



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 24 September 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:32 P.M., 24 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Attorney General: Flags

Justin Madders: [\[50049\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many and what proportion of Union Jack flags purchased by her Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

Justin Madders: [\[50050\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if she will list the companies that have supplied Union Jack flags to her Department since 2019.

Alex Chalk:

The Attorney General's Office (AGO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Government Legal Department (GLD) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI) have not purchased any Union Flags over the last two years.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Energy: Billing

Catherine West: [\[50119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what financial support will be made available to low-income households when energy and gas household bills increase on 1 October 2021.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem updates the energy price cap to reflect changes in underlying costs, such as purchasing wholesale gas and electricity prices, which are global markets. Wholesale prices are increasing, but the energy price cap still saves 15 million households on default tariffs up to £100 a year.

The Government continues to support low income and fuel poor households with their energy bills through the Warm Home Discount which provides eligible households with £140 off their bills. In addition, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments will help ensure those most vulnerable are better able to heat their homes over the colder months.

■ Fossil Fuels

Caroline Lucas: [\[50656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether at the UN General Assembly the Government discussed the open letter to participating nations from scientists and academics calling on governments to negotiate a Fossil Fuel Non-

Proliferation Treaty for the managed global phase out of coal, oil and gas published on 13 September; and if he she make a statement.

Greg Hands:

On 31 March 2021, the UK Government implemented its new, world leading policy to no longer provide new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas. At the G7 Leader's Summit in June, leaders agreed to phase out new direct government support for international carbon-intensive fossil fuel energy as soon as possible, and to end new direct government support for unabated international thermal coal power generation by the end of 2021.

The UK, as COP26 President, welcomes President Xi's announcement at the UN General Assembly that China will stop building coal fired power projects abroad and increase support for renewable energy in developing countries, and the Republic of Korea's April commitment to end its international public finance for coal power plants.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

Florence Eshalomi: [\[50179\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the National Audit Office report on the Green Homes Grant Scheme.

Greg Hands:

We are considering the National Audit Office report and its recommendations.

■ **Housing: Carbon Emissions**

Dan Carden: [\[50132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to support public engagement on net zero in the Net Zero Strategy in respect of tackling gaps in consumer protections to give people the confidence to make changes to homes.

Greg Hands:

The Government's upcoming Net Zero strategy will look at how the Government can best engage with the public in supporting them to make the right choices when retrofitting their homes and businesses.

Sarah Olney: [\[50739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will allocate funding for decarbonising the housing stock to help deliver net zero emissions by 2050.

Greg Hands:

The Government recognises that decarbonising our country's 30 million buildings is essential to meet our ambition of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Government is investing £9 billion in improving the energy efficiency of our buildings, including £1.3 billion this financial year.

■ Housing: Heating

Dan Carden:

[\[50131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to make it easier for people to make energy efficiency improvements to homes and adopt low-carbon heat technologies.

Greg Hands:

In 2019 there were around 1.3 million fewer fuel poor households living in the least energy efficiency Band E, F or G rated property compared to 2010.

Government is committed to ensuring as many homes as possible reach EPC Band C by 2035 where practical, affordable and cost effective. Support for energy efficiency improvements is available through schemes including the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Support for low carbon heating is currently available through the Renewable Heat Incentive, and from April 2022, the Clean Heat Grant will provide support to households switching to low carbon heating.

The Government will set out more details of how it will accelerate deployment of energy efficiency and low carbon heating in the forthcoming Heat and Buildings Strategy.

■ Oneweb: Satellites

Chi Onwurah:

[\[50012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has for Oneweb to provide the UK's own sovereign satellite navigation system; and what assessment he has made of the adequacy of a low-earth orbit system to provide satellite navigation services.

George Freeman:

The Government's investment was not predicated on OneWeb's ability to provide PNT services. Future generations of OneWeb satellites may have the ability to enhance the resilience of a sovereign UK PNT system, together with terrestrial options.

■ Small Businesses: Carbon Emissions

Jim Shannon:

[\[50021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps he has taken to support small businesses to contribute to the Government's net zero target.

Greg Hands:

Ahead of the UN climate change conference (COP26), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has launched the Together for Our Planet

(TFOP) Business Climate Leaders campaign, aimed at encouraging as many UK small businesses as possible to join the 'Race to Zero' – a global effort to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we all generate to zero by 2050.

Small businesses join the Race to Zero via the SME Climate Commitment. Upon making the SME Climate Commitment, UK small businesses gain access to a Together For Our Planet digital toolkit so they can display to customers they are taking action as part of a UN- and Government-backed campaign.

■ Subsidies: Disclosure of Information

John Penrose:

[50653]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish the quantitative calculations and evidence supporting the statement in the Subsidy Control Bill's Impact Assessment, section 290, that lowering transparency thresholds for publication from £500,000 to either £175,000 or £0 would have a net additional benefit of 0.00001 per cent a year.

Paul Scully:

The Bill's Impact Assessment can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/subsidy-control-bill-2021-bill-documents>.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Arts and Musicians: EU Countries

Dan Jarvis:

[48235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on providing additional financial support to touring (a) artists and (b) music organisations travelling to the European Union.

Julia Lopez:

This government recognises the importance of the UK's creative and cultural industries, not only to the economy and international reputation of the United Kingdom, but also to the wellbeing and enrichment of its people. We want musicians and performers to be able to tour abroad easily.

We recognise that challenges remain around touring, and we are continuing to work closely with the industry. In order to support this we have published guidance on GOV.UK, including updated [travel advice](#) for travelling to the EU, and [business traveller summaries](#) for individual Member States, and developed sector specific '[landing pages](#)' for GOV.UK, aimed at the creative sectors, which will allow cultural and creative professionals to easily locate and access guidance that is relevant to them.

Member States are principally responsible for deciding the rules governing what work UK visitors can undertake in each Member State. This is why we have spoken to every EU Member State about the importance of touring. From these discussions, 19

out of 27 Member States have confirmed that UK musicians and performers do not need visas or work permits for some short-term tours.

We are now actively engaging with Member States, and in particular those that do not allow any visa or permit free touring, to encourage them to more closely align requirements with the UK's generous rules, which allow creative professionals to tour easily here. DCMS ministers are speaking with their counterparts as part of these discussions, and we are working with the sector to amplify each other's lobbying efforts.

We are looking at options to support individuals and businesses to resume touring with ease. This includes looking carefully at proposals for a new Creative Export Office that could provide further practical help.

■ **Broadband: Low Incomes**

Chi Onwurah: [\[50011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions she has had with Ofcom on progress towards securing cheaper broadband tariffs for low income households.

Julia Lopez:

In the past 6 months, DCMS - working with Ofcom - have convened two Ministerial roundtables with senior representatives of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to discuss affordability and encourage the introduction of fixed broadband social tariffs for low-income households.

Following our engagement with the sector, a range of broadband social tariff packages are now available in the market to support those on low incomes or who receive specific benefits. BT, for example, recently announced a Home Essentials package to launch which will provide fibre and voice services to households in receipt of Universal Credit and certain other means-tested benefits for £15 per month. Virgin, Hyperoptic and other providers are also offering similar packages to assist on low incomes. Between them, these products are available to 99% of households across the country.

The government, together with Ofcom, continues to encourage all fixed-line providers to introduce a social tariff offer so as to ensure those on low incomes have affordable access to services and information.

■ **Broadband: Nottinghamshire**

Lee Anderson: [\[45927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on the rollout of gigabit broadband in (a) Ashfield constituency and b) Nottinghamshire.

Julia Lopez:

Gigabit coverage in Ashfield has increased significantly in the past 12 months, with 15.33% of premises able to access a gigabit-capable broadband service, compared with 1.8% in September 2020. Additionally, 99.1% of premises in Ashfield have access to superfast broadband (>30Mbps) in Ashfield, which exceeds the national average of 96.9%

To date, the Better Broadband for Nottinghamshire (BBfN) scheme has delivered 378 gigabit-capable FTTP connections across the constituency. The Hucknall exchange has also been included with Openreach's latest commercial announcement, with delivery expected to be completed between now and April 2024.

We are backing Project Gigabit with £5 billion so hard to reach communities are not left out. Nottinghamshire falls within Phase 2 (Lot 10) of Project Gigabit. Preparations for Phase 2 are already well underway and following the Open Market Review and Public Review, formal procurement should start in November 2022 in Nottinghamshire.

Concurrently, premises in rural areas may also be in line for funding through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, with up to £210m allocated to the scheme over the next four years to support hard to reach communities. The voucher scheme offers up to £1,500 for homes and £3,500 for businesses to help to cover the costs of installing gigabit broadband to people's doorsteps when used as part of a group scheme. Home and business owners can check the eligibility of their address and then look up suppliers in their area by going to <https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/>.

Nottinghamshire has made good use of the scheme so far, seeing 135 voucher connections worth £340,030, with a further 372 vouchers to be connected, totalling £948,290.

■ Channel Four: Privatisation**Damian Green:****[45653]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to (a) undertake and (b) publish an impact assessment on the implications of the privatisation of Channel 4.

Julia Lopez:

The government has recently consulted on whether an alternative ownership model for Channel 4 (but one where it retains a public service remit) may be better for the broadcaster, and better for the country.

We want Channel 4 to continue to be a public service broadcaster, and we want it to and continue to contribute socially, economically and culturally to life across the UK. But there is a wealth of evidence - including Ofcom's recent report - on the future challenges facing our traditional linear TV broadcasters. Channel 4 is uniquely constrained in its ability to meet these challenges while it remains under public ownership - particularly because its access to capital and ability to pursue strategic partnership opportunities is limited.

Moving Channel 4 into private ownership could allow it to access new capital, take advantage of international opportunities, and create strategic partnerships only available through the private sector.

Consulting on the broadcaster's future has therefore been about ensuring that Channel 4 can continue to contribute to the UK's success in public service broadcasting for years to come, and how we ensure its ownership model best supports this aim

The consultation opened on 6 July, running for 10 weeks, before closing on 14 September. We are currently analysing responses to our consultation, and evidence received through it, to inform our policy-making decisions. Once we have answered the questions set out in the consultation, we will know what specific impacts to assess and will therefore be in a position to carry out an impact assessment.

Damian Green:

[\[45789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government will take to safeguard Channel 4's remit in the event of its privatisation.

Julia Lopez:

The Government has recently consulted on whether an alternative ownership model for Channel 4 (but one where it retains a public service remit) may be better for the broadcaster, and better for the country.

We want Channel 4 to continue to be a public service broadcaster, and we want it to and continue to contribute socially, economically and culturally to life across the UK. The reason the Government is looking into the future ownership model of Channel 4 is to ensure its sustainability and ability to deliver a PSB remit for decades to come.

Our consultation has examined Channel 4's remit and obligations within this framework. We are currently analysing responses to our consultation, and evidence received through it, to inform our policy-making decisions.

Damian Green:

[\[45790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make and publish an assessment of the impact of privatising Channel 4 on businesses and jobs in the UK TV production sector.

Julia Lopez:

The government recognises that Channel 4 has consistently delivered on its remit in the decades since being established, including supporting the UK's independent production sector.

Forty years on, this sector is now flourishing. Independent production is increasingly less reliant on income from UK public service broadcasters, and will continue to be in demand for the high-quality, differentiated, distinctively British content it produces. In the 10 years between 2008 and 2018, the contribution of PSB commissions to sector revenue fell from 64% to 42%, due in large part to the growth of international revenue.

The consultation opened on 6 July, running for 10 weeks, before closing on 14 September. We are currently analysing responses to our consultation. Once we have answered the questions set out in the consultation, we will know what specific impacts to assess and will therefore be in a position to carry out an impact assessment

Whatever decision we make, it will not compromise this government's commitment to the independent production sector and wider creative economy. Our support for the UK film and TV industry has helped it bounce back from the impact of the pandemic when it had to shut-down in March 2020. For Q4 2020 the UK film and TV industry had the second highest production spend for any quarter on record - at £1.19 billion.

Last year, the government invested over £1 billion through the creative sector tax reliefs which support the UK screen sectors. In High-End TV, the UK has seen a production boom worth over £4 billion since a dedicated tax relief was introduced in 2013.

More than 600 productions have been supported by the government's UK Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, protecting over 55,000 jobs and securing £1.9 billion of production spend.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[49147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of privatising Channel 4 on Yorkshire's economy.

Julia Lopez:

The government has recently consulted on whether an alternative ownership model for Channel 4 (but one where it retains a public service remit) may be better for the broadcaster, and better for the country.

Consulting on the broadcaster's future is about ensuring that Channel 4 can continue to contribute to the UK's success in public service broadcasting for years to come, and how we ensure its ownership model best supports this aim.

Channel 4's economic contributions to the nations and regions of the UK is an issue we have consulted on. We value Channel 4's contribution to levelling up, and we consider a continued and renewed commitment to it may be appropriate to any change of ownership.

The consultation opened on 6 July, running for 10 weeks, before closing on 14 September. We are currently analysing responses to our consultation, and evidence received through it, to inform our policy-making decisions. Once we have answered the questions set out in the consultation, we will know what specific impacts to assess and will therefore be in a position to carry out an impact assessment.

■ Culture: North of England

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[48237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with ministers in the Cabinet Office on the steps being taken by them to include the level of funding on culture in the North as part of the Levelling Up White Paper.

Julia Lopez:

The government recognises the crucial role that cultural investment can play in Levelling Up. We are committed to ensuring that areas across England benefit fully from our funding programmes and experience the potential of culture to boost local growth, increase visitor numbers, bolster talent and attract investment. DCMS is engaging closely with other parts of government in the preparation for the Levelling Up White Paper.

DCMS has already provided a significant amount of funding for the North. In particular, the Culture Recovery Fund has provided £287,931,077 across the North of England, including £104,944,697 for the Yorkshire and Humber region. In addition, there are 223 ACE National Portfolio Organisations in the North West, Yorkshire and the Northeast regions combined.

Looking beyond the pandemic, culture is prioritized as a target for investment in the government's £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund, and I am confident that the North will benefit significantly from the cultural projects supported by this Fund.

■ Events Industry

Dan Jarvis:

[\[48236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support venue and music organisations in booking international artists to perform in the UK.

Julia Lopez:

The government recognises the world-leading position of the UK music sector and the rich breadth of musical talent across the UK. We also appreciate venues and music organisations' desire to book international artists to further contribute to the diversity and richness of the UK's cultural offering.

Creative and cultural professionals from non-visa national countries, such as EU Member States and the US, can come to the UK for up to one month without requiring a visa if they are paid by a UK source, or for up to three months without requiring a visa if they are sponsored by a registered tour sponsor. They will not require a visa if they are performing at a "Permit Free Festival", which includes a range of events from Glastonbury to the London Jazz Festival. If they are not receiving payment from a UK source, EU artists can come to the UK and undertake a range of activities related to their profession, including performances, for up to 6 months visa-free. The UK does not have work permits.

We are looking at further options to help support touring, including proposals for a Cultural Export Office that could provide practical help for those looking to tour and export worldwide.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis: [\[48238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he plans to use Event Research Programmes (ERP) to avoid complete closures of (a) venues and (b) events in the future.

Julia Lopez:

The Events Research Programme (ERP) pilot events ran across a range of settings, venues, and activities, with findings informing the return of events in a structured, scientifically and ethically robust manner.

The pilot events gathered evidence associated with different settings, including approaches to managing and mitigating transmission risk. They explored how different approaches to social distancing, ventilation, and test-on-entry protocols could ease opening, and maximise participation.

The ERP has provided important evidence on the variety of settings and differences within venues such as ventilation systems, the organisation of events, venue design, and attendee behaviour.

This has provided an understanding of how different settings and mitigations impact specific risk factors. It also provided significant evidence of the operational, logistical and commercial implications for events of differing types and the heterogeneity found in events settings.

The findings from the Events Research Programme continue to inform government policy-making.

EDUCATION

■ Organs: Donors

Jim Shannon: [\[50665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward legislative proposals on the teaching of organ donation in post-primary education settings.

Mr Robin Walker:

The national curriculum includes content that can be used by teachers as an opportunity to inform pupils about organ donation. For example, pupils are taught about this as part of the Key Stage 4 science curriculum. The national curriculum is compulsory in state-maintained schools and is often used as a benchmark by academies and free schools.

Since September 2020, it has been compulsory for schools to teach relationships education to primary school-aged pupils, relationships and sex education to secondary school-aged pupils and health education to all pupils in state-maintained schools. The statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education sets out that by the end of secondary school, pupils should know about the science relating to blood, organ and stem cell donation.

The department has published teacher training modules, including online modules for primary and secondary teachers containing key knowledge and facts to help teachers understand what they must teach in relation to the new requirements. This can be done flexibly and can include teaching about organ donation.

As with other aspects of the curriculum, schools continue to have flexibility over how they deliver important topics and use their autonomy and local community knowledge to do this.

Health education in schools in Northern Ireland are matters for the Department of Education for Northern Ireland.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Fisheries

Neil Parish:

[\[50004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he (a) has made and (b) plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of using powers under The Common Fisheries Policy and Aquaculture (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 to apply trade sanctions on relevant stocks against a nation State that is overfishing, for the purposes of securing the most advantageous deals for the UK fishing industry.

Victoria Prentis:

Powers set out under Retained Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing. The measures can include targeted trade sanctions on the species that has been caught. Sustainable fishing remains a priority for UK and we continue to consult a range of countries through bilateral and multilateral engagement to agree suitable harvest control rules to prevent overfishing.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Afghanistan: Asylum

Rachael Maskell:

[\[50092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she is having with the Government of Qatar on (a) evacuation of Hazara

families and (b) bringing Hazara families to the UK under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[50093\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she is having with the Government of Qatar on (a) evacuation of LGBT+ people and (b) bringing LGBT+ people to the UK under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[50094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she is having with the Government of Qatar on (a) evacuation of Christians and (b) bringing Christians to the UK under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme.

Amanda Milling:

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. The UK also led work on the recent UN Security Council resolution, demonstrating our commitment to holding the Taliban to account on human rights. We are working urgently with neighbouring countries to ensure that at-risk Afghans who are eligible to come to the UK can secure for safe passage, including through the former Foreign Secretary's visit to Qatar between 1 and 3 September. Our Embassy to Afghanistan has temporarily relocated to Qatar to lead our diplomatic, security and humanitarian engagement and a Rapid Deployment Team has been deployed to help those in transit. The UK is formally launching a resettlement programme, the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, providing a safe and legal route for up to 20,000 Afghans in the region over the coming years, with 5,000 in the first year. This scheme will include Afghans who face a particular risk from the Taliban, for example because of their role in standing up for democracy and human rights or because of their gender, sexuality or religion.

■ Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[50658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what advice her Department is providing to British nationals in Afghanistan on where they are able to access medical treatments.

Amanda Milling:

FCDO Travel Advice for Afghanistan is regularly updated to keep British nationals informed of developments. There continue to be very limited medical facilities available in Afghanistan and access is likely to be greatly reduced due to the deteriorating situation. Work continues to explore all possible avenues to ensure that any British nationals who remain in Afghanistan are able to leave safely if they wish to do so. We have asked all British nationals in Afghanistan to register their presence with us and we are working to verify all those who have submitted their details.

■ Afghanistan: Chevening Scholarships Programme

Rachael Maskell:

[\[50091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is taking steps to provide safe passage out of Afghanistan to Afghan Chevening scholars; and what his Department's policy is on the level of priority Afghan Chevening scholars have for UK Government support.

Amanda Milling:

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.

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.

The Chevening Secretariat is in touch with all Afghan Chevening scholars and their families, and is liaising with universities, local authorities and the Home Office to help scholars access support in the UK. Afghan scholars and their families who travelled in evacuation flights have automatically been granted an initial 6 months leave to remain in the UK. This means that those scholars and their dependents can work, study, receive healthcare and apply for support with accommodation and living costs. The Home Office is offering all Afghan arrivals bridging accommodation, if they have not yet been able to identify permanent accommodation. Scholars entering from third countries will come on student visas.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[50849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many (a) former and (b) current Afghan Chevening Scholars have entry clearance to arrive in the UK; how many of those scholars have arrived since April 2021 under (i) the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or (ii) another entry policy; if he will provide details of all entry policies through which former and current Chevening Scholars can arrive in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

Between 15 and 29 August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. Approximately 500 of these are 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.

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 out of Afghanistan and any engagement with the Taliban will emphasise this first and foremost.

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■ Afghanistan: Repatriation

Chi Onwurah:

[\[50015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions her predecessor had with his counterparts in Pakistan and other neighbouring countries to establish safe routes out of Afghanistan, prior to August 2021.

Amanda Milling:

Between 23 August 2019 and 18 August 2021 the previous Foreign Secretary and Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon met or contacted their counterparts from Afghanistan's neighbours over fifty times to discuss Afghanistan and to advance the Government's priorities in relation to that country. Key engagements for the previous Foreign Secretary included: on 28 June 2021 participating in the Global Coalition Against DAESH Ministerial Meeting in Italy; and on 29 June 2021 meeting with India's Minister of External Affairs Jaishankar and Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu. For Lord Ahmad, these included: meeting External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Shringla, Justice Minister Prasad and Home Minister Reddy during a visit to India between 14 and 20 March 2021; meeting Prime Minister Khan and Foreign Minister Qureshi during a visit to Pakistan between 23 and 24 June 2021; and meeting Uzbek Foreign Minister Kamilov during a visit to Tashkent on 15 and 16 July 2021.

■ EU Countries: Diplomatic Service

Paul Blomfield:

[\[50002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many diplomats the Government employed in the UK Mission to the EU in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021.

Amanda Milling:

At the end of the two most recent financial years, the number of FCDO UK Based staff working in the UK Mission to the EU was between 100-119 for 2019-20 and between 90-99 for 2020-21.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Flags

Justin Madders:

[\[50682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to her Department since 2019.

Amanda Milling:

Union Jack flags for the department are supplied through our Facilities Management provider (Mitie).

Justin Madders:

[\[50683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many and what proportion of the Union Jack flags purchased by her Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

Amanda Milling:

Since 2019 the FCDO has brought two six yard (India Tower) and two three yard flags. All flags purchased by the department are supplied by Mitie, through The Flag Consultancy. These are all manufactured in the UK.

■ France: Foreign Relations

Jim Shannon:

[\[50664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her French counterpart on reported allegations that President Macron has obstructed plans for an Anglo-French summit.

Wendy Morton:

Ministers at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regularly engage with their French counterparts to discuss a wide range of issues in the bilateral relationship. Following her appointment on 15 September, a meeting between the Foreign Secretary and her counterpart is being arranged.

■ Iran: Climate Change

Ian Mearns:

[\[49994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take steps at the COP26 summit to establish an international mechanism to help prevent the Government-led crackdown on environmentalists and water shortage protests in Iran under the new president, Ebrahim Raisi.

James Cleverly:

The UK has designated Iran as a Human Rights Priority Country and we continue to take action with the international community to press Iran to improve its poor human rights record. This will include using all opportunities during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course, which includes committing to improving human rights in Iran.

■ Overseas Aid

Neale Hanvey:

[\[50155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the potential role for (a) UK and international volunteers and (b) UK Non Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Organisations which facilitate volunteering in the delivery of the UK's global aid priorities.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government appreciates the contribution volunteers and civil society organisations can make to the UK's global aid priorities. Our Volunteering for Development (V4D) programme is helping poor and marginalised people globally to access more relevant and inclusive education, health, and livelihoods services. For example, through V4D's Sisters for Sisters project in Nepal, women community volunteers have improved participation by younger girls in schools through a focus on gender inclusion and addressing barriers that prevent or limit participation.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Sarah Owen:

[\[50773\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, in the context of the evacuation of people to the UK from Afghanistan following the Taliban offensive in summer 2021, what plans he has to evaluate the effectiveness of the Government's ability to respond to casework from hon. Members during an emergency situation.

Amanda Milling:

Responding to MPs' cases and correspondence remains a top priority for the Government and the FCDO has been working tirelessly to undertake the task. Staff from across the global FCDO network have been pulled into the crisis surge team along with colleagues from MOD and HMRC. We have received over 200,000 emails and had multiple shifts of over 100 people working throughout the day and night, 7 days a week to deliver and will continue to prioritise incoming correspondence. As we always do following a major crisis, we will be conducting an internal review to learn lessons to inform our response to future crises.

■ Uyghur Tribunal

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[50647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether officials in her Department have had discussions with their Chinese counterparts on the Uyghur Tribunal chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC.

Amanda Milling:

The Chinese Ambassador had an introductory meeting with the former Minister for Asia, Nigel Adams MP, on 8 September, where the issue of the Uyghur Tribunal was raised. The former Minister for Asia reiterated the UK Government's deep concern

about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, and made clear that the UK Government would not interfere with the tribunal's work.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Coronavirus: Hospitals**

John Redwood:

[\[48123\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost has been of setting up and closing down the Nightingale hospitals introduced in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

Total projected funding for the Nightingale hospital programme was agreed and separately ring-fenced at £466 million.

National Health Service providers are currently auditing their accounts for 2020-21 and the final spending outturn against this funding will be published in due course.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Hutchison Ports UK**

John McDonnell:

[\[41625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions and meetings (a) Ministers and (b) officials in his Department have held with Hutchison Group on delays to shipments at Felixstowe port.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: There have been no such discussions or meetings.

■ **Health Services: Weather**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[49198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of winter 2021-22 on the NHS; and what mitigation measures he has put in place to prevent any crisis in the NHS during that period.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with National Health Service providers to ensure appropriate operational plans are in place for winter, including meeting potential increases in the demand for emergency care driven by seasonal flu and COVID-19.

We have launched the largest ever seasonal flu vaccination programme and COVID-19 booster vaccines for priority groups and provided an additional £1 billion this year to address backlogs in elective care.

Hospitals: North West**Derek Twigg:** [\[49956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which acute hospitals declared major incidents in (a) Cheshire, (b) Merseyside and (c) the North West on (i) 1 August 2021 and (ii) 2 September 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: No major incidents were declared.

NHS: Migrant Workers**Stephen Timms:** [\[51576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason working families without permanent residence in the UK, who pay income tax and National Insurance, are also required to pay NHS surcharges.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The National Health Service is a residency-based healthcare system, meaning that people who do not live here on a lawful, settled basis must contribute to the cost of their care, regardless of individual tax status. All temporary migrants of more than six months are subject to the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) at the point of visa application. This allows them to access NHS services without further charge while they are here with some exceptions. The IHS ensures that individuals do not face unexpected treatment bills and reduces the administrative burden on frontline staff of identifying chargeable patients and recovering charges.

Teignmouth Hospital**Anne Marie Morris:** [\[51707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to make a decision on the future of Teignmouth Hospital.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: Following the original request to refer from Devon County Council Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee on 25 March 2021, the Department has been in regular correspondence with them to secure additional information needed to assess whether to refer this case to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel. This information has now been received and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care will make a decision in due course.

HOME OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Immigration**

Chi Onwurah: [\[50014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what (a) funding and (b) staff resources have been allocated to the 44 (0)2475 389980 number for non-UK passport holders in Afghanistan since it opened.

Kevin Foster:

Funding has been put in place to manage the contact to the helpline and facilitate the set up and staffing to manage this line. The volumes have been closely monitored in line with staffing and we are working on the final funding for this.

The department continue to closely monitor and review the volume of calls being made to the helpline; as the volumes have significantly reduced over the period since the line opened we have reviewed staffing in line with requirements. At its peak the line had up to 500 FTE staff available to be deployed.

■ Airports: Licensing Laws

Paul Maynard: [\[49985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 6 April 2020 to Question 25059, on Licensing Laws: Aviation, when she plans to publish her Department's response to the consultation on airside alcohol licensing at international airports in England and Wales, which closed on 1 February 2019.

Kit Malthouse:

We plan to publish the response to the consultation on airside alcohol licensing in the near future.

■ Asylum: Employment

Dame Meg Hillier: [\[50633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers have been granted permission to work as a result of the time taken for her Department process their case in last 12 months.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office are unable to state how many asylum seekers have been granted permission to work as a result of the time take taken for the Department to process their cases in the last 12 months as the data is only held on paper case files or within the notes sections of the Home Office's databases. Therefore, the number of asylum seekers granted permission to work is not held in a reportable format.

However, the Home Office do publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision or further review and can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics, Asylum applications awaiting a decision, by duration:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-applications-decisions-and-resettlement>

■ Cars: Theft

Preet Kaur Gill: [51019]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many car thefts related to exploits in keyless technology have been recorded in (a) Birmingham and (b) the West Midlands in each of the last five years.

Preet Kaur Gill: [51020]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps recent steps she has taken to work with manufacturers to reduce car thefts using exploits in keyless technology.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office doesn't hold data on the number of car thefts related to exploits in keyless technology.

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) collects data on car theft incidents and method of entry, which has, since April 2018, included the method of 'Offender manipulated signal from remote locking device'. Comparable data prior April 2018 are not available. Due to lower levels of responses to these CSEW questions, it is not possible to break the data down by region or city.

The most recently available data is available at Table_3 below:

[Nature of crime: vehicle-related theft - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

The Government is tackling vehicle crime as a priority. We continue to work closely with police and motor manufacturers through the National Vehicle Crime Working Group, established by the National Police Chiefs' Council lead for vehicle crime and overseen by the Government's Crime and Justice Taskforce. This includes consideration of how we can reduce the number of vehicles being stolen.

■ Football Banning Orders

Carla Lockhart: [50175]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people in the UK have been issued with football banning orders in each of the last five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office publishes annual figures on the number of football banning orders issued each year. The latest figures for the last five years are available from tables 1 to 4 of the ['Football-related arrests and banning orders'](#) publication.

■ National Security

Martyn Day:

[\[50727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made a recent assessment of national security threats to the UK posed by Iran and its new president Ebrahim Raisi.

Damian Hinds:

The safety and security of our citizens is the Government's top priority. In March of this year, we made clear in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy that we are committed to addressing growing threats from Iran, as well as other states. We will continue to use all tools at our disposal to protect the UK and our interests from any Iran-based threats.

■ Students: Finance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[50019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on raising awareness for prospective applicants to student finance of the requirement to have been resident in the UK for three years.

Kevin Foster:

There is regular engagement between the Home Office and the Department for Education on the provision of education for international students.

The Department for Education is responsible for determining which students qualify for Home Fee Status and providing information to prospective students regarding their eligibility.

■ Theft: Criminal Investigation

Jim Shannon:

[\[50022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to improve the effectiveness of the investigation of suspected (a) theft and (b) dog theft offences.

Kit Malthouse:

Investigation of suspected theft is a matter for the police. The Government is committed to recruiting 20,000 more police officers in England and Wales by March 2023. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the police have now recruited an extra 9,814 officers, 49% of the 20,000-officer target.

We recognise the distress dog and indeed all pet theft causes and are committed to doing more to prevent these cruel crimes. As part of the work of the Government's Pet Theft Taskforce, which launched on 8 May, we have assembled evidence and considered the issue from end to end, including causes, prevention, reporting, enforcement and prosecution.

The report of the Taskforce was published on 2 September and as well as recommending a new pet abduction offence, the Taskforce recommended the Government continues to work with the police to improve consistent recording and data collection of pet thefts, and makes improvements to pet microchipping to support the identification of lost and stolen dogs.

The report of the Taskforce can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pet-theft-taskforce-report>

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Department for International Trade: Flags

Justin Madders: [50061]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to her Department since 2019.

Penny Mordaunt:

Union Jack flags flown by the Department's buildings were supplied by:

- Flag Consultancy
- House of Flags

The Department's ceremonial Union Jack flags were supplied by;

- JW Plant – The Flag Company

Justin Madders: [50062]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many and what proportion of Union Jack flags purchased by her Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

Penny Mordaunt:

There were 14 Union Jack flags purchased in the last two years for use by the Department, all of which were manufactured in the United Kingdom.

JUSTICE

■ Parole: Reviews

Dr Luke Evans: [50774]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent progress has been made on reviewing the parole system.

Kit Malthouse:

As announced in October 2020, a Root and Branch Review of the parole system is currently underway. This review will draw together the reforms and changes that have taken place in the parole system in recent years. It is focusing on issues such as the

future constitution of the Parole Board, ways in which to improve the overall transparency of the parole system, the possibility of public parole hearings in some cases and allowing for victims to observe hearings if they wish. This will fulfil our manifesto commitments made before the last general election.

The full terms of reference of the Review can be read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parole-system-reform/terms-of-reference>

I intend to report on the progress of the Root and Branch Review later this year.

■ Sexual Offences: Rehabilitation

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[48329]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 15 July to Question 29878 on Sexual Offences: Rehabilitation, how many and what proportion of biologically male transgender prisoners in the male estate have accessed accredited Sex Offender Treatment Programmes in each of the last five years.

Victoria Atkins:

The data HMPPS hold on transgender prisoners (published in the annual HMPPS Offender Equalities Report) is snapshot data and importantly has not historically included prisoners who have a Gender Recognition Certificate, due to legal restrictions. There was no data gathering exercise in 2020 due to the pandemic. HMPPS are actively working on ways to improve the scope and quality of data held on transgender prisoners while still respecting their rights and privacy.

Analysis of accredited programme participation for each year's transgender offender cohort requires a data matching exercise as these pieces of information are held in separate data sets. A response could only be obtained at disproportionate costs as the analyses would be new and require significant resource to ensure accuracy and reliability.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Apprentices and Kickstart Scheme

Rachael Maskell:

[50720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to support local authorities to (a) invest in apprenticeships and (b) identify Kickstart placements in their maintenance departments in order to tackle potential skills shortages in those teams.

Neil O'Brien:

Officials in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities work closely with their counterparts in the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions, to collectively engage at regional and local levels with organisations such as mayoral combined authorities, local enterprise partnerships and local government on skills and labour market challenges.

There are currently 637 high-quality employer-designed apprenticeship standards available, supporting employers, including local authorities, to develop the skilled workforces they need, which include maintenance skills. To support employers in creating new apprenticeship opportunities, a higher incentive payment of £3,000 for each new apprentice they recruit as a new employee between 1 April and 30 September 2021, has been introduced in England.

In addition, the Department for Work and Pensions is working closely with over 100 local authorities across Great Britain to deliver the Kickstart Scheme. Local authorities are acting as gateway organisations helping to source Kickstart jobs from local employers, with some local authorities also having Kickstart jobs within their own organisations.

■ Rented Housing: Pets

Emma Hardy:

[\[50130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of removing barriers to renting for people with pets.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government recognises the importance of pet ownership to many renting in the private rented sector. We have therefore taken steps to make it easier for responsible tenants to keep pets in the private rented sector, as part of a broader mission to improve life for tenants.

We have revised the national Model Tenancy Agreement, the Government's recommended contract for assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector, in order to make it easier for tenants with pets to find private landlords who will accept them. The revision aims to strike the balance between protecting private landlords from situations where their properties are damaged by badly behaved pets and ensuring responsible pet owning tenants are not unfairly penalised.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Northern Ireland Office: Flags

Justin Madders:

[\[50694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

Conor Burns:

My Department has not purchased any Union Jack flags since 2019, and therefore, there is no list of relevant companies.

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon:

[\[50791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent steps the Government has taken to support community integration in Northern Ireland by helping to ensure that all deaths from the Troubles are commemorated appropriately.

Conor Burns:

As outlined in the Command Paper on legacy published in July, the Government remains committed to furthering reconciliation in Northern Ireland and has set out proposals for doing so.

These proposals include initiatives that aim to facilitate thoughtful and inclusive commemoration and reflection on the past for people of all backgrounds, building on the Oral History Archive proposed in the Stormont House Agreement.

The Government's proposals reflect, and continue to inform, bilateral and multilateral engagement with key stakeholders - including academic experts and the victims sector. We are still listening to, and carefully considering different views to ensure commemorative measures are appropriate and effective.

TRANSPORT

■ Electric Vehicles: Bicycles

Alex Sobel:

[\[51824\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of changing the maximum speed of e-bikes from 15.5mph to 20mph, in line with legislation in the US.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department reviewed the case for amending the current speed and power restrictions as part of the Future of Transport Regulatory Review Call for Evidence published in 2020 and has no plans to amend the existing regulations.

■ Great Western Railway Line: Electrification

Thangam Debonnaire:

[\[51724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress he has made on plans to complete the electrification of the Great Western Railway line between Bath and Bristol.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Electrification of the railway between Bath and Bristol has been recognised as a priority in Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy. We are working with Network Rail to consider how decarbonisation priority investment proposals are taken forward through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline.

■ Railways: Employment**Daisy Cooper:**[\[51866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2021 to Question 38423, whether no Train Operating Company has informed his Department that they have already started (a) freezing and (b) reducing recruitment of (i) train drivers, (ii) on-board supervisors, (iii) guards or other on-board train crew who have similar duties, (iv) railway despatch operatives and (v) station management staff.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government has not been informed by Train Operating Companies of any plans deriving from the Enabling Framework Agreement and the work of the Rail Industry Recovery Group.

■ Travel: USA**Philip Davies:**[\[51653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with US authorities on general travel by British citizens from the UK to the US; when he expects such travel to be able to commence again; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State for Transport has regular contact with the US, including the US Secretary of Transportation.

On 20 September the US government confirmed that they will be allowing vaccinated Brits into the US from early November, reciprocating the policy introduced by the UK on 2 August. This demonstrates the hard work and progress made by the UK-US Experts Working Group to restart transatlantic travel and kick start the economy. The Experts Working Group will continue to work together to ensure the return of safe and sustainable international travel.

TREASURY**■ Health and Social Care Levy****Rachael Maskell:**[\[50089\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Health and Social Care Levy on working people drawing their state pension.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Alongside the announcement of the Health and Social Care Levy, the government has published a number of documents that set out the impact of the policy, including distributional analysis and a Tax Information and Impact Note.

■ Housing: Construction

Caroline Lucas: [\[50975\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on Community Led Housing in respect of the number of community led homes that could be built with £65 million of additional Government funding; if he will make it his Department's policy to increase the Community Housing Fund in the upcoming Spending Review; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government recognises that the community-led housing sector offers significant potential for helping to meet housing need across the country. Discussions on the upcoming Spending Review will cover a range of important issues.

■ NHS: Finance

Mr Alistair Carmichael: [\[50626\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what additional funding has been provided to the NHS as a result of the UK's departure from the EU and statements made during the 2016 referendum campaign.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The NHS is a key spending priority for the government and that is why it committed in 2018 to a historic settlement that provides a cash increase of £33.9 billion a year by 2023-24. The announcement was clear that *"some of the extra funding will come from the money the government will no longer spend on the annual membership subscription to the European Union after Britain has left"*

Since then, we have gone even further, and announced a new Health and Social Care Levy which will provide a further £15.7bn to the NHS over the next 3 years.

■ Treasury: Flags

Justin Madders: [\[50684\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

Justin Madders: [\[50685\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of the Union Jack flags purchased by his Department in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

Helen Whately:

All Union flags purchased by the Treasury since January 2019 were manufactured in the UK.

WORK AND PENSIONS■ **Children: Poverty****Colleen Fletcher:****[50044]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate her Department has made of the proportion of children in relative poverty where at least one adult in that household is in employment in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry in each of the last five years.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: We do not hold information on the composition of children who are in relative poverty by work status at the household level.

However, the proportion of children in relative low income, before housing costs, where at least one adult in that **family** is in employment for Coventry North East constituency and Coventry for the five years to 2019/20 can be extracted using the Children in Low Income Families dataset on <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

■ **Disability: Coronavirus****Helen Hayes:****[50733]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps the Government is taking to measure the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on people with disabilities.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: We are committed to ensuring all disabled people can play a full role in society. That is why we published the National Disability Strategy on 28 July which takes into account the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people and focuses on the issues that disabled people say affect them the most in all aspects of life.

The impact of COVID-19 on disabled people, and those with health conditions, continues to be monitored across Government using a range of sources including regular engagement with disabled people and disability stakeholders to ensure the needs of disabled people are considered in the Government's response to, and recovery from COVID-19

The Disability Unit is also working with the Office for National Statistics to improve our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people.

We are learning as much as we can, as quickly as we can about this virus, who it affects and how best to keep everyone safe from it and protect those who may be more vulnerable than others.

■ Universal Credit

Angela Crawley:

[\[48275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the removal of the £20 universal credit uplift on child poverty in (a) Lanark and Hamilton East constituency and (b) other areas of deprivation.

David Rutley:

It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the £20 uplift on child poverty. This is particularly the case at the moment given the uncertainty around the speed of the economic recovery, and how this will be distributed across the population.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work. Helping parents to move into and remain in work offers the best opportunity for families to move out of poverty and to improve children's long-term outcomes. A child living in a household where every adult is working is about 5 times less likely to be in absolute poverty (before housing costs) than a child in a household where nobody works.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; Restart, which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year; and JETS, which provides light touch employment support for people who are claiming either Universal Credit or New Style Jobseekers Allowance, for up to 6 months, helping participants effectively re-engage with the labour market and focus their job search. We have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job. In total, our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

This year, we are also investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children will benefit from a range of support, including a healthy and nutritious meal as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer

and Christmas holidays in 2021. We also increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 in April, which helps eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins.

■ **Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme**

Kirsty Blackman:

[\[49158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of the 33 claims made to the Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme on behalf of people who have died over the last five years have (a) concluded and (b) resulted in a positive outcome.

Chloe Smith:

Of the 33 claims in the last five years, 6 have concluded, with one resulting in an award.