierarchy obligations in England.

■ **Chemicals: Regulation**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[38251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the timetable is for publishing guidance on the UK's REACH chemical regulations.

Rebecca Pow:

On 1 January 2021 Defra and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published a detailed set of guidance on the gov.uk and HSE websites to give business the information it needs to carry out its new responsibilities under UK REACH.

Defra and HSE continue to regularly update the gov.uk and HSE websites with relevant content. This includes guidance related to updates to the Comply with UK REACH IT service.

■ **Nappies**

Chris Elmore: [\[37554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent progress he has made on his assessment of the life cycle of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products.

Rebecca Pow:

Work on the environmental assessment of disposable and washable absorbent hygiene products is still in progress. It has taken longer than originally anticipated to enable relevant data to be collected. We intend to publish the final peer reviewed report later this year.

■ **Rodents: Gough Island**

Richard Fuller: [\[40818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 30 July 2019 to Question 280227 on Rodents: Gough Island, what (a) recent steps have been taken since 2019 and (b) are planned as part of the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund to eradicate non-native mice to protect the Tristan albatross on that island.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK Government has continued to provide support to RSPB for its programme to eradicate invasive non-native mice from Gough Island, to help save critically endangered seabirds such as the Tristan Albatross from extinction.

I am pleased to report that the RSPB has completed the eradication stage of the programme and will be continuing to monitor its impact.

■ Trapping

Helen Hayes:

[\[41064\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to prevent birds and small mammals from being caught in glue traps.

Rebecca Pow:

In our [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#), published in May this year, we announced that we would look to restrict the use of glue traps as a means of pest control.

Accordingly, we are supporting the hon. Member for Wolverhampton North East's Glue Traps (Offences) Private Members Bill, which proposes to ban the use of glue traps for catching rodents. The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 16 June, and we will work closely with her over the coming months as the Bill progresses through Parliament.

Anyone using glue traps already has a responsibility under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to act within the law to ensure their activities do not cause any unnecessary suffering. The industry's code of best practice (<https://www.pmalliance.org.uk/codes-of-best-practice/>), produced after consultation with Defra, the Animal and Plant Health Agency and Natural England, provides clear principles for the legal use of glue traps, including measures to protect non-target animals.

■ Walley's Quarry Landfill

Ruth Jones:

[\[41266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he discussed Walley's Quarry, in Newcastle Under Lyme, at his last meeting with the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

Walley's Quarry was discussed during the most recent meeting between the Secretary of State and the Environment Agency (EA) Chief Executive and Chair. The EA and central Government are committed to finding a long-term solution to the issue of odour at the site as quickly as possible to protect the health and wellbeing of local communities and are working together to deliver this.

■ Water Supply: Carbon Emissions and Environment Protection

Liz Twist:

[\[38382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to reconcile (a) low average bills, (b) the need to support vulnerable customers and (c) other short-term deliverables in the water industry with long-term investment needs to deliver on net-zero commitments and environmental objectives.

Rebecca Pow:

(a) Ofwat, the independent economic regulator, is responsible for ensuring that water companies charge fair prices and deliver quality services, through a process called the Price Review.

(b) All water companies offer reduced bills for eligible customers via the WaterSure scheme and social tariffs. Water companies also offer a range of other financial support measures such as payment holidays, bill matching and advice on debt management and water efficiency. Last October, Defra commissioned the Consumer Council for Water (CCW) to review the effectiveness of existing support schemes in water to ensure they are fit for purpose now and in the future. Defra is working with CCW and industry to explore CCW's recommendations (see [Independent Affordability Review | CCW \(ccwater.org.uk\)](#)) further.

(c) As part of Ofwat's 2019 Price Review process, water companies have set out their investment needs and associated costs up to 2024/2025. The Government has set its future expectations for Ofwat in a new strategic policy statement ([The government's strategic priorities for Ofwat: draft for consultation \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)) which sets out the significant Government ambitions on the environment and climate change, and how the water industry should contribute to that work.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Aid Workers****Yasmin Qureshi:****[40824]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to ensure the protection of female humanitarian workers in Afghanistan.

Nigel Adams:

Alongside international partners, we have continuously emphasised the need for adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law, and have called upon the Taliban to allow safe and unimpeded access to those delivering humanitarian aid, including female aid workers. The UN are seeking commitments from the Taliban to enable humanitarian work to continue; these must include guarantees for female aid workers.

■ Afghanistan: Armed Forces**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:****[41151]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July to Question 34013, what assessment he has made of whether the objective of developing the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces has been achieved; and what level of financial assistance the UK and its allies are providing to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces.

Nigel Adams:

We are proud of the work British and allied forces have done in the last two decades. Our armed forces, alongside our diplomatic and development staff, and those of our allies, enabled 3.6 million girls to go to school we have been protected from Al Qaeda in Afghanistan throughout the time of our engagement there.

All aid to the Afghan Government has now been paused. There has been no direct financial assistance to the Afghan security forces this year. When funding was provided, this was facilitated through a NATO multi-donor process.

■ Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad**Sarah Owen:**[\[41310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that British nationals in Afghanistan are able to return home safely; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: We have already evacuated the overwhelming majority of those to whom we have a direct obligation in an unprecedented effort from our military and Civil Servants. Over 15,000 people, including more than 8,000 British Nationals and their dependants, left Afghanistan between 15 August and 29 August thanks to UK support.

The UK Government is working hard to contact all the British nationals we are aware of who remain in Afghanistan, to help them leave the country.

The Foreign Secretary and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon visited countries in the region between 1-3 September for discussions on securing safe passage for those fleeing Afghanistan and advancing the government's international priorities.

In addition, FCDO Rapid Deployment Teams have been sent to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to reinforce our Embassy staff to process arrivals from Afghanistan.

■ Afghanistan: Embassies**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[40822\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Afghan staff who have worked, or currently work, at the British Embassy are in Afghanistan as of 18 August 2021; and what steps the Government is taking to evacuate those staff as soon as possible.

Neil Coyle:[\[40915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Afghan nationals have worked for or with UK diplomatic staff posted in Afghanistan since 2001.

Nigel Adams:

We worked tirelessly during Operation Pitting to evacuate safely the overwhelming majority of UK nationals and locally employed Afghan staff. We are now looking at all possible avenues to ensure that any British nationals and local staff remaining in Afghanistan, as well as at-risk individuals who have already been offered a visa to the UK, are able to leave safely if they wish to.

■ Afghanistan: Home Country Nationals**Neil Coyle:**[\[40916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that staff and volunteers working for or with UK NGOs in Afghanistan will be supported to leave Afghanistan and enter the UK.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: In addition to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the existing Ex Gratia Scheme (EGS), which offer resettlement for Afghan staff who have assisted the UK government, and their families, we are also setting up the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This scheme will welcome up to 5,000 vulnerable Afghans over the next year and up to a total of 20,000 over four years. We will work with the UN to facilitate that process and set out more details in due course.

■ Afghanistan: Humanitarian Aid**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[40825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 18 August 2021 on humanitarian funding to support the Afghan people, if he will publish a breakdown of where that money (a) has been allocated and (b) will be allocated.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has provided over £3.3 billion of aid since 2001, improving health systems, promoting private sector-led growth, increasing rural incomes, providing educational opportunities and tackling corruption work, as well as providing humanitarian assistance. Life expectancy increased from 56 years in 2002 to 65 in 2020.

We have committed to doubling our humanitarian and development aid to Afghanistan and the region to a total of £286 million this year. We will use our aid to support the UK's immediate objectives including progress on Counter Terrorism assurance, preventing instability spilling over to the region, supporting human rights and meeting humanitarian needs.

■ Afghanistan: International Assistance**Sarah Owen:**[\[41309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his international counterparts on diplomatic steps to

help ensure that (a) charity, (b) NGO and (c) humanitarian work can continue in Afghanistan following the Taliban offensive in August 2021.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: One of the UK's immediate priorities is to work with international partners to ensure that life-saving humanitarian aid can reach those who need it most. The UN is seeking commitments from the Taliban to enable humanitarian work to continue. These must include respect for humanitarian principles, humanitarian access, international humanitarian law and guarantees for female aid workers.

The UK led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution, demonstrating our commitment to holding the Taliban to account on human rights, humanitarian access, safe passage and preventing terror.

■ **Afghanistan: Politics and Government**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[41153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2021 to Question 34562, how the UK has supported Afghanistan in achieving a stable and democratic future following the withdrawal of NATO troops manifest since 26 July 2021, and what support the Government plans to provide to Afghanistan in the coming months.

Nigel Adams:

On 18 August we doubled our planned aid spend in Afghanistan this year to £286 million, one of our largest bilateral programmes. On 3 September we announced £30m of aid to Afghanistan's neighbouring countries to help those who choose to leave Afghanistan, as part of the Government's efforts to support regional stability. £10 million will be made available immediately to humanitarian partners, such as the UNHCR, to enable essential supplies such as shelters to be despatched to Afghanistan's borders as well as setting up sanitation and hygiene facilities. The Prime Minister convened a meeting of G7 leaders on 24 August to ensure that the international community is working together to ensure a stable future for Afghanistan. The UK led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution, demonstrating our commitment to holding the Taliban to account on human rights, humanitarian access, safe passage and preventing terror.

■ **Afghanistan: Refugees**

Fleur Anderson:

[\[41333\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to work with countries neighbouring Afghanistan on keeping their borders open and resettling refugees that flee by land.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The Foreign Secretary visited Qatar and Pakistan from 1-3 September and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon visited Uzbekistan and

Tajikistan from 1-3 September. The Foreign Secretary has also had telephone conversations with the Uzbek Foreign Minister on 6 September, the Tajik Foreign Minister, on 2 September, and with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on 27 and 25 August. Lord Ahmad has additionally called the Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, on 3 September, the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan on 25 August and Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan on the same day. They held discussions with counterparts on securing safe passage for those fleeing Afghanistan and advancing the government's international priorities. In addition, FCDO Rapid Deployment Teams have been sent to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to reinforce our Embassy staff to process arrivals from Afghanistan.

■ Afghanistan: Religious Freedom

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[40795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the rights of (a) Shia Muslims, (b) Sikhs, (c) Hindus, (d) Christians, (e) Sufi Muslims, (f) Bahá'ís, (g) Jews, (h) other religious minorities and (i) non-religious people and are protected in Afghanistan following the recent military victory of Taliban forces.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: We are clear on the need for a political settlement which will provide for an inclusive government and the peace and stability Afghanistan needs. Minister for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, addressed the UN Human Rights Council on 24 August to underscore the UK's commitment to protecting the human rights of all Afghan people, including all ethnic and religious communities, and holding the Taliban to account.

The UK led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution, demonstrating our commitment to holding the Taliban to account on human rights.

■ Afghanistan: Taliban

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[40563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take (a) in response to the recent letter sent to him by the CEO of Adam Smith International on the risk to Afghan civilians, employed to administer UK-funded programmes between 2002 and 2018, who were (i) staff members of contractors and (ii) not directly employed by the UK Government and (b) to honour all offers previously made to Afghan students of Chevening Scholarships for the academic year 2021-22.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: In addition to schemes offering resettlement for Afghan staff who have assisted the UK government, and their families, we are also setting up the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This scheme will provide protection for Afghan citizens identified as most at risk. The Government has

committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and 20,000 over the coming years.

All offers made to Afghan Chevening scholars for 2021-22 are valid. We successfully evacuated the majority of Afghan Chevening scholars in this year's cohort and will continue to do all we can to support the small number who remain in Afghanistan. We are clear that the Taliban must ensure safe passage for these people out of Afghanistan and any engagement with them will emphasise this first and foremost.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[40564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he plans to take to ensure the safety in Afghanistan of the staff of (a) BBC World Service, (b) other free media and (c) charities with links with the UK, including the Nowzad animal rescue organisation; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Adams:

Between 15 and 29 August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. That includes: over 8,000 British Nationals, close to 5,000 Afghans who loyally served the UK, along with their dependents, and around 500 special cases of particularly vulnerable Afghans, including Chevening scholars, journalists, human rights defenders, campaigners for women's rights, judges and many others. All these figures include dependants.

We are now looking at all possible avenues to ensure that any British nationals and local staff remaining in Afghanistan, as well as at-risk individuals who have already been offered a visa to the UK, are able to leave safely if they wish to. We have been clear that the Taliban must allow safe passage for those who want to leave

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[41152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 July 2021 to Question 34562, what the evidential basis was for the conclusion that there is no military route for the Taliban to achieve their goals; whether that remains the Government's position; and what assessment the Government has made of the Taliban's goals.

Nigel Adams:

It is clear that the Taliban now control much of Afghanistan. We must be pragmatic and realistic and acknowledge that there is a need for engagement to deliver UK interests and support the Afghan people. The principle guiding this must be to judge the Taliban by their actions. They need to implement the commitments they have made, including providing safe passage out of Afghanistan. And we are seeking to be a key moderating influence on their approach.

Any future Afghan government must adhere to Afghanistan's international obligations and commitment to protect against terrorism; safeguard the human rights of all Afghans, particularly women, children, and ethnic and religious minorities; uphold the rule of law; allow unhindered and unconditional humanitarian access; and counter human and drug trafficking effectively

■ Afghanistan: Terrorism**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[41150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 22 July 2021 to Question 34013, what assessment he has made of the potential risk of international terrorists using Afghanistan as a base.

Nigel Adams:

The UK continues to monitor closely the terrorist threat from Afghanistan, including from Al Qaeda and ISKP, and has proscribed both of these organisations and their associated groups. We will work with our international partners to stop Afghanistan from again becoming a haven and inspiration for terrorism and thereby reduce the terrorist risk to the UK and the international community.

■ Afghanistan: Women's Rights**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[40794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the rights of women and girls are protected in Afghanistan following the recent military victory of Taliban forces.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[40821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the political and security situation in Afghanistan on the safety of women and girls in that country.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: We are committed to prioritising women and girls in the UK's response to the situation in Afghanistan. We will use every humanitarian and diplomatic lever to safeguard human rights and the gains made over the last two decades. The UK led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution, demonstrating our commitment to holding the Taliban to account on human rights, humanitarian access, safe passage and preventing terror. Minister for Human Rights Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon addressed the UN Human Rights Council on 24 August to underscore the UK's commitment to protecting the human rights of all Afghan people, including women and girls, and holding the Taliban to account.

■ Ethiopia: Overseas Aid**Stephen Doughty:**[\[37479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much Official Development Assistance was allocated to Ethiopia in (a) each of the last three financial years and (b) in the current financial year to date; and what proportion of that funding went to the Tigray region for those years.

James Duddridge:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The figures for Official Development Assistance allocated to Ethiopia for 2019/20 and 2018/19 can be found in the respective Annual

Report and Accounts covering those years. Figures for Official Development Assistance spend in Ethiopia for 2020/21 will be announced in this year's Annual Report and Accounts. Since November 2020, £42.7million has been allocated to the humanitarian response in Tigray to support those in need, working through other implementing partners. UK-funded partners such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN Children's Fund, World Food Programme and International Committee of the Red Cross are providing food, shelter, water and healthcare in challenging circumstances. A further £5 million has been allocated to support refugees from the conflict in Sudan.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[41119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has an up-to-date organogram of his Department; and if he will publish the most recent organogram of his Department.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office publishes its organograms on gov.uk. The latest published versions were released on 21 July 2021 at <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/73e0260a-0516-44ff-b4eb-ba9fec420c45/fcdo-organograms>

■ Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[41121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many eligible applications his Department received for the Community Partnership Fund across all funding rounds; and of those how many were awarded grants.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: Information on the Community Partnership Fund managed through UK Aid Direct can be found on the Fund Manager's website www.ukaiddirect.org/about/where-we-work/?gt=Small%20Charities%20Challenge%20Fund

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[41122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many eligible applications his Department received for the Impact Fund across all funding rounds; of those how many were awarded grants; and how many were instructed to close projects with 90 days' notice in 2021.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: Information on the Impact Fund managed through UK Aid Direct can be found on the Fund Manager's website: <https://www.ukaiddirect.org/about/where-we-work/?gt=Small%20Charities%20Challenge%20Fund>

■ Religious Freedom: International Assistance

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[40758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that international aid is not withheld from (a) Christians and (b) other religious groups.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[40759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy and effectiveness of the distribution of aid to persecuted Christians.

Nigel Adams:

The UK remains deeply concerned about the severity and scale of violations and abuses of freedom of religion or belief, (FoRB) in many parts of the world. We remain committed to the global effort to support the most vulnerable members of society, irrespective of race, religion and ethnicity.

Based on OECD data for 2020, the UK will be the third largest donor within the G7 as a percentage of GNI. We will spend more than £10 billion in aid this year. Posts across the FCDO network regularly report on the local human rights situation, including in relation to the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief.

■ Small Charities Challenge Fund

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[41120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many eligible applications his Department received for the Small Charities Challenge Fund across all funding rounds; and of those how many were awarded grants.

Nigel Adams:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: Information on the Small Charities Challenge Fund can be found on the Fund Manager's website:

www.ukaiddirect.org/about/where-we-work/?gt=Small%20Charities%20Challenge%20Fund

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Zarah Sultana: [\[41318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a comprehensive evidence-based alcohol strategy to reduce the harm caused by alcohol.

Jo Churchill:

There are no plans for a standalone alcohol strategy as the Government has committed to publish a new United Kingdom-wide cross-government addiction strategy which will consider a range of issues, including drugs, alcohol and problem gambling.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Julian Sturdy:**[\[40885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what ongoing assessment his Department is making of the needs of people with serious underlying health conditions who may feel afraid to leave their homes since the move to stage 4 of the coronavirus roadmap from 19 July 2021.

Jo Churchill:

There is no ongoing assessment to investigate the needs of people with serious underlying health conditions who may feel afraid to leave their homes since the move to Step four.

Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals, many who have serious underlying health conditions, are currently advised to follow the guidance that is in place for the general population.

Helen Hayes:[\[41059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department taking to increase resources for public health interventions to tackle co-morbidities associated with serious cases of covid-19.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The Office for Health Promotion (OHP) has been established to ensure that collaborative and sustained action on prevention. The OHP will systematically tackle the top preventable risk factors, improving the public's health and narrowing health inequalities, including the co-morbidities that we know are associated with serious cases of Covid-19.

■ Coronavirus: Immunotherapy**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[37533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the status is of the Government order for the AstraZeneca synthetic monoclonal antibody treatment which could be used as a prophylactic treatment against covid-19 for patients whose immune systems do not respond to covid-19 vaccines.

Jo Churchill:

We are unable to provide the information requested on the AstraZeneca synthetic monoclonal antibody treatment as it is commercially sensitive.

The Therapeutics Taskforce and the cross-agency United Kingdom-wide group RAPID C-19 are monitoring clinical trials of monoclonal antibodies. We are in contact

with a number of manufacturers and encourage others to come forward, to ensure that United Kingdom patients have access to COVID-19 therapeutics as evidence continues to emerge. The final decisions on any procurement for therapeutics will be dependent on there being evidence to support safety and efficacy, and on value for money and the licensing approval.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Zarah Sultana: [\[41317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he made of the potential merits of reintroducing mandatory face masks in public spaces following the incidence of covid-19 cases in July 2021.

Paula Barker: [\[41374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to review the guidance on wearing face coverings (a) in shops, (b) on transport and (c) in other public settings ahead of colder months in autumn and winter 2021.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The Government continues to assess the evidence and keeps the guidance on wearing face coverings under review. We will take further action if needed.

■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine**

Julian Sturdy: [\[40872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department undertook an assessment of the potential merits for economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak of bringing forward the lifting of the self-isolation requirement for people who have been double-vaccinated against covid-19 from 16 August 2021.

Jo Churchill:

The majority of restrictions were lifted prior to 16 August 2021, waiting until this date to lift the self-isolation requirement on fully vaccinated contacts of positive cases has enabled more people to become fully vaccinated which significantly reduces the risk of severe illness and onward transmission and provided greater protection for people across the country.

Damien Moore: [\[41203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether workers in the life safety systems industry will be exempt from self-isolation if identified as a close contact of a covid-19 positive case.

Jo Churchill:

From 16 August 2021, those who are fully vaccinated, participants of approved vaccine trials, individuals under 18 years and 6 months of age, and those unable to have the vaccine for medical reasons, are not required to self-isolate if they are a contact of a positive case. Such individuals will instead be advised to take a

polymerase chain reaction test or given age-related public health advice (in the case of young children).

Individuals who do not fall within the categories above will be legally required to self-isolate if they are the contact of a positive case.

Damien Moore:

[\[41206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether people granted an exemption under the covid-19 self-isolation rules will be able to continue to isolate if they want to.

Jo Churchill:

From 16 August 2021, those who are fully vaccinated, participants of approved vaccine trials, individuals under 18 years and 6 months of age, and those unable to have the vaccine for medical reasons, are not required to self-isolate if they are a contact of a positive case. Such individuals will instead be advised to take a PCR test or given age-related public health advice (in the case of young children). However, should an individual wish to self-isolate, they can do so.

■ **Coronavirus: Quarantine and Screening**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[40889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential impact on young adults of covid-19 testing and isolation requirements during stage 4 of the covid-19 roadmap from 19 July 2021; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on young adults of back-to-back self-isolation periods.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment has been made regarding the specific impacts in question. However, assessments of the broader impact of the self-isolation requirements have been made for all age groups, including young adults. We recognise that young adults' educational, social, and by extension health outcomes are highly impacted by self-isolation.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[40730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he taking to help ensure that people who are advised not to have the covid-19 vaccination for clinical reasons are not disadvantaged by the Government's proposals for use of covid-19 certificates.

Janet Daby:

[\[41252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for people who have (a) multiple sclerosis and (b) other disabilities preventing them from receiving the covid-19 vaccine of the use of vaccine passports which may be mandatory for some activities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Any venue that adopts COVID-19 status checks as a condition of entry must comply with the relevant legal obligations such as the Equalities Act 2010 when deciding whether or not to accept medical exemptions.

Senior clinicians are currently drafting clinical guidance which will include and apply to conditions such as multiple sclerosis and other disabilities.

We will set out our plans shortly for a clinical review of medical exemptions which will enable individuals to show their COVID-19 status using the NHS COVID Pass.

Luke Pollard:[\[41241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether there is a material difference in terms of (a) medical and (b) public health effect between covid-19 vaccines administered overseas and those administered domestically by the NHS.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Comparisons between vaccines administered across the world are complex due to differences in vaccine trials and monitoring. When a vaccine receives a marketing authorisation or conditional marketing authorisation from a medicines regulator, certain factors or conditions are specified by the national regulator in order to ensure the product is of the highest quality, safety and efficacy for authorisation.

We are currently considering which regulators and associated vaccines we would be confident to recognise in the United Kingdom.

■ Employment: Coronavirus**Julian Sturdy:**[\[40882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to put in place targeted support for clinically extremely vulnerable people who have been unable to work since the move on 19 July 2021 to stage 4 of the Government's covid-19 roadmap.

Jo Churchill:

Guidance for clinically extremely vulnerable individuals was published on 12 July 2021 and outlines the support that people can access. There are currently no further plans for support specifically aimed at clinically extremely vulnerable people.

Employers continue to have a legal responsibility to protect their employees and others from risks to their health and safety and be able to explain to their employees the measures they have in place to keep them safe at work. Employers may request employees to undertake regular testing for COVID-19 to identify people who are asymptomatic.

■ Infant Mortality

Julian Sturdy: [\[40892\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to help ensure that hospitals are updating their (a) practices and (b) procedures on an ongoing basis and in line with the latest evidence to reduce baby loss.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

National Health Service (NHS) trusts in England providing maternity services have partnered with service users and commissioners to form local maternity systems (LMS), aligned to integrated care partnerships.

LMS' share information and learning in a structured and systematic way, working with partners to turn learning into service improvement; co-designing and implementing a vision for local maternity and neonatal services with local women through Maternity Voices Partnerships; and implementing shared solutions wherever possible through shared clinical and operational governance.

The Government expects all NHS trusts to operate in line with the latest evidence and guidelines on all aspects of maternity care and baby loss.

■ NHS: Emergencies

Rachael Maskell: [\[37509\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many local authorities are in Operational Pressures Escalation Levels (a) 3 (b) 4.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold this information centrally.

■ Nurses: Rother Valley

Alexander Stafford: [\[38484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many nurses there were in Rother Valley constituency in each year since 2010.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not hold the data in the format requested.

■ Ophthalmic Services

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[41070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of updating his Department's guidance to enable NHS optometrists and opticians to make direct referrals to eye hospitals in all areas of England.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[41071\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to chapter 5 of NHS England and Nesta's document entitled Transforming elective care services: ophthalmology, published in January 2019, what assessment he has made of the

potential impact of direct referrals from optometrists on reducing NHS (a) waiting times and (b) costs.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: Legislation presently allows optometrists to directly refer patients into secondary care services.

No assessment has been made of direct referrals on waiting times or costs.

■ **Patients: Compensation**

Cat Smith:

[\[40971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department had with Her Majesty's Treasury, prior to the publication of the Government response to the Report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review on 26 July 2021, on setting up a redress scheme to meet the cost of providing additional care and support to people who have experienced avoidable harm as a result of (a) hormone pregnancy tests, (b) sodium valproate and (c) pelvic mesh.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The Department engaged with HM Treasury on redress prior to cross-Government approval of the response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

■ **Prescription Drugs**

Janet Daby:

[\[41250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making it Government policy to permit pharmacies to re-allocate unopened pharmaceuticals to other patients to help tackle wastage.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not promote the reuse of medicines returned from patients once it has left a pharmacy. It is not possible for pharmacists to assure the quality of returned medicines on physical inspection alone. They cannot guarantee that the medicines have been stored or handled appropriately and this can impact on patient safety.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

John McNally:

[\[40957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether foreign dignitaries are able to travel to the UK without proof of receipt of a UK-approved covid-19 vaccine.

Jo Churchill:

Exemptions from mandatory testing may apply in limited circumstances to representatives of a foreign country or territory and representatives of the Government of a British overseas territory, travelling to the United Kingdom (UK) to

conduct official business with the UK. But For public health reasons they are strongly encouraged to take tests on days two and eight after arrival.

Foreign dignitaries may also be eligible for exemption from quarantine if they are amber arrivals and can show proof of being fully vaccinated under any of the following:

1. the UK vaccination programme
2. the UK vaccine programme overseas
3. an approved vaccination programme in Europe or the USA

Those without proof of vaccination will need to take a COVID-19 test on day two and day eight after arrival in England unless they are issued with an exemption by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Holly Lynch:

[41025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that people who have received two covid-19 vaccinations, including Oxford AstraZeneca batch numbers (a) 4120Z001, (b) 4120Z002 and (c) 4120Z003, are able to travel to EU countries.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The European Union has recently published a list of vaccines it sees as equivalent to those authorised by the European Medicines Agency, for travel purposes which is at the following link:

<https://reopen.europa.eu/en>

The list includes all vaccines administered in the United Kingdom, including all batches of AstraZeneca vaccine administered in the UK known commercially as Vaxzevria. This also includes batches 4120Z001, 4120Z002 and 4120Z003.

Decisions on which vaccines EU Member States will accept at their borders is for those countries to decide. We are not aware that any have decided not to accept UK vaccines.

Saqib Bhatti:

[41357]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with its counterpart in Italy in respect of British tourists' entry to Italy whose covid-19 vaccine was manufactured at Serum Institute in India.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Serum Institute of India (SII) manufactures both Vaxzevria and Covishield vaccines and both branded vaccines are exactly the same COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine. All SII-made doses approved by the United Kingdom (UK) regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and administered in the UK were branded as the 'COVID-19 vaccine AstraZeneca' which is now known commercially as 'Vaxzevria'.

The government continues to liaise with counterparts in Italy and we are seeking Italian confirmation that they will recognise all AstraZeneca doses administered in the UK. We will ensure that Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Travel Advice is kept up to date following any developments.

■ **Travel: Quarantine**

Caroline Lucas: [\[40828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to ensure that people with health exemptions are able to self-isolate in their homes on return from red-list countries.

Jo Churchill:

In some extremely limited circumstances due to pre-existing severe medical conditions or vulnerabilities, an individual travelling from a red-list country may be incapable of entering a managed quarantine facility because they are unable to be supported there. These individuals may be granted an exemption from managed quarantine and be permitted to quarantine in their own accommodation.

Medical and welfare support is available to all in managed quarantine and emergency healthcare is available. The Department does not expect all individuals with a pre-existing medical condition to request or receive an exemption from entering a managed quarantine facility.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[41100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of relaxing covid-19 quarantine measures for fully vaccinated passengers arriving to the UK from a country on the travel red list.

Jo Churchill:

For countries on the red list, COVID-19 prevalence is assessed to be high and there is evidence to suggest community transmission of variants of concern. This is the case irrespective of vaccination status. The Government keeps this policy under review and will announce any changes when and where these are deemed appropriate.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[41101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to incoming international students who are required to undertake a period of covid-19 hotel quarantine upon entry to the UK.

Jo Churchill:

International students facing significant financial hardship as a result of the requirement to quarantine in a managed quarantine facility can apply for hardship arrangements, including deferred payment plans. In exceptional circumstances reductions and waivers may be granted.

We will continue to keep our hardship policy under review.

Luke Pollard:

[\[41240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason Government policy makes a distinction between covid-19 vaccines received in the UK and those received overseas when deciding whether a traveller returning from an amber list country needs to quarantine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is currently undertaking extensive work to consider which regulators and associated vaccines we would recognise. It is important to consider which regulators have similar stringent standards of authorisation as the Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, which has some of the highest standards of quality, safety and efficacy in the world. This will then feed into discussions regarding quarantine from amber-listed countries.

■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Adam Afriyie:

[\[40813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date the Western Europe Regional meeting is taking place ahead of the 9th Conference of the Parties to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; if he will publish the agenda for that meeting ahead of that meeting; and what steps he plans to take to advocate for an evidence-based approach on harm reduction alternatives to tobacco at that meeting.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not been made aware of any proposals to hold a Western European Regional meeting.

HOME OFFICE

■ Visas: Hong Kong

Steve Reed:

[\[36653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people from Hong Kong have (a) applied for and (b) been granted a Hong Kong British National (Overseas) visa.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The Home Office publishes data on visas and the British National Overseas (BN(O)) route in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

The data relates to the first and second quarter of 2021, January to June, and are derived from management information. These data sets are rounded to the nearest hundred. Data for Q3 2021 will be published on 25 November 2021.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Animals: Exports**

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[40832\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her Department's policy is on live animal exports in respect of future trade deals.

Greg Hands:

Maintaining high environmental, animal welfare and food standards is a red line in the Government's Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations. FTAs do not create new permissions for imports from partner countries. Imports will continue to meet the same UK food safety and biosecurity import standards as they did before.

As part of the UK's Action Plan for Animal Welfare, the Government has introduced the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill to Parliament, which includes measures to ban live animal exports for slaughter and fattening. The Bill will make the UK the first European country to ban this practice.

■ Biofuels: Import Duties

Emily Thornberry: [\[40769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she personally approved the adjustment in the proposed UK tariffs on bioethanol to be applied if the UK had left the EU without a deal, announced by her Department on 8 October 2019.

Greg Hands:

The Government noted that the refinery industry would be impacted by liberalisation in the event that the UK left the EU without a withdrawal agreement. The Government therefore retained tariffs on products from refineries in contingency planning for a No Deal exit.

As the Government secured the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU in advance of 31 January 2020, the contingency planning was for an outcome that is no longer relevant.

■ British Sugar

Emily Thornberry: [\[40770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with British Sugar PLC on the tariff treatment of bioethanol since the start of 2019.

Greg Hands:

The Secretary of State has not had any discussions with British Sugar PLC on the tariff treatment of bioethanol since her appointment in July 2019.

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Emily Thornberry: [\[38163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the World Trade Organisation Committee on Regional Trade Agreements paper Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (Goods and Services), dated 16 June 2021, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the signatories' response to the question posed at section 1.31, chapter 19, page 9.

Emily Thornberry: [\[38164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the World Trade Organisation Committee on Regional Trade Agreements paper Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (Goods and Services), dated 16 June 2021, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the signatories' response to the question posed at section 1.7, page 3.

Emily Thornberry: [\[38165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the World Trade Organisation Committee on Regional Trade Agreements paper Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (Goods and Services), dated 16 June 2021, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the signatories' response to the questions posed at article 14.11 and article 14.13, page 7.

Emily Thornberry: [\[38166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the World Trade Organisation Committee on Regional Trade Agreements paper Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) (Goods and Services), dated 16 June 2021, what assessment she has made of the potential implications for her policies of the signatories' response to the question posed at section 1.72, page 23.

Greg Hands:

On June 22nd, the Government published the outline approach, scoping assessment, and consultation response, in advance of beginning formal negotiations with Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) countries. CPTPP has high environmental, labour and other standards. Its rules commit members to, for example, have a minimum wage, allow the freedom of association, protect the marine environment and, crucially, to enforcing their own laws in such areas. CPTPP also affirms members' rights to regulate in their national self-interest, rather than forcing harmonisation on its members.

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Malaysia

Emily Thornberry: [\[38167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of Malaysia's compliance with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership Articles 19.3 and 19.4.

Greg Hands:

The UK and Malaysia have a strong trading and investment relationship. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) will support shared ambitions to remove barriers to trade and create new opportunities for business and investors. CPTPP has high environmental, labour and other standards. Its rules commit members to, for example, having a minimum wage and allowing freedom of association. The agreement includes a comprehensive labour chapter that intends to ensure parties protect and enforce labour rights, improve working conditions, and strengthen cooperation on labour issues.

■ Department for International Trade: Protective Clothing

Philip Davies: [\[38203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what her current policy is on the wearing of face coverings in her (a) Department, (b) departmental agencies and (c) related bodies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Greg Hands:

The Department remains aligned to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance so does not currently mandate the wearing of face coverings in any of its UK offices. Those working for the Department are expected to follow guidance on face coverings in operation in the geographical area they are working while on official business.

The Department continues to prioritise other control measures such as minimising contact, ventilation, and screens over face coverings on its UK estate. The Department works with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to agree working practices overseas in line with local guidance.

■ Environment Protection: Import Duties

Emily Thornberry: [\[40762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which product categories under the UK Global Tariff, presented with their commodity codes, the Government has assessed to be barriers to the liberalisation of environmental goods.

Greg Hands:

In setting tariff rates under the UK Global Tariff (UKGT), consideration is given to factors prescribed in the Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Act 2018. This includes the interests of producers and consumers as well as any impacts on competition,

productivity, and external trade. As part of the UKGT, the UK has liberalised a list of 104 environmental goods to promote the deployment of renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, carbon capture, and the circular economy through recycling and reducing single use plastics.

■ Trade Agreements

Sarah Olney: [\[38370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department has a policy on the level of violence within a country that would result in the UK Government not (a) entering or (b) continuing negotiations on a potential trade deal.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

More trade need not come at the expense of our values. We will continue to take a balanced and proportionate approach with international trading partners.

Alexander Stafford: [\[38481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2021 to Question 14104, what progress she has made on placing environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards at the heart of UK international trade policy.

Greg Hands:

The Government is committed to upholding the UK's world-leading environmental and labour standards in Free Trade Agreements. In its outline approaches to Free Trade Agreements, the Government has committed to securing provisions that will protect workers' rights and help promote trade in low carbon goods and services, supporting research and development in sectors such as offshore wind and smart energy systems. The United Kingdom is also working with international partners at the World Trade Organisation to promote multilateral action on trade and environment.

■ Trade and Agriculture Commission

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[40833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when the Trade and Agriculture Commission will be formally constituted; and when the Trade and Agriculture Commission will hold its first meeting.

Dr Dan Poulter: [\[40834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to ensure representation of farmers on the Trade and Agriculture Commission.

Greg Hands:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) invited Expressions of Interest for independent advisors to sit on the Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC) in July, and DIT will announce the membership in the coming weeks.

The TAC will be composed of independent experts in their fields, in line with the provisions of the Trade Act 2021. This will include expertise in UK animal welfare standards, UK animal and plant health standards, UK environmental standards relating to agricultural products, and international trade law and policy.

SCOTLAND

■ Ports: Hunterston

Caroline Lucas: [\[40829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what projects the Government is supporting at the Hunterston PARC site in North Ayrshire as part of the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Hunterston Strategic Development Area is one of three projects within the Energy, Circular Economy & Environment Programme. The Hunterston investment is supported by £18 million from the UK Government. Good progress is being made and we expect to receive the Business Case by the end of the year.

TRANSPORT

■ Active Travel England

Ruth Edwards: [\[37618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when his Department plans for Active Travel England to be (a) established and (b) operational.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is committed to establishing Active Travel England and is developing the right model for the body. It must be able to deliver its role effectively and value for money. We plan to make announcements on the body shortly, including on when it will be established and become operational.

■ Aircraft: Noise

Bim Afolami: [\[41166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of making aircraft noise a statutory nuisance.

Robert Courts:

The government is supportive of the need to protect communities from the adverse effects of aircraft noise. However, noise from general transport, including aircraft, is not included as a statutory nuisance under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 as we believe it is not practical for local authorities to enforce these rules. Aviation noise is better managed through specific government policies tailored to individual noise sources, and we believe there are sufficient mechanisms in place to protect communities from the effects of aircraft noise.

■ Airports: Coronavirus

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[41227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that passengers arriving at airports from countries on the covid-19 green list do not mix with passengers arriving from amber and red list countries.

Robert Courts:

Since June, direct red list arrivals on direct flights have been required to enter dedicated terminals at Heathrow and Birmingham. These have helped to keep passengers separate, focussing processing capacity and easing the passengers of both red and non-red passengers through the airport.

The Government has worked closely with UK airports on social distancing guidance and maintained a consistent approach with international counterparts to protect public confidence when travelling. Airports have also retained preventative measures such as face coverings, hygiene stations and signage, which have been determined through each individual airport's risk assessment process.

■ British Airways

Fleur Anderson:

[\[41343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of British Airways on financial support for (a) cabin crew and (b) pilots.

Robert Courts:

Ministers and officials have engaged extensively with the aviation industry throughout the pandemic and continue to do so. In total, we estimate that by the end of September 2021 the air transport sector (airlines, airports and related services) will have benefited from around £7bn of Government support since the start of the pandemic. This included the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), Covid Corporate Financing Facility and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Scheme.

On 3 March 2021, the Government extended the CJRS until 30 September 2021 and furloughed employees will continue to receive 80% (up to £2,500) of their current salary with the Government currently contributing 60% of this.

British Airways reported that it expected to receive a total of £279m in relief under the CJRS for the 12 months to the end of December 2020 and had applied the CJRS to more than 30,000 cabin crew and ground-based employees; and it has continued to make use of the CJRS in 2021.

■ Commuters: Morley and Outwood

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[38343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reduce the average commuter time for residents in the Morley and Outwood constituency.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) programme is a multi-billion-pound investment and the Government's largest single investment in upgrading the country's existing railway in the next five years. TRU will deliver extensive reliability, capacity and journey time improvements across the key east to west route, from Manchester Victoria to York, via Morley. Network Rail continue to progress development and design of the programme.

■ Cross Country Railway Line and East Midlands Railway**Fiona Bruce:**[\[38246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to ensure that (a) CrossCountry and (b) East Midlands Railway restore full rail services to (a) Congleton and (b) Alsager following recent network changes and disruption.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Train services were reduced across the country in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic with some services reintroduced since. We welcome that passengers are returning to the railway in increasing numbers this summer. As they do, it will be for operators, working together, to propose the appropriate level of station calls and train services that reflect the changed patterns of demand and reduced revenue following the pandemic, and also provides a robust and punctual timetable.

■ Electric Scooters**Catherine West:**[\[41106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to help tackle road safety issues in respect of e-scooters hired under the Government's e-scooter rental trials.

Rachel Maclean:

There are a number of ways in which the Department is making the trials as safe as possible. All trial e-scooters must meet minimum construction standards and have at least third-party insurance provided by the e-scooter operator. Trial areas were required to provide evidence of engagement with the local police before a trial could be approved, to ensure the police were aware of the trials and of their role in enforcement. If an e-scooter is ridden into a no-go zone, it will power down to a safe stop, requiring the rider to push it back to an area in which riding is permitted. It is for the police to take action against rider behaviour for offences including drink driving; riding on the footway; contravening red traffic lights and using a mobile phone. Those who ride private e-scooters on the public highway are liable to be issued with fixed penalty notices for offences including contravening cycle lanes, riding without insurance and riding without a driving licence.

■ Electric Scooters: Accidents

Rachael Maskell:

[\[38316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of reported accidents caused by an e-scooter where that e-scooter was being used (a) as part of and (b) not as part of an e-scooter trial.

Rachel Maclean:

Data on personal injury road accidents is collected via the STATS19 system of accidents reported by the police. Although e-scooters are not currently one of the designated vehicle types in STATS19, guidance has been issued to police forces to identify them using the free text field for other vehicles.

Data for 2020 are currently being collated and validated. We intend to publish data on e-scooters and other vehicle types which can be reliably identified from the free text field alongside the annual Reported Road Casualties Great Britain statistics publication in September 2021.

In the future, the STATS19 data collection system will be amended so that e-scooters (and similar) can be identified as a vehicle type – details are in the report here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1001195/stats-19-review-final-report.pdf (page 11)

■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes

Rachael Maskell:

[\[38314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will take steps to encourage local authorities to select seated e-scooter trials in order to provide a more accessible service to disabled users.

Rachel Maclean:

In May 2020 the Department held a consultation on the proposed regulations that would allow e-scooter trials to begin and the rules e-scooter users must follow during the trials.

Following the consultation we removed the requirement that an e-scooter does not have provision for seating. We considered the consultation responses and agreed that this requirement would unnecessarily have restricted the availability of different and possibly more accessible types of e-scooters being used in trials.

Local authorities are responsible for trials in their areas, but to take part in the trials they must partner with one or more e-scooter operators to provide rental e-scooter schemes.

34 operators applied to the Department for their vehicles to be approved for use in the trials. Only one operator proposed to trial a seated variant, but they did not provide the necessary information for their vehicle to be approved.

Operators in trial areas are considering how to make their services more accessible to disabled people.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[38318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2021 to Question 145058 on Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes, if he will publish the data outlining e-scooter usage in the trials in York and other cities.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department has in place a national monitoring and evaluation programme for the e-scooter trials. We will be publishing reports in autumn 2021 and spring 2022, with a summary of the evidence collected and reviewed so far by our evaluation contractor, Arup. This will include high level information on the number of trips; average distance and duration; scooter availability; and demographic information about users, from across the trials.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Vacancies

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[40790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to support businesses that are struggling to receive supplies and goods as a result of the current shortage of (a) HGV, (b) LGV and (c) other delivery drivers.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is implementing a package of measures to address the shortage of drivers. Measures include maximising driver testing capacity by increasing the number of staff available to conduct tests, consulting on proposals to streamline the testing process to boost throughput of drivers, and support for training via funding apprenticeships to assist new entrants as well as the reskilling of jobseekers.

Zarah Sultana:

[\[41328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of adding HGV drivers to the Government's shortage occupation list.

Rachel Maclean:

We want to see employers make long term investments in the UK domestic workforce instead of relying on labour from abroad and our Plan for Jobs is helping people across the country retrain, build new skills and get back into work

Focusing on developing UK-based talent represents an enduring solution to address the long running HGV driver shortage.

■ Large Goods Vehicles: Driving Tests

Lee Rowley:

[\[41190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to HGV driving tests.

Rachel Maclean:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has put in place a number of measures to increase driving tests for heavy goods vehicle drivers.

These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays). The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners.

The aim is to increase testing capacity as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a COVID-secure service for customers and examiners.

■ Level Crossings: Doncaster**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[37566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2021 to Question 21322 on Level Crossings: Doncaster, what discussions he has had with Network Rail and the British Transport Police on preventing similar incidents at level crossings in future.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Level crossings and safety are discussed at meetings between Ministers, officials and the rail industry. However, any mitigating actions would be undertaken by Network Rail as the infrastructure owner.

■ Motorcycles: Driving Instruction**Anneliese Dodds:**[\[38410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of rising numbers of learner motorcyclists and scooter riders on the safety of cyclists.

Rachel Maclean:

There is no means of establishing the number of Compulsory Basic Training courses that have been undertaken, and therefore the number of learner motorcyclists and scooter riders. However, the robustness of the driving test regime ensures that learner riders use the highway in a safe and considerate manner.

■ Northwich Station: Safety**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[37564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 June 2021 to Question 16200 on Northwich Station: Safety, whether progress Network Rail has made in investigating (a) the roof collapse at Northwich Station and (b) the safety of comparable buildings.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Network Rail internal investigation into Northwich is ongoing.

Regarding the safety of comparable buildings, a review has been completed of stations local to the Northwich area and mitigation steps have been taken where identified in accordance with Network Rail procedures.

A further review of similar buildings across the North West & Central region is continuing with a target to complete in mid-October.

■ **Parking: Pedestrian Areas**

Rachael Maskell: [\[41011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will include proposals to prohibit pavement parking in his Future of Transport programme.

Rachel Maclean:

We have been carefully considering the 15,000 responses to our recent pavement parking consultation and the results will inform future policy decisions. We will publish the outcome in the autumn.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[41077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to publish the result of the Government's consultation on pavement parking by the end of September 2021.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department will publish the consultation response as soon as possible.

■ **Railway Stations: Tickets**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[38385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to help ensure rail ticket machines can avoid ransomware attacks.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport works with transport operators, including rail operators, and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to improve their resilience to cyber threats, including ransomware attacks. The NCSC, as the UK's technical authority for cyber security, continually reviews its advice and guidance to reflect new trends and to outline how individuals and organisations can protect themselves, as well as providing swift support to organisations which fall victim to major cyber incidents, including ransomware attacks.

■ **Railway Stations: Visual Impairment**

Damien Moore: [\[41210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that rail platforms are accessible for people with visual impairments.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

We are committed to improving accessibility across the rail network, and I shall be bidding for further rounds of funding for the Access for All programme at the upcoming Spending Review and for the next rail Control Period (2024-29).

Furthermore, Network Rail has received an initial £10 million to install tactile paving at priority stations not already funded. I will make further announcements on future rounds of funding in due course.

Railway Stations: Wheelchairs**Damien Moore:**[\[41209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that rail platforms are accessible for wheelchair users.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I am committed to improving accessibility across the rail network. The Department expects the industry to meet current accessibility requirements whenever it installs, renews or replaces station infrastructure. Failure to do so can lead to enforcement action by the Office of Rail and Roads.

Furthermore, I shall be bidding for further rounds of funding for *Access for All* schemes in the forthcoming Spending Review.

Railways: Coronavirus**Bim Afolami:**[\[41162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that train companies declassify first class carriages when their trains are operating at high-occupancy levels during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The safety of passengers and staff has been a priority for the Department throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Government has published Safer Travel guidance which sets out steps operators can take to identify risks arising from coronavirus. From 19 July most restrictions have been lifted, including the requirement for social distancing on trains. Within the context of that guidance, it is for train operators to decide how best to manage their services and rolling stock.

Railways: Employment**Daisy Cooper:**[\[38423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the proposals by the Rail Industry Rail Group for an Enabling Framework Agreement on employment in the rail industry are currently being implemented by Train Operating Companies.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The proposals in the Rail Industry Recovery Group Enabling Framework Agreement, to which sector employers and trade unions are party, reflect the need to secure the

industry's long-term sustainability. The Government understands that discussions continue prior to any implementation by Train Operating Companies.

■ Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation: Hydrogen

Peter Aldous: [\[40865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential merits of extending the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation to cover hydrogen produced from nuclear energy.

Peter Aldous: [\[40866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to make a decision on the potential extension of the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation to cover hydrogen produced from nuclear energy.

Peter Aldous: [\[40867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential role of nuclear energy in producing hydrogen over the next five years to support the introduction of hydrogen for vehicles, maritime and aviation.

Rachel Maclean:

Officials from the Department for Transport and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are in regular contact on the development of our green hydrogen policies. This includes engagement to better understand the merits of any support for hydrogen production using nuclear energy.

The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) has reduced carbon emissions from UK transport fuels by of 275 mega tonnes from 2008 to 2020 through supporting the use of renewable fuels. There have been no recent ministerial discussions to expand the RTFO to cover nuclear derived fuels. Any decision on extension of the RTFO to support fuels derived from nuclear energy would need to be carefully considered because this could divert nuclear energy from the electricity grid where it plays a valuable role in providing low carbon energy.

We will set out a plan for the path to zero carbon shipping in 2022. The Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) consultation launched on 23rd July this year seeks to explore the suitability of nuclear energy for producing SAF.

Any proposals would be the subject of a public consultation, published economic analysis and require primary and secondary legislation.

■ Riding Sunbeams

Brendan Clarke-Smith: [\[41284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the £350,000 First of a Kind grant allocated to Riding Sunbeams Apollo Ltd in January 2019 by Innovate UK for a transport project, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of return on

investment in that project; and if he will publish that project's findings and recommendations.

Brendan Clarke-Smith:

[\[41285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the £400,000 First of a Kind grant allocated to Riding Sunbeams Apollo Ltd in January 2019 by Innovate UK for a transport project, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of return on investment in that project; and if he will publish that project's findings and recommendations.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Riding Sunbeams has been the lead partner in two projects awarded funding through the First of a Kind (FOAK) rail innovation competition funded by DfT and managed by Innovate UK (IUK). Its "First Light" project was awarded £350,000 in 2019; while "Daybreak" was awarded £400,000 in 2020, rather than 2019. These competitions offer valuable funding and relationships to help companies overcome the barriers to testing new technology on the live railway, which in turn is crucial to address key challenges for rail capacity, customer experience and, in the case of Riding Sunbeams' projects, decarbonisation.

Riding Sunbeams' projects, like all competition winners, were selected for funding by IUK based on standard evaluation processes. They were assessed for eligibility, and scored by independent expert assessors based on criteria including how well they met the challenges set out in the competition; their levels of innovation, and technical and commercial feasibility; and their budget and capabilities.

The contractually-required output of these projects was a successful demonstration of the funded technology for potential buyers in a representative railway environment, rather than findings or recommendations for publication.

■ **Roads: Accidents**

Alexander Stafford:

[\[38485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many traffic accidents have occurred in Rother Valley constituency in each year since 2010.

Rachel Maclean:

The number of personal injury road accidents reported by police for the Rother Valley constituency in each year since 2010 is shown in the table.

| YEAR | NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS |
|------|---------------------|
| 2010 | 250 |
| 2011 | 226 |
| 2012 | 212 |
| 2013 | 229 |

| YEAR | NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS |
|------|---------------------|
| 2014 | 224 |
| 2015 | 203 |
| 2016 | 207 |
| 2017 | 191 |
| 2018 | 163 |
| 2019 | 162 |

■ Roads: Litter

Ben Bradley:

[\[41197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using existing cameras on the Highway network to enforce littering laws and in issue fines.

Rachel Maclean:

We want to see a road network free from litter, and we agree that there is more we can all do to keep the Strategic Road Network (SRN), the motorways and principal A-roads managed by National Highways (formerly Highways England), clear of litter. National Highways continuously seeks to improve the operational effectiveness of litter picking and influencing littering behaviour through communication campaigns and raising awareness of the increased possibility of being caught littering and fixed penalty notices.

National Highways is keen to use technology to help ensure our strategic roads are part of a modern network that supports a modern country. It is in ongoing discussions with technology companies and Litter Authorities about how technology and other enforcement tools can help reduce littering at the source. Footage from cameras can already be used as evidence of roadside littering and it is for the Local Authority to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to enforce fixed penalty notices or prosecute. National Highways is working to improve the evidence it provides to Local Authorities to assist them in prosecution.

■ South Western Railway: Railway Signals

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[37568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 2 July 2021 to Question 21321 on South Western Railway: Railway Signals, what steps he has taken to ensure those costs incurred by the public purse can be mitigated in the future.

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.

Trailers: Licensing**Drew Hendry:**[\[38301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the examiner shortage for B+E towing licence exams in the Scottish Highlands.

Rachel Maclean:

DVSA will continue their examiner training programme to ensure there is sufficient resource to service demand, including B+E testing in the Scottish Highlands.

Trains: Morley and Outwood**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[38347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to upgrade trains which travel through Morley and Outwood constituency.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

All Northern's fleet travelling through Morley and Outwood constituency will either be new or refurbished trains with the digital upgrades due to be completed by 31 December 2021.

Travel Restrictions: Canada**Catherine West:**[\[41109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason Canada was not included alongside the EU and USA for quarantine-free travel to the UK from 28 July 2021; and whether he plans to take steps to implement quarantine-free travel between the UK and Canada.

Robert Courts:

Canada was added to the UK government's green list at 4am on Monday 30 August 2021, meaning travellers arriving in the UK from Canada will not have to quarantine regardless of whether they are fully vaccinated.

The government is taking a phased approach to expanding the policy for vaccinated inbound travellers, and in due course, we will explore expanding this approach to other countries, where it is safe to do so. At present, we are unable to give timescales for extending this policy, but we look forward to working with Canada as we progress towards a safe, sustainable and robust return to international travel.

■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[41228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the evidential basis is for his Department's decision to assign countries to the red, amber or green travel list for covid-19.

Robert Courts:

The traffic light system categorises countries based on risk to protect public health and the vaccine rollout from variants of COVID-19. The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) produces risk assessments of countries and territories. Decisions on Red, Amber or Green List assignment and associated border measures take into account the JBC risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors. Key factors in the JBC risk assessment of each country include:

- genomic surveillance capability
- COVID-19 transmission risk
- Variant of Concern transmission risk

A summary of the JBC methodology, alongside key data that supports decisions on the traffic light system is published on gov.uk.

The data for all countries be kept under regular review and the Government will not hesitate to take action where a country's epidemiological picture changes.

■ Travel Restrictions: Pakistan**Sarah Owen:**[\[41303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology that led to the Government's decision to keep Pakistan on its red list for international covid-19 travel restrictions, as announced on 5 August 2021.

Sarah Owen:[\[41304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology that led to the Government's decision to keep Bangladesh on its red list for international covid-19 travel restrictions, as announced on 5 August 2021.

Sarah Owen:[\[41305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology that led to the Government's decision to keep Guyana on its red list for international covid-19 travel restrictions, as announced on 5 August 2021.

Sarah Owen:[\[41306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology that led to the Government's decision to keep the Philippines on the red list for international covid-19 travel restrictions, as announced on 5 August 2021.

Sarah Owen: [\[41307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology that led to the Government's decision to keep Turkey on its red list for international covid-19 travel restrictions, as announced on 5 August 2021.

Sarah Owen: [\[41308\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the methodology that led to the Government's decision to keep Kenya on its red list for international covid-19 travel restrictions, as announced on 5 August 2021.

Robert Courts:

The traffic light system categorises countries, based on risk to protect public health and the vaccine rollout from variants of COVID-19. The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) produces risk assessments of countries and territories. Decisions on Red, Amber or Green List assignment and associated border measures are taken by Ministers, who take into account the JBC risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors. Key factors in the JBC risk assessment of each country include:

- genomic surveillance capability
- COVID-19 transmission risk
- Variant of Concern transmission risk

A summary of the JBC methodology is published on gov.uk, alongside key data that supports Ministers' decisions.

The data for all countries will be kept under regular review and the Government will not hesitate to take action where a country's epidemiological picture changes.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Helen Hayes: [\[37537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the costs to international travellers associated with (a) privately-funded covid tests and (b) hotel quarantine for those arriving from countries on the Red list during the covid-19 pandemic.

Robert Courts:

The government continues to work across departments, the travel industry and private testing providers to further reduce testing costs, while ensuring travel is as safe as possible. The government will continue to review the testing and health measures in place, with the next Checkpoint review taking place later this month.

TREASURY■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Mark Fletcher:**[\[903249\]](#)

What fiscal steps his Department is taking to help small and medium-sized businesses recover from the covid-19 pandemic.

Paul Holmes:[\[903257\]](#)

What fiscal steps his Department is taking to help small and medium-sized businesses recover from the covid-19 pandemic.

John Glen:

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods while also supporting businesses of all sizes across the UK. We put in place an economic support package totaling £352 billion through the furlough and self-employed income support schemes, as well as support for businesses of all sizes through grants and loans, business rates and VAT relief, and a commercial rents moratorium.

We want to help small businesses across the UK to scale and grow as they recover from the pandemic. At Budget, we announced Help to Grow: Digital and Management. Help to Grow: Digital provides a new online platform and voucher to support SMEs to adopt software which could help them save time and money and grow faster. Help to Grow: Management offers a new, world-leading management skills training programme to upskill 30,000 small businesses across the UK over three years, to help boost their business's performance, resilience, and long-term growth through practical leadership and management training.

■ **Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme****Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[903248\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the potential effect of the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on the number of jobs that will be retained.

Jesse Norman:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was designed as a temporary measure. Closing the scheme at the end of September strikes the right balance between supporting the economy, protecting incomes, and getting people back to work.

This is working; at the start of this crisis, unemployment was expected to reach 12 per cent or more. It is now forecast to peak at about half of that level, meaning almost 2 million fewer people losing their jobs than previously feared.

■ Coronavirus: Government Assistance

Anum Qaisar-Javed: [\[903258\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Scotland on the potential effect of ending his Department's schemes to support people affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

The Chancellor and other Treasury Ministers speak regularly with the Secretary of State for Scotland on a wide range of matters.

We have put in place an economic package of support totalling £352 billion to support both individuals and businesses throughout the pandemic, with the devolved administrations having received an additional £28.1 billion in funding through the Barnett formula to support their recovery through 2020-22.

■ Employment Schemes

Simon Fell: [\[903254\]](#)

What fiscal steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to support people who are out of work to gain skills to find new, well-paid jobs.

Katherine Fletcher: [\[903259\]](#)

What fiscal steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to support people who are out of work to gain skills to find new, well-paid jobs.

Jesse Norman:

The Plan for Jobs supports people to gain the skills needed to access high quality jobs. The Chancellor provided £111 million to triple traineeships, £17 million to expand sector-based work academies, and £32 million to boost the National Careers Service's capacity.

At the Spending Review, the Government announced £95 million to fund free courses for adults in subjects with strong employment prospects and £43 million to provide 16,000 places on employer-led skills bootcamps.

At Budget, the Chancellor announced £126 million more for traineeships, and increased incentives for hiring apprentices to £3,000.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Kickstart Scheme

Duncan Baker: [\[36791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs included within the Kickstart scheme have been (a) approved, (b) advertised and (c) started by (i) county, (ii) region and (iii) nation.

Mims Davies:

We are pleased to say that, as of the 31st August, over 63,000 young people have started Kickstart jobs. Over 181,000 jobs have been made available for young people to apply for through the Kickstart Scheme with over 280,000 jobs approved for funding by the Scheme.

We are unable at present to provide data on the number of approved jobs by location, as at that stage in the process we do not hold information about the exact location of a job, only the head office of the employer.

Below are tables listing the number of Kickstart jobs which have been made available and started by young people to date by geographical area of Great Britain and work sector. The figures used are correct as of the 31st August and these figures have been rounded according to departmental standards.

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

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

| LOCATION | JOBS MADE AVAILABLE | TOTAL JOBS STARTED |
|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| East Midlands | 11,600 | 3,840 |
| East of England | 14,400 | 4,460 |
| London | 36,700 | 13,970 |
| North East | 7,300 | 2,930 |
| North West | 23,400 | 8,090 |
| Scotland | 13,400 | 5,670 |
| South East | 21,000 | 6,870 |
| South West | 13,500 | 4,280 |
| Wales | 10,400 | 3,190 |
| West Midlands | 16,400 | 5,670 |
| Yorkshire and The Humber | 13,700 | 4,820 |

*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals. Jobs Made Available include 1,000 non-

| LOCATION | JOBS MADE AVAILABLE | TOTAL JOBS STARTED |
|----------|---------------------|--------------------|
|----------|---------------------|--------------------|

grant funded vacancies and
Total Starts include around
900 starts to non-grant funded
jobs

| SECTOR | JOBS MADE AVAILABLE | TOTAL JOBS STARTED |
|--------|---------------------|--------------------|
|--------|---------------------|--------------------|

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Administration | 45,500 | 16,190 |
| Animal Care | 900 | 510 |
| Beauty & Wellbeing | 1,300 | 500 |
| Business & Finance | 6,600 | 2,350 |
| Computing, Technology & Digital | 12,800 | 5,670 |
| Construction & Trades | 5,600 | 2,070 |
| Creative & Media | 13,900 | 6,450 |
| Delivery & Storage | 5,400 | 1,860 |
| Emergency & Uniform Services | 400 | 150 |
| Engineering & Maintenance | 6,000 | 1,930 |
| Environment & Land | 3,400 | 1360 |
| Government Services | 600 | 120 |
| Healthcare | 5,000 | 1,420 |
| Home Services | 1,300 | 340 |
| Hospitality & Food | 19,300 | 4,840 |
| Law & Legal | 400 | 190 |
| Managerial | 1100 | 330 |
| Manufacturing | 4,500 | 1,750 |
| Retail & Sales | 28,500 | 10,400 |
| Science & Research | 700 | 300 |
| Social Care | 4,500 | 1050 |

| SECTOR | JOBS MADE AVAILABLE | TOTAL JOBS STARTED |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sports & Leisure | 4,300 | 1500 |
| Teaching & Education | 8,600 | 2,180 |
| Transport | 600 | 140 |
| Travel & Tourism | 600 | 190 |

*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals. Jobs Made Available include 1,000 non-grant funded vacancies and Total Starts include around 900 starts to non-grant funded jobs

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

CABINET OFFICE

■ Northern Ireland Update

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis):

[\[HCWS262\]](#)

My noble Friend, the Minister of State in the Cabinet Office (Rt Hon Lord Frost CMG), yesterday made the following written statement:

The Government set out in its 21 July Command Paper, ‘[Northern Ireland Protocol: the way forward](#)’, proposals to find a new balance in the operation of the Protocol.

The Government proposed to the EU on 23 July a ‘standstill’ arrangement to maintain the operation of the Protocol on the current basis, and to pause current legal actions, to provide space for discussions on those proposals. The EU announced on 27 July that it was not, at that stage, moving to the next stage of the legal proceedings it started in March. There have since been initial technical talks between the UK and the EU. These will continue in order to determine whether a constructive process can be established for discussing and addressing the issues identified with the Protocol.

Following on from this, to provide space for potential further discussions, and to give certainty and stability to businesses while any such discussions proceed, the Government will continue to operate the Protocol on the current basis. This includes the grace periods and easements currently in force. Operational and other guidance will be updated to reflect this approach. We will ensure that reasonable notice is provided in the event that these arrangements were to change, to enable businesses and citizens to prepare.

■ Role of the Speaker’s Committee in Holding the Electoral Commission to Account

Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith):

[\[HCWS269\]](#)

As set out in a previous statement to this House ([HCWS100](#)), the Government has proposed a series of measures in the Elections Bill that seek to maintain public confidence in the effective and independent regulation of the electoral system by empowering the UK Parliament to hold the Electoral Commission more effectively accountable. As the independent regulatory body charged with upholding the integrity of free and fair elections, it is right for the public to expect that the Electoral Commission should be more fully and duly accountable to the UK Parliament for the way they discharge their functions.

The Electoral Commission are the independent body which oversee elections and regulate political finance in the UK. The Commission are made up of Electoral Commissioners, including a Chair, who are appointed by Her Majesty via an Address in Parliament. The Electoral Commissioners govern the work of the Electoral Commission.

The Commission are already accountable, but to a limited extent, to Parliament via the Speaker’s Committee on the Electoral Commission. The Speaker’s Committee is a cross-

party, statutory committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Speaker's Committee is responsible for:

- determining and overseeing the procedures for selecting candidates to be put forward for appointment or reappointment as Electoral Commissioners;
- examining the Electoral Commission's five-year plan and annual financial estimates (considering the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General and advice from the Treasury) to decide whether they are consistent with the economical, efficient and effective discharge by the Commission of their functions. Following this, the Speaker's Committee lay the documents before the House of Commons, with or without any modifications as necessary;
- reporting to the House of Commons at least once a year on the exercise of its functions.

It is important to note that the measures in the Elections Bill do not amend the Speaker's Committee's current duties nor do they alter the other existing accountability arrangements of the Electoral Commission: the Commission will remain accountable to the Llywydd's Committee and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body in relation to financial matters and their Business Plan where it relates to devolved functions. Our proposals will also maintain the statutory role of the Comptroller and Auditor General in his examination of the Commission. The Government's measures will build on these current arrangements to enhance the Commission's accountability to Parliament. This is primarily being done in two ways.

Strategy and Policy Statement

We will make provisions within the Elections Bill for the introduction of a Strategy and Policy Statement. The Statement, if approved by the UK Parliament, will set out guidance and principles to which the Commission will have a legal duty to have regard in exercising their reserved and devolved functions. However, that legal duty does not replace or undermine their other statutory duties. It is commonplace for the Government to set a policy framework, as approved by Parliament, which independent regulators should consider.

An illustrative example of a Statement and Policy Statement for the Electoral Commission will be published during the passage of the Elections Bill to aid parliamentarians. We will also be engaging with the Parliamentary Parties Panel and other interested parties on how a draft Statement might be framed.

The role of the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission

We will expand the functions of the Speaker's Committee to give it the power to examine the Commission's compliance with the duty to have regard to the Strategy and Policy Statement. The Government intends:

- to enable the Speaker's Committee to perform a scrutiny function similar to that of parliamentary select committees, in that it will be able to retrospectively examine the Electoral Commission's activities in light of the regulator's duty to have regard to the Strategy and Policy Statement;

- that as part of its existing yearly reporting requirements on the discharge of its functions, the Speaker's Committee will be able to draw to the attention of the House any matter of interest relating to the Electoral Commission's compliance with their duty with regards to the Strategy and Policy Statement;
- that the Speaker's Committee will also be able to set out its own procedures to outline, if it wishes to do so, its workings under its expanded remit in any way it sees fit;
- that the Speaker's Committee will have the ability to request information (for instance via a public evidence session) from the Electoral Commission that the Speaker's Committee may require to discharge its scrutiny function;
- that the Speaker's Committee will not be expected to examine individual complaints from members of the public and others against the Electoral Commission. Members of the public can already complain to the Commission and the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

It is right that the Commission remain fully operationally independent and that they continue to be governed by their Electoral Commissioners. Therefore, with this new power the Speaker's Committee will not be able to proactively direct the Commission's decision-making. Our measures will not affect either the governance structure nor statutory provisions for the Electoral Commission's Board and Commissioners.

With these two measures the Government will empower the UK Parliament to hold the Electoral Commission effectively accountable - crucial in maintaining public confidence in our electoral system - whilst also respecting the Commission's investigative, enforcement and operational independence.

I have placed the infographic attached to this statement in the libraries of both Houses .

Attachments:

1. Electoral Commission Accountability Framework [Electoral Commission Infographic - Accountability Framework.pdf]

DEFENCE

■ Acquisition of Sheffield Forgemasters

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS261\]](#)

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has acquired Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited (SFIL), allowing HM Government to refinance the company and secure the supply of components for critical current and future UK defence programmes.

The MOD also intends to invest up to £400 million into SFIL over the next 10 years for defence critical plant, equipment and infrastructure to support defence outputs. The acquisition has been assessed as the best value for money for the taxpayer due to SFIL's unique capabilities and circumstances. The immediate cost of the acquisition is £2.56 million for the entire share capital of the company, plus debt assumed.

SFIL is the only available manufacturer with the skills and capability to produce certain large scale high-integrity castings and forgings from specialist steels in an integrated facility to the highest standards required for specific defence programmes. SFIL's ownership by the Government will not prevent other UK based manufacturers bidding for MOD contracts, which will continue to be run in an open and fair competition.

The MOD has already started working closely with the company to implement best practice governance that will ensure appropriate financial oversight to secure the company's future success, with the aim eventually to return the business to the private sector.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Environment Bill – Establishment of the Office for Environmental Protection

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Domestic Environment)

(Rebecca Pow):

[\[HCWS265\]](#)

As the Environment Bill starts Report stage in the House of Lords today, I am making this statement on the actions taken and commitments made to establish the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) as an independent body, given the significant interest from members of both Houses.

This government was elected on a manifesto that committed to setting up a new independent environmental body in the OEP, which will help ensure that our high environmental standards are upheld.

OEP independence

The Environment Bill includes several provisions to enshrine the OEP's independence in law. These include a specific duty on the Secretary of State when exercising his or her functions to have regard to the need to protect the OEP's independence.

The Bill also states that the OEP must prepare its own strategy that sets out how it intends to exercise its functions. The OEP is required to lay this strategy before Parliament to allow for proper scrutiny and transparency. The Bill also requires the OEP to act objectively and impartially. In addition to the protections that the Bill provides, the government has made several commitments to ensure the OEP's operational independence.

OEP appointments

The Office for Environmental Protection will be included in the Schedule to the Public Appointments Order in Council and non-executive members will be independently regulated by Her Majesty's Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Bill also requires that the OEP Chair be consulted on all non-executive appointments.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission took a similar approach as its board members are appointed by Ministers. The Commission has had an 'A' rating as a

National Human Rights Institution from the United Nations since 2009, based partly on its independence and autonomy from government.

The appointments of the OEP Chair Designate and non-executive members designate have already been made, following a regulated public appointments process, which will also be followed for future appointments.

The government took the necessary steps to ensure that the role of Chair was listed as a significant appointment with the Commissioner for Public Appointments, providing an added level of scrutiny and independence in the recruitment process. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Environmental Audit Committees conducted a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing before the appointment of Dame Glenys Stacey as OEP Chair Designate. I am happy to confirm our intention that future Chair appointments should follow a similar process, ensuring fairness, accountability and independence in the future.

The appointments that have already been made demonstrate that the OEP will have the relevant expertise it needs to operate as an effective independent body. As a further safeguard, Parliament can choose to call any member of the OEP board to provide evidence in relation to their suitability for appointment once they have taken up their post. The Bill also requires that the OEP Chair be consulted on all non-executive appointments, and that the executive members be appointed by the OEP board alone, with the Chief Executive appointed by the non-executive members (or the Chair in the case of the first Chief Executive) after consultation with the Secretary of State.

OEP finance

To give the OEP robust financial certainty over the coming years, the government has committed to provide it with an indicative five-year budget which will be ringfenced within each spending review period. This approach follows the model of the Office for Budget Responsibility and is consistent with international best practice, strengthening institutional independence through delegated budgetary autonomy.

I have agreed with HM Treasury the budget for the OEP's first year of operation. This will be reviewed after the first 18 months of operation, which will ensure an evidence-based approach to the future OEP budget. The OEP must also include an annual assessment in its annual report and statement of accounts whether it has received sufficient sums to carry out its functions, which must be laid before Parliament.

OEP guidance

The OEP has an unprecedented remit: its principal objective will be to contribute to environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment, and it will be able to take enforcement action against all public authorities, including local authorities, regulators and central government departments. It is for this reason that the government feels that a guidance power is necessary - the OEP must be impartial and independent, but not unaccountable.

This guidance power will not be used – indeed, it cannot be used - to intervene or direct the OEP in decision-making about specific cases. Furthermore, recognising the strength

of feeling from Parliament on this issue, we have introduced an amendment for Lords Report to enable additional parliamentary scrutiny of any draft guidance. Under the new amendment, the Secretary of State will be required to lay a draft of any guidance before Parliament and respond to any resolutions or recommendations made by either House and Parliamentary Committees before producing the final guidance. This would supersede and strengthen the provision in clause 25(4), which currently requires the Secretary of State to lay before Parliament and publish any guidance.

This government is committed to establishing the OEP as an independent body to contribute to environmental protection and hold public authorities to account. It will be a body built on international best practice and tailored to our domestic context, and we are committed to ensuring it can be legally established as soon as possible following Royal Assent, to begin delivering benefits for people and the environment.

JUSTICE

■ Protecting the Public and Justice for Victims

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Robert Buckland):

[\[HCWS266\]](#)

Today I would like to update the House on how the government is protecting the public and providing justice for victims following the Opposition day debate of 9 June 2021.

Impact of Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a truly unprecedented effect on our courts system. Bringing people safely into buildings for trials and hearings – especially jury trials – has been challenging. That is why we have done so much to keep delivering justice in these difficult times.

The government is committed to getting justice firing on all cylinders by ramping up our work to enable judges to safely hold as many hearings as possible over the coming year. In the Crown Court, disposals continue to exceed receipts and we have seen the outstanding caseload stabilise at around 60k, and hopefully turn a corner, while our outstanding cases in the magistrates' court are now at the lowest level since the pandemic began.

We will continue to maximise capacity across the system, reopening 60 courtrooms by September 2021, extending 32 Nightingale courtrooms until March 2022, giving judges the option to open courtrooms for longer – sitting a session in the morning and another in the afternoon – and the flexibility to conduct non-trial work, like pre-trial preparation hearings, remotely. We have lifted the limit on sitting days in the Crown Court this year, enabling us to maximise the use of the courts estate, and every available judge. All this activity taken together will help get more cases heard, more quickly, so that there is timely access to justice.

How we supported victims over the last year and through the pandemic

While the impacts of Covid-19 on the courts have been profound, supporting victims to seek justice remains a top priority. We are acutely aware of the risk of victims dropping out of the justice process and are monitoring the impact of Covid-19. In recognition of the impact of Covid-19 on victims, the Ministry of Justice established the Victim and Witness Silver Command Group in March 2020 in order to identify and assess developing risks and issues that may have an impact on victims of crime, including in their journey through the criminal justice system. This group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis and its comprehensive membership consists of representatives from across government, criminal justice agencies, external stakeholders, and the third sector.

This year has seen record investment across government of over £300 million in specialist victim services and we have made over £92 million available since the start of the pandemic to ensure victims had access to critical support services, including counselling and advice. Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisers are a key component in support through the criminal justice system, which is why we have made a £27 million investment over two years resulting in the recruitment of nearly 700 new posts, an increase of 44% on existing provision.

Earlier this year we also published a new Victims' Code focussed on 12 key rights for all victims of crime. The new Code is the culmination of two years of extensive work, including hearing from victims and the groups that support them, to ensure that we have a clear and comprehensive framework for victims' rights. This vital work has laid the necessary foundations for effective legislation in this area, and it is our intention to proceed without delay.

Alongside this, the government has demonstrated its continued commitment to tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and domestic abuse. We have published new VAWG and domestic abuse strategies this year to help drive a step-change in the response to these crimes, and we have committed to undertaking a review of sentencing in domestic homicide cases to understand sentencing practice and consider whether there is a need for change. These build on our landmark Domestic Abuse Act, which received Royal Assent in April, and is being brought into force as soon as possible. Measures brought into force since the debate on 9 June include the offence of threatening to disclose private sexual photographs and films; extending the extra-territorial jurisdiction of England and Wales in relation to certain violent and sexual offences; ensuring those homeless as a result of domestic abuse and are eligible for local authority accommodation have priority need status; and also to enable a pilot using polygraph tests to protect domestic abuse victims. The vast majority of the remaining measures in the Act will be in force by spring 2022.

How the government has dealt with rape and serious sexual violence cases through the pandemic

While criminal justice agencies and the judiciary are prioritising serious cases, including rape, to provide certainty to victims and defendants, reducing the outstanding caseload will take several years. We are working to ensure that these cases will continue to be prioritised by all involved while dealing with the impact of the pandemic.

The government has long recognised that far too few victims of rape are seeing justice and that more must be done to support them to take their case through the criminal justice system. The recently published Rape Review sets out a robust programme of work to improve how the criminal justice system responds to rape – increasing the number of cases reaching court to 2016 levels, reducing the number of victims withdrawing from the process and ultimately putting more rapists behind bars.

Last year we passed legislation to ensure that serious sexual and violent offenders sentenced to a standard determinate sentence (SDS) of over 7 years serve at least two thirds of their sentence in custody. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill will extend this change to more offenders. Those sentenced to a SDS between 4 – 7 years for certain serious sexual or violent offences (where that offence attracts a maximum penalty of life), which includes rape, will serve two thirds of their sentence in custody instead of half. The government is committed to driving this agenda to give victims confidence in the system.

Wider support for victims

We want to continue transforming the experience of victims in the criminal justice system today. That's why the government has committed to passing a Victims' Law – to put the rights in the Victims' Code into statute. This will help to guarantee victims they will be seen, heard, and helped at every point in the justice process.

We will consult not only on the rights of victims, but also on the provision of community-based domestic abuse and sexual violence services, as well as a statutory underpinning for the roles of independent sexual and domestic violence advisers to ensure that victims receive a high standard of care.

I look forward to setting out a timetable for bringing the Victims' Law onto the statute books and working with victims, campaigners, and Members of Parliament from across the political divide to make a success of this landmark piece of legislation.

We know there is further to go, and we should not underestimate the scale of the challenge ahead of us. Victims, witnesses and defendants are still waiting too long and we need to take action to address this.

This year has been incredibly difficult in the courts as it has in so many areas. But through a monumental collective effort the system is recovering.

TRANSPORT

■ Draft Legislation: The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order 2021

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport (Rachel Maclean):
[\[HCWS264\]](#)

I have today published the draft Statutory Instrument "The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order 2021" and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum.

Renewable transport fuels already make a substantial contribution towards meeting UK carbon budgets and will continue to play an important role in meeting the UK's increasingly ambitious future carbon reduction targets. In 2019, the use of renewable fuel supplied under the RTFO saved approximately 5.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, equivalent to taking 2.5 million cars off the road.

This Statutory Instrument amends The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations Order 2007(SI2007/3072). The statutory instrument will help further increase carbon savings by increasing renewable fuels targets and expanding the RTFO to sectors with limited alternatives to decarbonise, such as maritime.

The Statutory Instrument is published in accordance with the procedure required by Schedule 8 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and agreed with Parliament. This is because it includes amendments to The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations Order 2007, parts of which were previously amended by SIs made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972. The Statutory Instrument is being published in draft at least 28 days before being laid for affirmative debate.

The Department consulted on these proposals between March and April 2021 in the paper "Targeting net zero -Next steps for the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation". The government response to that consultation and associated cost benefit analysis are available [here](#).

■ Roads Update

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[[HCWS270](#)]

I have on several occasions announced to this House the importance of road safety to me and my Department. After hearing the public's concerns about smart motorway safety, I commissioned an evidence stocktake and set out recommendations to raise the bar on safety. This was one of my first acts as Secretary of State.

The subsequent evidence stocktake was published in March 2020 and showed that ALR motorways are in most ways as safe as, or safer than, conventional ones. I was determined to make sure they were the safest roads in Britain and to this end, I announced a package of 18 measures, costing £500million, which includes the faster rollout of a radar-based stopped vehicle detection (SVD) across the ALR network, including an additional £5million on national and targeted communications campaigns to ensure drivers receive the right advice to help them keep safe.

Other actions included an update to The Highway Code to include new information about driving on high-speed roads, which has been achieved this year, six months earlier than scheduled. We have also changed the law to enable automatic detection of vehicles driving in closed lanes, known as red 'X' violations and National Highways are upgrading specialist cameras to help better identify violations so those drivers can be prosecuted.

A year on, I commissioned a Progress Report from National Highways to set out progress on those 18 actions, and to develop proposals about how several of them can be accelerated, going above and beyond what was originally committed to. The Progress Report was also an opportunity to review updated data since the 2020 Stocktake.

Crucially, the data contained in the National Highways Progress Report published in April 2021 continues to show that fatal casualties are less likely on all lane running motorways than on conventional ones.

The National Highways Progress Report drew its evidence from data and analysis of the 2019 STATS19 official statistics and produced by National Highways. I know that there has been considerable public and media interest in understanding motorway accident and fatality data and in March 2021 I commissioned the Office of Rail and Road to independently review the data to provide further analytical assurance and ensure that the conclusions arrived at are robust.

The ORR's report, *Quality Assurance of All Lane Running motorway data*, is published today. I welcome the ORR's review and their conclusion that they found no errors in the underlying calculations, and all the products and processes reviewed are in line with established practice. This was a thorough undertaking; the ORR drew on its expertise as the monitor of England's strategic road network. The ORR analysed detailed information, interviewed relevant staff at both National Highways and the Department for Transport, and reviewed the evidence submitted to the Transport Select Committee inquiry, which commenced in February 2021. To provide additional expertise and challenge, ORR took independent analytical advice from a specialist consultancy and involved the non-executive chair of its National Highways Committee. This was done to ensure the conclusions and recommendations arrived at are as robust and comprehensive as possible. The report supports National Highway's findings that smart motorways are the safest roads in the country in terms of fatalities.

The ORR's report contains several recommendations for improvement that will strengthen our understanding of road safety. National Highways have agreed to all its recommendations and developed an action plan in response which is already underway.

My commission for assurance into smart motorway safety data by the ORR is another step towards improving road safety and instilling public confidence in the safety of our roads, which make a crucial contribution to economic and social development in this country.

TREASURY

■ Economy Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak):

[\[HCWS268\]](#)

Today I can inform the House that I have launched Spending Review 2021 (SR21) to set departmental Resource and Capital DEL budgets from 2022-23 to 2024-25 and the devolved administrations' block grants for the same period. SR21 will be presented to Parliament alongside Autumn Budget 2021 and the economic and fiscal forecast from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) on 27 October 2021.

■ Notification of contingent liability – Pilot No-Interest Loans Scheme

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):

[\[HCWS267\]](#)

It is normal practice when a government department proposes to undertake a contingent liability in excess of £300,000 and for which there is no statutory authority, for the Minister concerned to present a departmental Minute to parliament, giving particulars of the liability created and explaining the circumstances.

I wish to notify Parliament of a contingent liability that has been created by the government from the introduction of the pilot No-Interest Loans Scheme. The pilot No-Interest Loans Scheme was announced at the Budget on 3 March 2021. The loans will support consumers in vulnerable circumstances who would benefit from affordable credit to meet unexpected costs and will provide an alternative to relying on high-cost credit. Fair4All Finance, who were founded to support the financial wellbeing of people in vulnerable circumstances, have been appointed to run the pilot and will enter contracts with lenders to deliver the loans, including to provide a partial guarantee against default losses. To facilitate the lending to consumers in vulnerable circumstances, HM Treasury will reimburse Fair4All Finance for eligible default losses they incur under eligible guarantees.

HM Treasury will reimburse Fair4All Finance for up to 80% of eligible default losses incurred as part of the pilot. HM Treasury will reimburse losses on loans made from 22 September 2021, but the liability will not be incurred until Fair4All Finance enter guarantees with eligible lenders and defaults occur, which is not expected until financial year 2022-23.

The maximum amount to be paid under the contingent liability is £10 million, with expected payments totalling £1.8 million. HM Treasury will reimburse Fair4All Finance for eligible default losses on loans initiated after 22 September 2021 and will stop reimbursing costs by 31 March 2026. If the liability is called, provision for any payment will be sought through the normal Supply procedure.

It is normal that any contingent liabilities should not be incurred until 14 sitting days after Parliament has been notified of the government's intention to incur a contingent liability. There is an exception in cases of special urgency. This is one such occasion.

In order to make timely progress with this policy, it is important that lenders have the certainty of the HM Treasury's funding commitment to the pilot in good time before the November and December periods, which for many social lenders is the busiest time of the year. As such HM Treasury's grant agreement with Fair4All Finance has been signed to enable contract negotiations with lenders to commence.

I note that HM Treasury's intention to develop such a pilot has been in the public domain for some time, and that the pilot has received broad support from across both Houses of Parliament since the Government funding was announced at Budget 2021. Given this support I hope the House is in agreement with my assessment that to delay signing the aforementioned agreement until the House returned would have been inappropriate and to the detriment of the beneficiaries under this scheme.

I will also lay a minute today on this matter.