



Daily Report

Friday, 15 October 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 October 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:33 P.M., 15 October 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

■ **British American Tobacco: Corruption**

Bob Blackman:

[\[51675\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, with reference to the BBC Panorama programme of 12 September 2021, whether the Serious Fraud Office plans to review its assessment of the compliance of British American Tobacco with the Bribery Act 2010 in response to the findings of the Panorama programme.

Alex Chalk:

Following a three-year investigation into British American Tobacco, in January 2021 the SFO determined that this case did not meet the evidential tests as defined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. As with all cases that fail this first limb of the Code, it was therefore not in the public interest to continue with the investigation.

The SFO is aware of the allegations made in the BBC's Panorama programme of 12 September 2021 and will review and assess any material which is provided to it.

■ **British American Tobacco: Fraud**

Bob Blackman:

[\[51674\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what plans she has to refer the allegations made in the BBC's Panorama programme of 12 September 2021 regarding British American Tobacco to the Serious Fraud Office.

Alex Chalk:

The SFO is aware of the allegations made in the BBC's Panorama programme of 12 September 2021. Following a three-year investigation into the British American Tobacco, in January 2021 the SFO determined that this case did not meet the evidential tests as defined in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. As with all cases that fail this first limb of the Code, it was therefore not in the public interest to continue with the investigation.

The SFO continues to assist its international law enforcement partners with ongoing investigations related to this matter and will assess any new material it receives. The SFO does not comment on the actions it takes to assess allegations.

■ **Sam Pybus**

Peter Gibson:

[\[52602\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, if she will examine the length of sentence handed to Sam Pybus under the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

Suella Braverman:

My office received a number of referrals to review the sentence in this deeply disturbing case. I agree that the sentence appears too low, and I have referred it to the Court of Appeal to be reviewed. The case will be heard in due course and the Court of Appeal will decide whether to increase the sentence.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ British Business Bank: Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme****Owen Thompson:**[\[51779\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme lenders are not required to notify the British Business Bank of the repayment of loans.

Paul Scully:

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme lenders are not specifically required to notify the British Business Bank of loan repayments. This is because, at the time the scheme was launched, a decision was taken to streamline administrative burdens on lenders to allow them to concentrate resources on processing the large number of applications from businesses.

However, lenders do have an overarching duty to ensure that accurate records are kept, and loans that have reached maturity are automatically removed from the Bank's web based reporting tool.

Further information related to loan repayments for the Government's Covid-19 loan schemes will be included in the Department's 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts, to be published in due course

■ Carbon Capture and Storage: Northern Ireland**Jim Shannon:**[\[51693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to announce any carbon capture and storage projects in Northern Ireland.

Greg Hands:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution committed to establishing two industrial Carbon Capture Usage and Storage (CCUS) clusters by the mid 2020s, with the aim of four of these sites by 2030, capturing 10Mt of carbon dioxide per year. As part of the CCUS deployment process, we have announced the clusters eligible for Track-1 and expect to announce the selected Track-1 clusters from 25 October 2021.

■ Clean Steel Fund: Public Consultation

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he has taken to engage with civil society on the allocation of the Clean Steel Fund.

Lee Rowley:

The Department announced the Clean Steel Fund (CSF) in 2019 and it is currently in development. In 2019 we carried out a Call for Evidence seeking views and supporting evidence to help us develop the detailed design of the Fund, including on barriers to realising clean steel ambitions, and the opportunities to be gained in overcoming these. This Call for Evidence was open to all and we received responses from civil society, including trade associations and academics. These responses are being considered as the policy is designed.

The Government will continue to engage with a range of interested parties on the steel sector in the future.

■ Construction: Vacancies

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52537\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of skills shortages in the construction industry on progress in delivering the Government's house building and infrastructure programmes.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Government is taking to support recruitment to the construction industry in response to skills shortages in that sector.

Lee Rowley:

The Government continues to review matters related to skills on a regular basis. At the current time, output in the construction sector, with regard to Government-funded infrastructure or housing projects, continues to be solid. Statistics from the Office for National Statistics show that construction output recovered quickly during 2020, and has been at a similar level to that before the pandemic since March 2021. There is also a strong pipeline of demand. Between Q2 2020, and Q2 2021, orders for new housing increased by 154%, and for infrastructure by 98%.

The Government is working closely with the construction industry to ensure that it can attract, retain and develop the skilled workforce it needs for the future. This includes the introduction of a Talent Retention Scheme, which is now being taken forward by industry, to help workers move into construction jobs; and work with the Construction Industry Training Board and the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) to ensure effective and appropriate support for skills development.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Neale Hanvey:** [\[51030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have had with the Scottish Government (i) prior to and (b) since the UK Government's notice of termination of the covid-19 vaccine supply agreement with Valneva, on that matter.

George Freeman:

Ministers regularly discuss COVID-19 vaccine matters with the Scottish Government and other devolved administrations.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health has discussed the termination of our supply agreement with Valneva with his counterpart in the Scottish Government and the UK Government will maintain dialogue with the Scottish Government on this matter.

Neale Hanvey: [\[51031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of the UK Government's notice of termination of the covid-19 vaccine supply agreement with Valneva on his Department's ability to meet vaccine supply requirements.

Neale Hanvey: [\[51032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what contingency measures the Government has put in place to ensure adequacy of covid-19 vaccine supply in response to the Government's notice of termination of the covid-19 vaccine supply agreement with Valneva.

George Freeman:

Our vaccination programme is continuing to make phenomenal progress, with four out of every five adults now fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

I cannot comment on commercial decisions, the termination of our supply agreement with Valneva will have no impact on our vaccine supplies for autumn.

The UK has contracted for a portfolio of vaccines from a number of developers, and we have sufficient contracted supply for the expected booster campaign as well as to complete the first round of vaccinations.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[51729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reasons the Government has terminated its supply agreement with Valneva for their covid-19 vaccine.

George Freeman:

As any responsible government does, we manage our vaccine supply to meet our projected needs and to offer the best protection to those who need it, when they need it. Delays to Valneva's contracted delivery schedule have meant that their ability to

deliver an effective vaccine in the timeframe contracted for was unachievable. As such the vaccine no longer aligns with its planned use in our vaccination programme. Given the maturity of the UK's vaccination programme, and with over 80% of the UK population now double vaccinated and now an alternative (in the absence of Valneva's product) autumn/ winter vaccination campaign underway, the government has therefore taken a decision to cancel the agreement with Valneva. Due to commercial sensitivities, we cannot disclose the details of our commercial discussions with them.

UK Government officials are engaged in constructive discussions with Valneva now to seek to reach a mutually beneficial resolution to the matters.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 41806 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, on what date the approximately 0.5 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine the UK procured through COVAX were delivered.

George Freeman:

Approximately 0.5 million Pfizer doses procured through COVAX were delivered earlier this year. These doses helped the NHS deliver our vaccination programme as quickly as possible.

■ **Energy Charter: Climate Change**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the findings of Global Justice Now, published 18 September 2021, that globally, fossil fuel companies are suing governments for more than £13 billion over climate change policies which risk impacting their profits, what assessment her Department has made of the compatibility of the UK's membership of the Energy Charter Treaty with (a) the Paris Agreement objective to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees and (b) the COP26 goal to keep 1.5 degrees within reach.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Charter Treaty already calls on Member States to minimise the environmental impacts of energy operations.

Member States of the Energy Charter Treaty are currently engaged in a process to modernise the Treaty and ensure it is aligned with our climate objectives.

■ **Energy Supply: Prices**

Helen Hayes:

[\[51790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what contingency planning his Department is undertaking to help ensure that vulnerable people are not left without heating in the event of energy shortages in winter 2021, with particular reference to the elderly and disabled people.

Greg Hands:

We remain confident that gas and electricity security of supply can be maintained under a wide range of scenarios.

Catherine West:[\[52565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of UK energy suppliers on (a) the impact of high global gas prices on the UK energy market and (b) protecting household energy bills during winter 2021-22.

Greg Hands:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have been in regular contact with the regulator, Ofgem, and energy suppliers.

On 20 September 2021, a roundtable was held with leading energy suppliers and consumer groups to hear about the challenges they currently face.

A further roundtable was held on 21 September 2021 with smaller and challenger energy suppliers.

■ Energy: Billing**Catherine West:**[\[52564\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make available immediate funding for low income households who will experience an increase in their gas and electricity bills from 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.

■ Fireworks: Animal Welfare**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[51727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans the Government has to bring forward additional regulations on the sale and safe use of fireworks in response to the distress caused to animals from fireworks.

Paul Scully:

The Government takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously and we understand the concerns that some people have about the potential for distress caused to animals.

We have no current plans to place further restrictions on the sale of fireworks to the public. Through our public awareness campaign for the 2021 fireworks season, we are working with a variety of stakeholders, including animal welfare groups, to

promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks to the general public, to ensure that those using them do so safely and considerately.

■ Fossil Fuels: Storage

Mark Pritchard:

[\[51657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's strategy is on increasing its oil and gas reserves and storage capacity.

Greg Hands:

The UK benefits from having access to highly diverse sources of gas supply to ensure households, businesses and heavy industry get the energy they need.

Gas storage is not a component of overall winter supply. GB gas storage stock levels are currently comparable to previous years ahead of the winter months and storage is expected to continue its role as a source of system flexibility. BEIS is continuing to explore the future of the gas storage landscape through the UK Hydrogen Strategy, which considers the role of hydrogen storage in greater detail and whether further regulation or support mechanisms are needed to maximise its potential.

■ Fuel Poverty

John McDonnell:

[\[50941\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of households in fuel poverty; and what forecast he has made of the number of households in fuel poverty in 2022-23.

Greg Hands:

The proportion of households classified as living in fuel poverty has fallen from 22.1% in 2010, to 15% in 2018, driven by improvements in the energy performance of homes. There are now 1.3 million fewer low-income households living in the least energy efficient homes (Band E, F or G) compared to 2010.

■ Horizon Europe

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51764\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to conclude the agreement to associate to Horizon Europe.

George Freeman:

The UK and the EU agreed the terms for our association to Horizon Europe under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

As the underpinning EU legislation was not yet adopted when the TCA was agreed, this was accompanied by a Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services, which set out the parties' intention to formalise UK participation at the earliest opportunity.

Now that the EU legislation underpinning the Horizon Europe programme is in force, the UK stands ready to formalise our participation at the earliest opportunity. UK

entities are eligible and are strongly encouraged to apply for Horizon Europe funding, which the Commission has made clear in the Q&A on their website.

Rachael Maskell: [\[51765\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that research projects will be reimbursed their full grants for 2021, when the agreement is signed with Horizon Europe.

George Freeman:

The UK and the EU agreed the terms for our association to Horizon Europe under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

UK entities are eligible to apply for Horizon Europe funding; the Commission has made this clear in the Q&A section on their website.

The UK stands ready to formalise our participation at the earliest opportunity. UK entities are eligible and are strongly encouraged to apply for Horizon Europe funding, which the Commission has made clear in the Q&A on their website.

Rachael Maskell: [\[51769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the science research budget under Horizon Europe will be maintained at the same levels as Horizon 2020 funding for the UK; and what steps he is taking to secure that level of funding.

George Freeman:

Future funding decisions are subject to the outcome of the Spending Review which will set budgets from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The Chancellor has reiterated the Government's commitment to cement the UK's position as a science superpower through an ambitious R&D package.

The Government increased investment in R&D to £14.9bn for 2021/22, putting public investment at its highest level for four decades. We are committed to achieving our target of total UK investment in R&D increasing to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

The UK and the EU agreed the terms for our association to Horizon Europe under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

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Now that the EU legislation underpinning the Horizon Europe programme is in force, the UK stands ready to formalise our participation at the earliest opportunity. UK entities are eligible and are strongly encouraged to apply for Horizon Europe funding, which the Commission has made clear in the Q&A on their website.

■ Hydrogen

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what proportion of the targets for domestic green hydrogen production outlined in the Hydrogen Strategy will be allocated to the decarbonisation of heavy industry.

Greg Hands:

The Government has published the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy that builds on our ambition, working with industry, for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030.

The Government has not set specific hydrogen demand targets for different sectors of the economy because the precise mix of decarbonisation solutions will depend on how technologies and markets develop over the coming decades.

■ Hydrogen: Iron and Steel

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his Department's policies of the German Government's recent financial support for the demonstration and commercialisation of hydrogen steelmaking.

Greg Hands:

The UK is monitoring international progress on low carbon steel making trials, using hydrogen and other technologies, and the funding and policies that support them.

■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions

Caroline Lucas:

[\[51666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department plans to take to support the decarbonisation of the UK steel industry between now and 2023 ahead of the Clean Steel Fund's allocation.

Lee Rowley:

The Department announced the Clean Steel Fund (CSF) in 2019 and it is currently being designed and developed.

Other schemes are available to support the steel sector which are live now, including the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF). Through grant funding, the IETF can support energy efficiency upgrades and decarbonisation engineering studies, which are needed to prepare the sector for more ambitious decarbonisation schemes in the future.

■ Iron and Steel: Foreign Investment in UK

Gill Furniss: [\[51017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to encourage inward investment into the UK's steel sector to aid the transition to net zero carbon emissions.

Lee Rowley:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: The Government recognises the importance of the UK steel sector as a foundation industry and the role it plays in the supply chain for other important advanced manufacturing sectors in the UK, as well as for direct and indirect jobs across the country.

Decarbonising the sector is a core part of the Government's plans to meet its stated carbon emission reduction targets, for supporting local economic growth and for our levelling up agenda.

The Steel Council was reconstituted in March 2021. This forum offers the Government and industry the opportunity to work towards creating an achievable, long-term plan to support the sector's transition to a competitive, sustainable, and low carbon future.

The Government has announced a £250 million Clean Steel Fund to support the UK's steel sector to transition to lower carbon iron and steel production, through new technologies and processes, placing the sector on a pathway consistent with the UK Climate Change Act. Our expectation is that the Fund will provide a proportion of the investment for projects, with the rest funded by industry.

■ National Grid: Fires

John McDonnell: [\[50939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to undertake an investigation into the fire at the National Grid facility in Sellindge, Kent; and if he will make a statement.

Greg Hands:

The formal investigation into the fire at the Interconnexion France-Angleterre (IFA) interconnector is being led by National Grid Ventures, in their role as joint owner of the facility.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy is working closely with National Grid Ventures to support the investigation.

■ Natural Gas: Prices

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[51684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the reasons for the increase in wholesale gas supplies.

Greg Hands:

As set out by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 20 September, higher wholesale gas prices have been seen internationally in 2021. A number of factors have contributed to this increase. This increase in global gas prices is reflected in the British wholesale gas market.

There has been an increase in global gas demand as a result of economies rebounding following the removal of measures put in place to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. Combined with low levels of European gas in storage following a cold winter in Europe, this has led to a much tighter gas market with less spare capacity. In addition, high demand in Asia for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), which is transported globally by ship, and weather events in the US, have meant less LNG than expected has reached Europe.

Gas production has also been reduced, with several planned and unplanned outages, such as in Norway and the US. Other factors include essential maintenance, including projects rescheduled from 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ Natural Gas: Shortages**Rachael Maskell:**[\[52541\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a risk report of the (a) economic and (b) other impacts of shortages in gas.

Greg Hands:

As my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State set out in a statement to the House on 20 September, higher natural gas prices have been seen internationally in 2021 for a number of reasons, however the diversity and reliability of GB's sources of gas continues to minimise the risk of gas shortages.

■ Ofgem**John McDonnell:**[\[50940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish details of the (a) meetings that Ministers in his Department have held with representatives of Ofgem in the last 12 months and (b) primary matter that was discussed at each of those meetings.

Greg Hands:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have regular meetings with Ofgem senior management.

■ Procurement: China**Selaine Saxby:**[\[52626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that UK businesses can prevent the products of human rights

violations in China, particularly in the supply chain for solar farms through polysilicon, from being installed in local areas.

Greg Hands:

We are thoroughly investigating reports of forced labour in the global solar panel supply chain. In January, we announced a comprehensive package of measures to help ensure no UK organisations are complicit in the serious human rights violations being perpetrated against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

■ **Science: Research**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51766\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with UKRI Innovate UK to ensure that science research which should be in receipt of a grant under the EIT Health Investor Network will be reimbursed in full for 2021.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps is he taking to ensure that the EIT Health Investor Network is meeting its commitments under the EU Withdrawal Agreement.

George Freeman:

The UK and the EU agreed the terms for our association to Horizon Europe under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This includes participation in 2021 projects run by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

The UK stands ready to formalise our participation at the earliest opportunity. UK entities are eligible and are strongly encouraged to apply for Horizon Europe funding, which the Commission has made clear in the Q&A on their website.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that science research is fully funded from January 2022.

George Freeman:

Future funding decisions are subject to the outcome of the Spending Review which will set budgets from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The Spending Review process will conclude on 27 October. We are working with HM Treasury to agree an ambitious R&D package. In announcing the Spending Review, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer reiterated the Government's commitment to cement the UK's position as a science superpower.

The Government is already investing £14.9bn in R&D across government in 2021/22, putting public investment at its highest level for four decades. We are committed to achieving our target of total UK investment in R&D increasing to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what additional new global funding for science research he has secured for the UK after leaving the EU.

George Freeman:

The Government recognises the critical importance of global research partnerships and supporting UK researchers to collaborate across the world. Our commitment to research and innovation has been clearly demonstrated by my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget announcement of increasing investment in R&D across government to £14.6bn in 2021/22; and as set out in the Integrated Review, international collaboration is central to a healthy and productive R&D sector.

On 1st April, the Department set out an additional £250m of funding for the R&D sector. As a result, UK scientists will have access to more public funding than ever before. This takes total Government investment in R&D to £14.9 billion in 2021/22 and follows four years of significant growth in R&D funding, including a boost of more than £1.5 billion in 2020/21.

For example, our commitment is demonstrated through the Square Kilometre Array Observatory, of which the UK is a founding country. In June 2021 the start of construction in Australia and South Africa was announced at a total cost of £1.7 billion, to which the UK is committing over £270 million. When complete, this radio telescope network will be the most advanced on Earth, and its headquarters are in the UK, at Jodrell Bank just south of Manchester.

Additionally, the Department administers approximately £10m in tactical funds to enable agile, catalytic R&D collaborations with international partners. The funds support Integrated Review ambitions, Government research priorities including Net Zero, and Innovation.

Given we are currently conducting a Spending Review, it would not be appropriate to pre-judge the outcome and comment on future spending plans.

■ Tidal Power: River Mersey

Kim Johnson:

[\[52621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make it his policy to support the Mersey Tidal Power Project towards an investment position by the mid-2020's.

Greg Hands:

The Government remains open to considering well-developed proposals for harnessing tidal energy. Any such consideration would of course be subject to rigorous value-for-money assessment.

■ Vacancies**Jim Shannon:**[\[52497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help tackle labour shortages.

Paul Scully:

The Government recently announced a package of measures to ease temporary supply chain pressures in food haulage industries, brought on by the pandemic and the global economy rebounding around the world. Up to 4,000 people will soon be able to take advantage of training courses to become HGV drivers. 5,000 HGV drivers will be able to come to the UK for 3 months in the run-up to Christmas, providing short-term relief for the haulage industry. A further 5,500 visas for poultry workers will also be made available for the same short period, to avoid any potential further pressures on the food industry during this exceptional period. Ministers from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are working very closely across Government to monitor labour supply chains, identify pinch points and consider any further necessary government action.

BEIS is also working closely with other Government Departments and industry to address sector-specific challenges, which are being faced by countries around the world. For example, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently announced the implementation of the Downstream Oil Protocol. This measure will provide a temporary exemption of companies operating in the oil industry from the Competition Act 1998 for the purpose of sharing information and optimising fuel supply in the event of a disruption.

The Government is keen to see employers make long term investments in the UK domestic workforce instead of relying on labour from abroad, and businesses should be looking at how to make employment more attractive, including through wage increases and offering training. Progress is already being made in testing and hiring, and a big push towards improving pay, working conditions and diversity.

■ Valneva: Coronavirus**Neale Hanvey:**[\[51036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure diversity of (a) suppliers and (b) technology within vaccine provision in the context of the notice of termination of the covid-19 vaccine supply agreement with Valneva.

Neale Hanvey:[\[51037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will list those companies manufacturing vaccines or developing vaccines in the UK which use (a) messenger RNA and (b) inactivated virus.

George Freeman:

The Government's approach to seeking a vaccine for COVID-19 has, from the outset, been to secure access to a portfolio of candidate vaccines from a range of developers. This has resulted in four regulated COVID-19 vaccines within the portfolio to date providing both diversity of supply and diversity of vaccine type.

The Government has secured early access to 332 million COVID-19 vaccines doses through supply agreements with five separate vaccine developers. This includes agreements with:

- Pfizer/BioNTech for 135 million doses of its mRNA vaccine;
- University of Oxford/AstraZeneca for 100 million doses of its adenovirus vaccine;
- Moderna for 17 million doses of its mRNA vaccine;
- Novavax for 60 million doses of its protein adjuvant vaccine; and
- Janssen for 20 million doses of its adenovirus vaccine.

Of these COVID-19 vaccines, the AstraZeneca vaccine is manufactured in the UK and Novavax has a UK supply chain subject to regulatory approval. Vaccine manufacture is a global business, and the response to COVID-19 a global effort, and we are proud of AstraZeneca's contribution to that from the UK.

CABINET OFFICE**■ Cabinet Office: Listed Buildings****Tim Loughton:****[49016]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 10 September 2021 to Question 43371 on Cabinet Office: Listed Buildings, if he will publish a list of the (a) properties classified as heritage assets owned by his Department, (b) the most recent estimate of the value of those properties and (c) the annual income derived from those properties as opposed to the details of the body responsible for advising him on those properties' management.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ 43369](#) on 9 September 2021, and [PQ 43371](#) on 10 September 2021.

■ Cabinet Office: Topham Guerin**John McDonnell:****[41623]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what payments on contracts the Department made to Topham Guerin in August 2021; what payments are scheduled to be made to that company in September 2021; and what were the nature of those contracts.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office publishes details of all contracts over £10,000 on [Contracts Finder](#) and spend over £500, including on public information campaigns, [on gov.uk](#) on a rolling basis. This will include expenditure on this campaign and will be broken down by supplier.

This contract was modified in accordance with Regulation 72.1.(c) and 72.1.(b) of the Public Contract Regulations. Further detail is available in the [Tenders Electronic Daily supplement to the Official Journal of the EU](#).

■ Conditions of Employment: Brexit

Rachael Maskell: [\[50717\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to ensure that workers' rights are not diminished as a result of the commission looking at regulation following the UK's departure from the EU.

Rachael Maskell: [\[50718\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to ensure that environmental protections are not diminished as a result of the commission looking at regulation following the UK's departure from the EU.

Michael Ellis:

The Government is committed to high standards of workers' rights and environmental protections. The initiative referred to by the hon. Member is about ensuring that we have a regulatory environment which is the right fit for the UK as an independent nation.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Mr Mark Harper: [\[R\] \[50631\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Government's covid-19 communications and in particular for disabled people.

Mr Mark Harper: [\[R\] \[50632\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department has taken to consult with local level self-advocacy groups on (a) covid-19 communication and (b) government guidance relating to covid-19.

Michael Ellis:

The Government constantly monitors public awareness of its communication campaigns. We use regular evaluations to maximise the impact of our campaigns across the UK.

We are committed to supporting individuals with disabilities through every stage of this pandemic. Progress in this area means that COVID-19 guidance is available across multiple channels in a range of alternative formats. Many of our most crucial

content assets come in alternative accessibility formats including Easy Read, large text formats, videos with British Sign Language interpretation, and audio. Important health communications, also, regarding COVID-19 symptoms, Stay Alert and NHS Test and Trace content, are available in alternative formats, including Easy Read, British Sign Language and Audio. COVID-19 statements and speeches from the Prime Minister are now also made available in transcript form on GOV.UK, aligning with accessibility standards.

We continuously engage with disability charities using polling and focus groups with hard-to-reach audiences to better understand how our communications are received and how this affects COVID-safe behaviours. We use these insights to improve government messaging, mitigate anxieties and challenge misinformation.

Examples of new guidance are discussed in regular sessions with disability charities and experts in accessibility; this provides an opportunity for these groups to review and make recommendations on how to better government communications. We will continue to work with these organisations to ensure COVID-19 communications are as accessible as possible.

■ Disease Control

Caroline Lucas:

[41796]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 August 2021 to Question 16063 on Disease Control, if he will make it his policy to gather the details of all pandemic exercises held across Government departments from 2010 onwards; if he will set out the relevance of each exercise to the covid-19 pandemic; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas:

[41798]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 26 August 2021 to Question 16063 on Disease Control, which Cabinet Ministers were actively involved in Exercise Nimbus.

Michael Ellis:

In addition to the information provided in the response to [PQ 16063](#), the following cross-government exercises have been conducted since 2010 in relation to pandemic preparedness and response:

- April 2021: an official-level exercise to test contingency plans for the risk of an emergence of a significant variant of COVID-19.
- May 2021: a Ministerial-level exercise to rehearse the response to the outbreak of a significant variant of COVID-19.
- August 2021: a series of official-level wargames to test cross-government COVID-19 arrangements for the Autumn / Winter period.

As explained in the response to PQ 16063, the Government does not publicly comment in detail on pandemic preparedness exercises. This includes exercises that test plans for ongoing emergencies, including COVID-19. This is to allow Ministers,

officials and emergency planners to develop policies and plans while ensuring that the full, candid and proper deliberation of lessons learned is not influenced or impacted by the possibility of public exposure.

■ Government Departments: Correspondence

Daisy Cooper: [51856]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that all government agencies pro-actively promote access to paper or printable forms for people who do not have full access to digital versions.

Michael Ellis:

The Government's Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO) is responsible for producing the Service Standard (<https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/service-standard>) which guides government teams as to how they should design and produce content providing information regarding public services.

Government teams are required to make sure that all information is accessible across all channels, including online, phone, paper and face to face.

Government teams must also make sure that everyone can use their services, including disabled people, people with other legally protected characteristics, people who do not have access to the internet and/or lack the skills and/or confidence to use the internet. CDDO provides clear guidance on how to make non-digital parts of a government service as widely accessible as possible by providing a contact for users and providing forms in alternative formats for example, large print, braille or audio CD.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Liz Saville Roberts: [50112]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the value was of Government procurement from UK businesses registered in each NUTS 1 nation and region in 2019.

Michael Ellis:

This information is not held centrally.

■ Prime Minister: Flags

Justin Madders: [50696]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to the Prime Minister's Office since 2019.

Justin Madders: [50697]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of the Union Jack flags purchased by the Prime Minister's Office in each of the last two years were manufactured in the UK.

Michael Ellis:

Downing Street flags are supplied by JW Plant and by The Flag Consultancy. I understand these companies manufacture their flags in the United Kingdom.

■ **Procurement****Seema Malhotra:**[\[49154\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent steps his Department has taken to help tackle supply chain issues in the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Kerry McCarthy:[\[49970\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which Minister will be leading the work of the National Economic Recovery Taskforce (Logistics) to tackle supply chain shortages following the recent Government reshuffle.

Michael Ellis:

Government Ministers responsible for the supply chain ecosystem are working collectively, and in close partnership with industry, to drive the development and delivery of plans to strengthen supply chain resilience, supporting economic recovery and levelling up.

■ **Public Services: Artificial Intelligence****Richard Fuller:**[\[50655\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what targets he is setting for the adoption of artificial intelligence to improve the quality and efficiency of public services.

Michael Ellis:

The Government does not set targets for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). However, the Government has set up several avenues to make sure we are making the most of AI, such as the independent AI Council.

Departments are also required to follow the Technology Code of Practice which includes guidance on the use of emerging technology. Emerging technology should only be used where it meets the users' needs, and this includes the use of AI.

The Government continues to work with departments to establish what other efficiencies can be realised while also meeting the needs of citizens.

■ **Trade: Northern Ireland****Gareth Thomas:**[\[51581\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the level of staffing required to implement the commitments within the Northern Ireland Protocol on checks between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and checks on goods coming to the UK from the EU under the Trade and

Cooperation Agreement; whether those staffing levels have been met; and what additional funding has been allocated to support those staffing requirements.

Michael Ellis:

On staffing, I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to [PQ31420](#) on 27 July 2021.

As announced on 14 September, full customs declarations and checks on goods coming to the UK from the EU under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be introduced as planned on 1 January 2022, although safety and security declarations will not be required until 1 July 2022. The Northern Ireland Protocol is still under review and therefore providing an accurate estimate of the level of staffing would not be substantive.

■ UK Internal Trade: Northern Ireland

Angela Rayner:

[\[31417\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the (a) number of additional civil servants required to administer the requirements of the Northern Ireland Protocol relating to the flow of goods between Northern Ireland and Great Britain and (b) cost of recruiting additional civil servants for that purpose.

Michael Ellis:

Border Force has recruited fifty full-time equivalents for the purpose of implementing the Northern Ireland Protocol at a total cost of approximately £1.4m.

Other Departments have recruited small numbers of additional staff but have generally managed the requirements of the Protocol through reprioritization.

■ UK Trade with EU: Import Controls

Drew Hendry:

[\[50076\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the devolved Administrations (a) were consulted by his Department and (b) consented to the decision to extend the delay on EU trade import controls beyond October 2021.

Drew Hendry:

[\[50077\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has carried out an impact assessment of extending the delay on EU trade import controls beyond October 2021 on the competitiveness of UK exporters compared with importers; and whether he has plans to publish any such assessment.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the hon. Member to the [Written Statement](#) of 14th of September, which sets out the reasons for the change to the timetable for introducing border import controls on goods from the EU.

The Government is working closely with the Devolved Administrations on the delay to the introduction of controls, especially on controls and checks on Sanitary and Phytosanitary goods which are a devolved matter.

COP26

■ Climate Change

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52459\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to consult widely with parties to the UNFCCC on the decisions needed at COP26 to operationalise the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage; what provision he has made in the COP26 agenda to discuss and agree loss and damage matters, including getting the COP decisions needed to operationalise the Santiago Network; and what assessment he has made of whether the Santiago Network will be fully operational by the end of COP26.

Alok Sharma:

As COP26 incoming Presidency, the UK has convened six consultations (workshops and a Heads of Delegation meeting) which have devoted substantial time to the issue of developing the Santiago Network, in addition to a dedicated session at the July Ministerial which I convened in London. The agenda for COP/CMA will be decided on by the Parties. My officials are also discussing the agenda with Parties over the next few weeks. Whether the Santiago Network will be operational by the end of this year depends on the view that Parties take at the conference on the process they wish to follow, but the UK will use our convening power to maintain momentum and encourage a fair, inclusive and impactful outcome.

■ Climate Change: Education

Marion Fellows:

[\[52526\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what plans her Department has to help ensure that the UK's hosting of COP26 will include disability inclusion as a priority for action on climate adaptation of education systems.

Alok Sharma:

Climate action must be inclusive of people with disabilities and support their rights. This means ensuring that information and services are accessible, challenging social norms that create barriers to access and disaggregating data by gender, age and disability. People with disabilities must be involved in climate action at all levels and engagement with, and capacity building of, disabled people's organisations on climate issues is essential.

Through our focus on adaptation for COP26, we are encouraging the international community to do more to drive effective delivery of adaptation action on the ground, including through implementation of the Principles for Locally-led Adaptation. These Principles provide a framework for ensuring that those most impacted by climate

change - including people with disabilities, indigenous people, women and youth - are empowered to plan for and protect their own futures.

We are committed to championing inclusivity throughout our COP26 Presidency. This is why there is a dedicated COP26 civil society engagement team that works with NGOs and rights groups, including those from the disability community, who have established an official led disability working group that meets regularly, to help guide our preparation for delivering a disability inclusive summit.

■ Climate Change: Finance

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[51884\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what progress has been made towards the \$100 billion climate finance commitment.

Alok Sharma:

The UK continues to encourage developed countries to increase their climate finance commitments for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries through the UK's G7 and COP26 Presidencies. At the COP President Designate's request, Germany and Canada are leading the development of a \$100 billion Delivery Plan. This will demonstrate, in advance of COP26, how developed countries will mobilise \$100 billion a year through to 2025. President Biden has made a major step towards achieving the \$100 billion goal, announcing recently at the UN General Assembly that the US is doubling their climate finance to \$11.4 billion in 2024.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52460\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what discussions he has had with developed country (a) negotiators and (b) ministers on the need for new and additional finance for loss and damage in the last 12 months.

Alok Sharma:

In my role as COP26 President, I have met with more than 100 Ministers from at least 65 countries. As part of these discussions, as well as in public fora, I have set out the importance of developed countries meeting and surpassing the commitment to jointly mobilise \$100 billion of climate finance a year through to 2025, from a range of public and private sources.

At both Ministerial and official level we continue to raise the need for finance and action on loss and damage, noting that relevant finance for averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage comes from sources under and outside the convention.

As COP26 incoming Presidency, the UK has convened six consultations (workshops and a Heads of Delegation meeting) which have devoted substantial time to the issue of operationalising the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage, in addition to a dedicated session on loss and damage at the July Ministerial which I convened in London where the issue of finance was raised. I will also hold discussion on adaptation, loss and damage, and finance at pre-COP at the end of September, with

a view to political leaders providing the strategic framing for negotiator-level discussions at COP26.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52461\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment his Department has made of (a) how to meet the shortfall in the \$100 billion climate finance commitment and (b) how that cost should be distributed across developed countries.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52462\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) contributions by developed countries to the \$100 billion climate finance commitment are delivered as grants and (b) 50 per cent of climate finance is allocated to adaptation.

Alok Sharma:

The OECD figures recently published showed that developed countries were still significantly short of the \$100 billion goal in 2019, mobilising \$79.6 billion. We have seen recent progress. President Biden's recent announcement that the US is doubling their climate finance to \$11.4 billion by 2024 is a major step towards the achievement of the \$100 billion goal. However, we need all developed countries to step up with enhanced pledges, and the Presidency is continuing to encourage developed countries to increase their commitments, including to feed into the Germany-Canada led Delivery Plan.

The UK is ensuring a large majority of our international climate finance is grant-based. We are pressing other donor countries for similarly ambitious commitments. Under our G7 Presidency, the G7 committed to scaling up adaptation finance, and we have seen concrete new individual pledges from Canada, Japan, the US, and Denmark in recent months to this effect. The UK has committed to delivering a balance through our scaled up ICF and has joined the Champions Group on Adaptation Finance, composed of donors committed to delivering a balance of adaptation in their climate finance in response to calls from developing countries.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52463\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to help ensure that COP26 delivers substantial progress on loss and damage, including mandating work for financing options to increase the level of support to frontline communities, as called for by the Climate Vulnerable Forum and other stakeholders.

Alok Sharma:

As incoming Presidency, the UK has been gathering Parties' views on what more is needed in addition to the Santiago Network to deliver progress on Loss and Damage. An emerging point is the need for existing funds and action in the international and humanitarian system to be better coordinated and scaled up, and better oriented to local level needs.

We are working with the international community to increase support for locally led action, including through the Adaptation Action Coalition. In parallel the UK is asking other donors to follow our example in supporting the LDC's Initiative for Effective

Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE AR) which has the aim of assisting LDCs to put in place plans, finance and delivery mechanisms to respond to local needs. The UK endorsed the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation at the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021, and successfully persuaded other Foreign and Development ministers to do the same under the UK's G7 Presidency. We are also working to address the barriers that restrict and prevent finance flowing to the local-level through the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance.

We welcome the input of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and have been engaging with them through their regional dialogues, as well as through bilateral engagement on their suggestions and plans for COP26.

Caroline Lucas:

[52464]

To ask the President of COP26, what consideration he has made of calls from civil society and other stakeholders for a high level political focus on Loss and Damage through a (a) Loss and Damage Champion or (b) Ministerial pairing to ensure that work is urgently undertaken in order to deliver (i) concrete progress on Loss and Damage at COP26 and (ii) a clear pathway through to COP27.

Alok Sharma:

We have heard and agree with calls from civil society for the need for a high level political focus on loss and damage at COP26 and in the run up to COP27. The UK is currently consulting Parties on the idea of a high level envoy for loss and damage.

We agree that a clear pathway is needed and intend to respond to parties' and observers' calls (including at the July ministerial) to step up efforts to address loss and damage, through locally-owned plans, institutional capacity, technical expertise and accessible finance. We will have a dedicated session at Pre-COP with Ministers designated to lead discussions. We also expect this to play a significant part in the discussions at COP26, subject to the agreement Parties reach on the agenda of the conference in the coming weeks.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Ethnic Groups

Ruth Jones:

[44440]

To ask the President of COP26, how many Black and minority ethnic people are part of the UK's COP26 negotiating team.

Alok Sharma:

We have recently appointed a Diversity and Inclusion lead in the Campaigns and Engagement Team to lead on inclusivity and diversity for a successful and fully inclusive COP.

For additional wider information, the Government publishes statistics on Civil Service demographics annually on March 31st via the Office for National Statistics. This can be found on the GOV.UK website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/civil-service-statistics-2021>.

DEFENCE**■ Afghanistan: Asylum****Rachael Maskell:**[\[51756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will (a) identify and (b) repurpose and make adequate all accommodation on his Department's estate that could be used for the resettlement of Afghan refugees.

Leo Docherty:

The relocation of Afghan refugees is a significant undertaking. Whilst the provision of accommodation is clearly a crucial part of the resettlement programme, of equal importance is ensuring that Local Authorities have the capacity to provide the right level of access to health and education provision to ensure the integration of Afghan evacuees. The Ministry of Defence continues to work closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and the Home Office on a cross-Government effort to identify where we can best support this endeavour. This includes the provision of additional Defence accommodation where appropriate to do so.

■ Afghanistan: Refugees**Rachael Maskell:**[\[51759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support the armed forces can provide to refugees in quarantine hotels arriving under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

Leo Docherty:

In accordance with the government's COVID-19 border health measures, individuals arriving in the UK from Afghanistan are required to undergo a period of quarantine in designated hotels. During the evacuation of British nationals and Afghan allies from Kabul (Op PITTING), Defence provided logistics support in Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) hotels in Manchester. All persons extracted from Kabul under Op PITTING have now finished their mandatory period of quarantine.

Rachael Maskell:[\[51760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what resources he is making available to support Operation Warm Welcome.

Leo Docherty:

The Government is committed to ensuring that those Afghan nationals who were relocated under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and during the recent evacuation are well supported as they start their new lives in the UK. Defence is supporting Op WARM WELCOME through the provision of assistance to other Government Departments via the Military Assistance to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process and by building on existing networks to develop a network of service related expertise and experience to support those Afghans with a connection to Defence.

■ Defence Equipment: Exports

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[52423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the countries to which his Department has exported defence equipment in the past twelve months through FMS.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence has not exported any defence equipment as US Foreign Military Sales.

■ Defence: Procurement

Stuart Anderson: [\[51027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to safeguard defence supply chains from foreign threats.

Jeremy Quin:

The Integrated Review committed Her Majesty's Government to acting to address growing risks around economic security. The Defence & Security Industrial Strategy identified the MOD component to tackling these risks including assessing and monitoring threats to defence supply chains, including foreign threats. The MOD's Defence Commercial monitor the resilience of key UK defence suppliers, and industry wide supply chain issues and risks and have established a new Directorate of Economic and Investment Security to support the new National Security Investment (NSI) Act and which will lead in the MOD on reviewing foreign investment into UK companies

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth: South China Sea

Janet Daby: [\[51844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason HMS Queen Elizabeth has been deployed to waters off South Korea; and what assessment he has made of the potential response from North Korea to that deployment.

James Heappey:

The Integrated Review commits us to pursuing deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific in support of shared prosperity and regional stability. The Carrier Strike Group deployment is an embodiment of this commitment and therefore included a programme of activity to strengthen our bilateral defence relationships with key partners in the region, including South Korea. Our presence in the region sends a clear message to all of the UK's ability to protect its interests globally.

■ Ministry of Defence: ARMSCOR

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[52422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the commercial relationship between Armcor and his Department.

Jeremy Quin:

Armcor (Armaments Corporation of South Africa) is the acquisition agency for the South African Department of Defence (and also acts for the Department on disposals).

The Defence Equipment Sales Authority entered into a Framework Agreement with Armcor in November 2020, to broaden its marketing capabilities. The Ministry of Defence has no contracts with Armcor and to date there have been no commercial sales as part of this agreement.

Warships: Repairs and Maintenance**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[51904\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether military trials of transferring F-35B engines to ships within the UK Carrier Strike Group have been carried out.

James Heappey:

We have not trialled the transfer of F-35B engines to the Carrier Strike Group from the United Kingdom. However, we have an established logistics supply chain should there be a need to transfer F-35B engines to HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**BBC Worldwide: Privatisation****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[51678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of privatising BBC Worldwide.

Julia Lopez:

BBC Worldwide, formerly a BBC commercial subsidiary, was merged with BBC Studios in April 2018 and no longer exists. The new BBC Studios is already a commercial subsidiary of the BBC and therefore receives no public funding. Dividends made by BBC Studios are returned to the BBC's public service arm, supplementing the BBC's licence fee income.

Broadband: Ceredigion**Ben Lake:**[\[52578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Borth exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake:[\[52579\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Cardigan exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake: [52580]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Lampeter exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake: [52581]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Bow Street exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake: [52582]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the New Quay exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake: [52583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Aberaeron exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake: [52584]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Talybont exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Ben Lake: [52585]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions her Department has had with Openreach on (a) progress on the update of the Llanon exchange and (b) the timeline for completion of that work.

Julia Lopez:

The department regularly engages with Openreach on the progress of their commercial rollout. Details of specific exchanges can be found on the Openreach website at the following address: <https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/where-when-building-ultrafast-full-fibre-broadband>.

It is the government's view that the best way to achieve nationwide gigabit coverage is to create a competition-friendly environment in areas where deployment is commercially viable while focussing government funds on the 20% of the country where commercial deployment is unlikely. The Government is investing £5 billion as part of Project Gigabit to ensure the hardest-to-reach areas in the UK receive coverage. This will ensure communities are not left behind as the country benefits from a faster, further-reaching commercial investment. More generally across the UK, over half of premises can access gigabit-capable networks, up from just one in ten in

November 2019. By the end of the year, 60% will have access, and by 2025 the government is targeting a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage.

■ **Broadband: Disadvantaged**

Justin Madders:

[45852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the absence of pricing standards and regulation for fixed wireless operators on digital exclusion.

Julia Lopez:

Pricing regulation in the telecoms sector is a matter for Ofcom, the independent regulator. However, most providers of fixed wireless access price their services in line with comparable fixed line services and on a national basis.

In 2019 the Government issued Ofcom with a Statement of Strategic Priorities for telecommunications to which it must have regard when exercising its regulatory functions. This includes tackling harmful industry practices and improving the support available to vulnerable consumers.

In order to tackle digital exclusion we have introduced the Broadband Universal Service Obligation to provide a digital safety net, ensuring a minimum level of service to participate in society and the economy, based on information provided by Ofcom. The USO came into effect on 20 March 2020, providing consumers with a legal right to request a decent broadband service, providing download speeds of at least 10 Mbps and upload speeds of 1Mbps. Whilst there is still more to do, the evidence suggests this approach is working as Ofcom's Online Nations 2021 report showed that people are using online services more than ever with the number of UK homes with internet access increasing to about 94%.

■ **Business: Artificial Intelligence**

Ruth Jones:

[45920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with the Information Commissioner's Office on the provision of clear statutory guidance for businesses on algorithmic systems operating in the workplace.

Julia Lopez:

The Secretary of State and the Information Commissioner have regular discussions to help ensure the data protection legal framework is functioning effectively and identify areas of concern.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) publishes a range of information to help organisations comply with their data protection obligations, including guidance for employers at: https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1064/the_employment_practices_code.pdf.

The ICO has also published guidance for organisations on on data protection and artificial intelligence (including algorithms), at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/key-data-protection-themes/guidance-on-artificial-intelligence-and-data-protection/>.

Employees who have concerns about the way employers are using their data can contact the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113 or their livechat at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/live-chat/> for further advice, from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

■ Cabinet Office: Historic Buildings

Tim Loughton: **[49939]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which Department is responsible for Historic England's Government Historic Estate Unit; and how funding has been allocated to that unit.

Nigel Huddleston:

Historic England is Government's statutory advisor on heritage and funded by DCMS. The Government Historic Estates Unit (GHEU) is a small, dedicated team within Historic England, which helps government departments and other public bodies, such as the Royal Household, to look after the historic buildings and structures in their care.

In financial year 2021/22 Historic England received £69.2 million baseline Grant in Aid from DCMS. An allocation of this grant for 2021/22 is staffing costs for those working in the GHEU which amounts to £61,000.

■ Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation

Ruth Jones: **[45918]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the governance of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation.

Julia Lopez:

The CDEI is an expert government body within the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport. The CDEI is a team of civil servants supported by an expert advisory board which includes globally recognised practitioners from industry, civil society and academia.

The CDEI's current remit, as announced publicly and in Parliament on 10 September 2021, focuses on enabling trustworthy innovation in data and AI in the real-world by developing, testing and refining approaches to data and AI governance. Given this role, and after conducting a consultation on the CDEI's future functions and statutory status as part of the National Data Strategy, the CDEI's current governance

framework as a team of civil servants supported by an expert advisory board is effective.

The CDEI is already working on some of the most pressing issues in the field, from helping the Ministry of Defence to develop ethical principles for the use of AI, to partnering with the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles to embed ethical due diligence in the future regulatory framework for self-driving vehicles.

■ **Children: Protection**

Carla Lockhart:

[\[50172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to strengthen child protection measures in the draft Online Safety Bill.

Chris Philp:

The strongest protections in the draft Online Safety Bill are for children. Services in scope will need to prove children are not accessing their service, or they will need to conduct a child safety risk assessment and provide safety measures for child users. Those safety measures will protect children from inappropriate and harmful content.

■ **Cultural Heritage: West Yorkshire**

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[49215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to help preserve sites of historic significance in (a) Morley and Outwood and (b) West Yorkshire.

Nigel Huddleston:

Though there have been no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments designated in Morley and Outwood in the last two years, I can confirm that five Listed Buildings have been designated in West Yorkshire in this period - Clough House (Birstall); York Gate Gardens (Leeds); Grave of Charles Waterton (Wakefield); Gawthorpe Water Tower (Wakefield); and Manningham War Memorial (Bradford).

■ **Data Protection: Trade**

Emily Thornberry:

[\[51642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, whether the estimate of £1.45 billion for the net direct monetised benefit of the proposals over 10 years in Section 1 Paragraph.4 takes into account of the (a) change in the level of additional compliance costs and (b) retention of trade if EU data adequacy status is maintained.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[51643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, for what reasons her Department is unable to provide a quantitative

estimate in cash or percentage terms of the expected change in trade from the proposed changes in data regulation.

Emily Thornberry: [\[51644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, what assessment her Department has made of whether the proposed changes in data regulation will have a net positive impact on UK trade if EU data adequacy status is (a) maintained and (b) removed.

Emily Thornberry: [\[51645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to her Department's report, Data: A New Direction - Analysis of Expected Impact, published on 10 September 2021, what data her Department used to estimate the number of businesses affected by compliance costs in the table in Section 2 Paragraph 57.

Julia Lopez:

The methodology and data used to develop the analysis is described in the report. It accounts for the variation in compliance costs across different scenarios with respect to the UK's EU adequacy decisions.

As set out in the report, this analysis is open to consultation. We are seeking further information at this stage in order to robustly quantify these impacts, including on trade, as we build a more detailed impact assessment. The Government would welcome responses to the consultation on this topic.

■ Data Protection: USA

Owen Thompson: [\[51008\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the written statement made on 10 September 2021, HCWS276, what policy proposals the Government has on the future of personal data transfers to the US.

Julia Lopez:

International data transfers are vitally important to global economies, societies, and individuals' lives. Securing data adequacy arrangements with our priority partners will be a significant step in the UK's ongoing plans to unlock the power of data to drive UK growth and innovation.

Given our strong security, economic, and trade relationships, the US is one of the UK's most important partners. On 26th August, DCMS announced the US as a priority partner to assess for a data adequacy arrangement.

We are engaging positively with our US counterparts and progressing the technical assessment to ensure that high standards of data protection would be maintained under an adequacy arrangement. We will provide updates in due course.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Artificial Intelligence**

Kirsten Oswald: [50990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to assess a potential correlation between company procurement of artificial intelligence platforms and the level of transition to zero-hours contracts.

Kirsten Oswald: [50991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will ensure that the impact of artificial intelligence on workers is taken into account as part of the Government's AI Strategy.

Kirsten Oswald: [50992]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that the equalities impacts of artificial intelligence will be taken into account in the development of the Government's AI Strategy.

Kirsten Oswald: [50993]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment her Department has made of how productivity gains from artificial intelligence can be shared with workers.

Kirsten Oswald: [50994]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what definition of equality will be used in the Government's AI Strategy; and what consultation has taken place with equalities groups in the development of that strategy.

Kirsten Oswald: [50996]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish a draft AI Strategy.

Chris Philp:

The Government published its National AI Strategy on 22nd September 2021. It can be viewed here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-ai-strategy>.

The Strategy will ensure that the UK continues our global leadership in the research, development, commercialisation and adoption of responsible AI.

The Strategy sets out our ambition to drive prosperity across the UK and ensure everyone can benefit from AI.

In particular, the Strategy recognises that issues such as the equalities impacts of AI will be an important consideration as we continue to develop policy on the governance and regulation of AI. We will involve relevant regulators and equalities groups in this work. It also recognises the need to give more people the skills to work with AI, developing an AI-literate workforce.

The diversity of people working with and developing AI is an important component of the AI Strategy. We are already supporting 2,500 new Masters conversion courses in AI and data science across universities in England. Included in this program are up to 1,000 scholarships, which aims to increase the number of people from underrepresented groups and encourage graduates from diverse backgrounds to consider a future in AI and Data Science.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Flags**

Justin Madders:

[\[50055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

Chris Philp:

Since 2019 all of the Union flags that have been supplied to the Department have been provided by The Flag Consultancy, a subcontractor of Arcadis, who are contracted to deliver flags and flag services under the current Event Management Services Contract.

Justin Madders:

[\[50056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 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.

Chris Philp:

All of the 67 Union Flags purchased by the Department in the last two years have been manufactured in the UK.

■ **Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Listed Buildings**

Tim Loughton:

[\[49938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2021 to Question 43369 on Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Listed Buildings, if she will publish (a) a list of the properties classified as heritage assets owned by her Department, (b) the most recent estimate of the value of those properties and (c) the annual income derived from those properties.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport owns the freehold to the following Listed Buildings:

PROPERTY	ESTIMATED VALUE OF FREEHOLD	
	(2017)	ANNUAL INCOME
22 Park Street, Windsor	£195,000	£50
23 Park Street, Windsor	£210,000	£120

■ Digital Economy Act 2017

Bob Blackman:

[\[45838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether it remains Government policy to undertake a formal review of the impact of the changes made to the Electronic Communications Code in the Digital Economy Act 2017.

Julia Lopez:

Since the introduction of the reforms in 2017 we have continually listened to feedback from stakeholders on the impact those changes have had on the expansion and improvement of digital networks across the UK. The culmination of this process was a consultation on potential further reform to the Code, published in January 2021. The consultation closed in March 2021 and responses are being considered. The government's response will be published shortly.

■ Digital Technology: Disadvantaged

Holly Lynch:

[\[903490\]](#)

What steps she is taking to help prevent people from becoming digitally excluded.

Julia Lopez:

The Government has worked closely with providers to put in place social tariffs. These provide low cost landline and broadband services for people on means-tested state benefits. We are encouraging providers who do not currently offer social tariff packages to do so. The telecoms industry has also removed data caps on fixed broadband packages, and provides free or low cost data boosts on mobile services to support vulnerable consumers.

In February DCMS also launched a £2.5 million Digital Lifeline Fund to reduce the digital exclusion of people with learning disabilities. This fund has provided tablets, data and free digital support to over 5,000 people with learning disabilities, enabling them to connect with friends and family, and access services and support groups, promoting overall well being.

The Government has also introduced a digital entitlement for adults with no or low digital skills to undertake specified digital qualifications, up to level 1, free of charge.

Finally, around 2,900 public libraries in England provide accessible locations offering free Wi-Fi, computers, and other technology. Library staff, often supported by volunteers, can provide library users with digital support.

■ Digital Technology: Rural Areas

Greg Smith:

[\[903489\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to improve digital infrastructure and connectivity in rural areas.

Julia Lopez:

The government is focused on improving digital infrastructure and connectivity in rural areas, with our £5bn Project Gigabit and £1bn Shared Rural Network. As such, the government recently announced more details about our procurement pipeline, specifically, for the 2.2 million hard to reach premises in England in Phases 1 and 2 of the delivery plan.

Alongside Project Gigabit and the Shared Rural Network, we are continuing with our strategy to reduce barriers and to promote competition and investment.

■ Disclosure of Information: Fees and Charges

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[50995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether her Department has conducted an equality impact assessment of the introduction of fees to exercise data subject access requests.

Julia Lopez:

The right of access is one of the fundamental rights in data protection legislation and the government will protect it. Subject access requests are a critical transparency mechanism under this right, allowing individuals to check the accuracy of their personal data, learn more about how their data is being used and with whom their data is being shared, and obtain a copy of the data held about them.

The consultation paper Data: A New Direction, published on 10 September, considers whether to re-introduce fees for responding to subject access requests. Any fee regime would be structured fairly so as not to undermine an individual's right to access their personal data.

An initial equality impact assessment has been conducted and a final assessment will be developed during and after the consultation process. Through the consultation, the government is seeking views on what, if any, safeguards should apply in order to mitigate any adverse impacts were this proposal to be pursued further.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Dan Jarvis:

[\[50032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to encourage people to return to live events following the lifting of covid-19 public health restrictions.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government recognises the important contribution that live events make to the UK's culture and economy. It's important that as we welcome the return of large events such as music festivals, and fans back to our stadiums, we do so as carefully as possible. That's why we have been working with event organisers to ensure that the lessons learned from the Events Research Programme are being put into practice.

The Government is committed to ensuring the safety of the public through minimising the risks of transmission of Covid-19 and by encouraging vaccination. The evidence from the Events Research Programme pilots was used to inform and shape Government policy and bring about the return of audiences to venues and events across England. The ERP showed that transmission is most likely when large crowds gather, and covid-status certification has been shown to be one method of mitigating this risk. Certification will help to improve confidence in those wishing to attend live events and encourage attendance.

From 19 July, the Government made the NHS COVID Pass available so that individuals can prove their vaccination status. The NHS Covid Pass has been designed to be quick and simple to use, so as not to place any significant burden on settings utilising the resource. Use of the NHS COVID Pass is voluntary for individual organisations. However, we encourage the use of the NHS COVID Pass in facilities or events where people are likely to be in close proximity to a large number of people from other households for a sustained period of time.

■ Gaming Machines

Jim Shannon:

[\[52495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of PaddyPowerBetfair's introduction of a £500 monthly cap on losses for younger customers.

Chris Philp:

We welcome recent steps taken by industry to raise standards and increase protections for customers, including PaddyPower/Betfair's introduction of its £500 cap and the Betting & Gaming Council's codes of conduct on high value customer schemes and online game design.

The government and the Gambling Commission are continuing work to consider protections in online gambling. Earlier this year, the Gambling Commission launched a consultation and call for evidence on the steps remote operators should be required to take to identify and protect customers at risk of harm, including on issues to do with affordability. It received over 13,000 responses and the Commission has published an interim update on its website outlining next steps.

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 in December with the publication of a Call for Evidence which received 16,000 responses. The Review will be wide-ranging and evidence-led, and aims to make sure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. We are considering all evidence carefully and will publish a white paper outlining any conclusions and proposals for reform in due course.

■ Local Government: Voluntary Work

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[51877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to help ensure that volunteer capacity is available to support councils when needed.

Nigel Huddleston:

Local authorities work closely with the voluntary, community, and social enterprise sector and other organisations, including the public sector and the NHS, to recruit and coordinate volunteers at a local level. The Government aims to empower these local partnerships and ensure national efforts to encourage volunteering complement locally-led responses.

Where there is urgent need for intervention from the Government, we work closely with the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP). The VCSEP is a collection of voluntary and community sector organisations, and is co-chaired by the British Red Cross and National Association for Voluntary and Community Action. The Partnership aims to help communities prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies. They do this by coordinating and directly providing support to those in need, including mobilising volunteers if the need arises.

■ Loneliness

Rachael Maskell:

[\[47015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent progress he has made on delivering the Loneliness Strategy.

Nigel Huddleston:

Over the last eighteen months, the government has continued to take action in line with the loneliness strategy, including through delivering a response to COVID-19 that recognises the value of social connection.

We have invested over £34 million in charities focused on reducing loneliness and a further £50 million to organisations supporting people with their mental health. This is

part of the government's unprecedented £750 million package of support for the sector during the pandemic, which has benefited over 14,000 charities.

We also set up the £4 million Local Connections Fund in partnership with the National Lottery Community Fund. Through the Local Connections Fund, we have awarded over 1,300 microgrants to charities and community groups that help people to connect via the things they enjoy. For example, we've supported songwriting workshops in Devon, dance classes in Bedfordshire, and online chat services in Durham.

We established the Tackling Loneliness Network, bringing together over 80 organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to share expertise and develop innovative ways to tackle loneliness. The Tackling Loneliness Network Action Plan was published in May 2021 and sets out actions that government and Network members are taking to support social connection in response to COVID-19. A copy of this report will be placed in the Libraries of the House and is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emerging-together-the-tackling-loneliness-network-action-plan>

We have continued to share practical tips and signpost support through the 'Let's Talk Loneliness' campaign. During Loneliness Awareness Week in June this year, our campaign activity reached over 21 million people, including through partnerships with TikTok, BT, Royal Mail and Electronic Arts.

The government publishes a report on its work on loneliness every year. The latest was published in January 2021 and is available online at: [<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-second-year/loneliness-annual-report-january-2021>] The next report will be published in early 2022.

■ Public Service Broadcasting

Dr Matthew Offord:

[51677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of requiring publicly funded broadcasters to provide all entertainment content on free to access digital platforms 10 years after first transmission.

Julia Lopez:

The government is supportive of a modern system of public service broadcasting (PSB) that remains relevant and can continue to meet the needs of UK audiences in the future.

Ensuring that content is universally available on a free-to-air basis is a core tenet of PSB, and the government is committed to ensuring this remains the case. This means that PSB content should be delivered via technologies that are commonly available, familiar to audiences, and offer a high-quality viewing experience.

As independent organisations, the UK's two publicly funded broadcasters – the BBC and S4C – are responsible for negotiating the length of time for which entertainment content is available on their platforms with producers and other rights holders. At present, the BBC allows access to most of its programmes for at least one year on the BBC iPlayer and S4C allows access to its programmes for up to 150 days on Clic.

■ Railways: Cultural Heritage

Peter Gibson: [\[49282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support heritage rail.

Nigel Huddleston:

The UK is a true pioneer in the history of railway development, nurturing and benefitting from the talents of Brunel and Stephenson among others. We are rightly proud of this legacy and must ensure that the next generation is endowed with both the skills and the passion to protect this legacy for the future.

The heritage railway sector is not only a fundamental component of our national heritage, it is an important aspect of our visitor economy with heritage railways attracting around 13 million visitors and bringing an estimated £250 million to the economy annually. It is because of this cultural and economic significance that the Government has supported the heritage rail network over the past year through its unprecedented Culture Recovery Fund, which has awarded approximately £15.7 million to railway related organisations across the country.

■ Small Businesses: Travel

Sarah Olney: [\[50121\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of providing further financial support to the travel sector.

Sarah Olney: [\[50122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department is taking to support small and medium-sized enterprises within the travel sector.

Sarah Olney: [\[50124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if her Department will make provisions to support small and medium-sized enterprises in the travel sector beyond 30 September 2021 when the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ends.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has provided over £35 billion in support to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors over the course of the pandemic and is committed to supporting

the safe return of tourism to the UK, as set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan published in June.

Businesses across the economy, including the travel industry, can draw on over £350 billion worth of loans, rates relief, VAT deferrals and the furlough scheme, the latter of which ended on 30 September. The Government continues to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

The Government is regularly engaging with travel industry bodies - such as UKInbound, the European Tour Operators Association and the Association of British Travel Agents - to monitor the pandemic's impact and to support the sector's recovery.

■ Social Media: Disinformation

Dawn Butler:

[\[48164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to prevent companies and organisations using automated social media accounts to (a) increase follower numbers on social media platforms and (b) spread disinformation online.

Dawn Butler:

[\[48165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to work with social media companies to eliminate automated fake profiles on social media platforms.

Chris Philp:

The government continues to put pressure on companies to respond quickly and effectively to the threat posed by misinformation and disinformation.

Ministers and officials hold regular discussions with major social media companies to understand what is happening on their platforms and the steps that they are taking to address misinformation and disinformation, including where it is spread by fake accounts.

We have seen positive steps by platforms to curtail the spread of harmful and misleading narratives, particularly in relation to COVID-19, although there is clearly more to do. We will continue to engage platforms regarding measures that could be put in place to respond to this evolving challenge, and we will put pressure on these companies to ensure that their policies and enforcement are fit for purpose, whilst still respecting freedom of expression.

The draft Online Safety Bill sets out proposals to impose a new duty of care on tech companies to tackle illegal and harmful content on their services. To fulfil their duty of care, the largest social media companies will need to set out what harmful content is and is not acceptable in their terms of service. They will need to enforce these terms of service consistently, including policies that may relate to fake user accounts. Ofcom will have the power to hold companies to account if what is appearing on their platforms doesn't match up with the promises made to users.

■ Social Media: Safety

Daisy Cooper:

[47057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with (a) YouTube and (b) other social media companies about whether their harmful or dangerous content policies should be extended to cover content including (i) breaking and entering and (ii) vandalism to personal property.

Chris Philp:

Ministers and officials have regular meetings and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including YouTube, on a variety of issues, including dangerous content. Details of Ministerial meetings are published quarterly on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

The draft Online Safety Bill sets out proposals to impose a new duty of care on tech companies to tackle illegal and harmful content on their services. Companies such as Youtube will have to identify and remove illegal content and protect children from harmful or inappropriate content.

The big social media companies, such as YouTube, will also need to keep their promises to users by taking action against harmful content that is prohibited under their terms of service. Under the new laws, their terms of service will need to cover content that could cause significant physical or psychological harm to users.

■ Sports: Disability

Vicky Foxcroft:

[50101]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech at the National Lottery Paralympics GB Homecoming event on 12 September 2021, what the source is of the extra funding for disability sports.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[50102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Prime Minister's speech at the National Lottery Paralympics GB Homecoming event on 12 September 2021, how the additional funding for disability sports will be allocated.

Nigel Huddleston:

On 15th August, the Government publicly committed to providing £232 million to support Team GB and ParalympicsGB athletes preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The £232 million Grant In Aid funding 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.

UK Sport, the strategic lead body for high performance sport in the UK, will be responsible for allocating the funding to athletes for the Paris cycle. Athletes will benefit through their World Class Programme and Progression Funding, which will

provide vital support towards reaching the pinnacle of their sports as preparations begin for Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

■ **Telecommunication: Scotland**

Jamie Stone:

[\[52573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many and what proportion of telegraph poles situated on private land in Scotland were installed after 2017.

Julia Lopez:

The Department does not have access to the number of telegraph poles or ducts situated on private land across the UK, as this is a matter for each individual operator.

■ **Tourism: Finance**

Catherine West:

[\[50117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what financial support will be made available to the tourism industry after the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Catherine West:

[\[50118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she plans to take to protect jobs in the travel industry after the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has provided over £35 billion in support to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors over the course of the pandemic in the form of grants, loans and tax breaks.

For example, the Government cut VAT for tourism and hospitality activities to 5% last July, with this significantly reduced rate remaining until the end of this month. To help businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate, a 12.5% rate will then apply for a further six months.

We are committed to supporting tourism's return to pre-pandemic levels ahead of independent forecasts, as set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan published in June. The Government is regularly engaging with stakeholders, including via the Tourism Industry Council, to monitor the pandemic's impact and to support the sector's recovery.

EDUCATION**■ Children: Day Care****Catherine West:****[52566]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the findings of the survey of 20,000 parents by Mumsnet with 13 other groups, published in September 2021, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the cost of childcare on (a) household bills and (b) the career choices of parents.

Will Quince:

The department welcomes the contribution that Mumsnet and their partner organisations have made around this topic. However, it is important to note that this survey is unweighted, and the sample size represents a small proportion of all parents with a child or children in the early years.

Ipsos MORI conducted wave 9 of our parent poll, 'Childcare use, perceived impact on child development, information on working from home, and awareness and use of free entitlements for families of 0-4 year-olds during COVID-19' in July 2021, with a smaller but representative sample of 1,000 parents of children aged 0-4 in England. This is available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/childcare-use-perceived-impact-child-development-information-working-home-and-awareness-and-use>.

The data has been weighted to match the population profile of parents of children aged 0-4 in England by region, social grade, and the age of the selected child.

The Parent Poll asked different questions to the Mumsnet survey but key points from the findings include:

- The affordability of weekly childcare costs is unchanged for just over half of parents compared to before the COVID-19 outbreak, and for 3 in 10 parents their weekly childcare costs are now easier to meet.
- The majority of parents (91%) who used formal childcare before the COVID-19 outbreak, and are currently using it, say that their child is spending about the same number of hours or more in formal childcare as they did before.
- More than half (56%) of parents report that their child is currently using formal childcare, this increases to 94% when looking at just those children who were receiving formal childcare before the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Only 6% of parents whose child was not receiving formal childcare said they would like to use formal childcare but have not been able to find a suitable provider. This is only approximately 2% of all parents.
- Nearly two thirds of parents of 0-4 year olds currently using childcare (64%) agree that the hours their child(ren) can access formal or informal childcare/school fits with the working hours of the adults in the household.

■ Children: Disadvantaged

Ben Bradley:

[49257]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to tackle educational inequalities for disadvantaged white boys, following the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparity published in April 2021 and the Education Select Committee Report entitled *The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down*, and how to change it, published in June 2021.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities was launched to conduct a detailed, data-led examination of inequality across the entire population, and to set out a positive agenda for change. We thank Dr Tony Sewell and each of the commissioners for generously giving their time to lead this important piece of work. It is now right that the government considers their recommendations in detail and assesses the implications for future government policy. The government remains fully committed to building a fairer Britain and taking the action needed to address disparities wherever they exist.

We also thank the Education Select Committee for its report and have been considering its findings and recommendations carefully. We will publish the government's response to the report in due course.

The government is committed to levelling up across the UK and is funding particularly disadvantaged areas through the National Funding Formula, Pupil Premium and our Schools Capital programmes.

■ Lifelong Education

Sir David Evennett:

[51598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to promote lifelong learning.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is investing £2.5 billion in the National Skills Fund in England.

Since 1 April 2021, the government is supporting adults who do not hold A level equivalent or higher qualifications to access over 400 funded level 3 courses, with Free Courses for Jobs. This offer is a long-term commitment, backed by £95 million from the National Skills Fund in year one.

Complementing this support for adults, Skills Bootcamps offer free, flexible courses of up to 16 weeks to give people the opportunity to build up sector specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. The department is expanding the Skills Bootcamp programme across the country during 2021/22 financial year, with £43 million from the National Skills Fund. There will be digital Skills Bootcamps available in each English region and a wide coverage of technical Skills Bootcamps. We are also delivering Skills Bootcamps in retrofit construction skills to support the green industrial revolution.

From 2025, the department will introduce a Lifelong Loan Entitlement equivalent to 4 years of post-18 education. People will be supported to study throughout their life, with the opportunity to train, retrain and upskill as needed in response to changing skills needs and employment patterns. It will help transform post-18 study, delivering greater parity between further and higher education.

The department is continuing to invest in education and skills training for adults through the Adult Education Budget (AEB), investing £1.34 billion in the 2021/22 financial year. The AEB fully funds or co-funds skills provision for eligible adults aged 19 and above from pre-entry to level 3, to support adults to gain the skills required for work, apprenticeships or further learning.

■ Pre-school Education

Liz Twist:

[\[52575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the role of early years services is in the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Will Quince:

Levelling up is at the heart of the agenda to build back better after the COVID-19 outbreak and to deliver for every part of the UK. The department takes a dual approach to disadvantage: tackling outcome inequalities nationally while tilting efforts to, and working specifically in, places of greatest need.

In education, ability is evenly spread but opportunity is not. We know that differences in outcomes start early. To really tackle our levelling up challenge, we must look at our support for children and young people at every level, from support for families and childcare, through to university, and to develop skills throughout life.

We are already making progress. On 2 June 2021 we announced an additional £1.4 billion education recovery package, which includes a £153 million investment in evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners, including through new programmes focusing on key areas such as speech and language development.

This is in addition to the £27 million which we are already investing to support children's early language development in light of the COVID-19 outbreak:

- £17 million is to deliver the Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI) in schools that would particularly benefit. Two thirds of primary schools have already signed up for the programme.
- £10 million will support language development for pre-reception children in the next academic year.

What happens outside of schools and settings is also important. The government is investing over £34 million to champion family hubs. This approach will help to support children of all ages and their families across a broad range of needs in their localities. This investment includes establishing a new national centre for family hubs, run by the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families; a new transformation fund to open

family hubs in around 10 local authorities; an evaluation innovation fund; and work with local authorities to develop data and digital products that will support the practical implementation of family hubs.

The government will publish a landmark Levelling Up White Paper later this year, setting out bold new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunity in all parts of the UK.

■ **Pre-school Education: Finance**

Liz Twist: [\[52577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding for early years services.

Will Quince:

We are making our usual preparations for the imminent Spending Review, which will set departmental budgets for all financial years from 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Ministers and officials from the department will continue to have discussions with HM Treasury as the Spending Review progresses.

■ **Pre-school Education: Standards**

Liz Twist: [\[52576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of early years provision.

Will Quince:

High quality, accessible childcare is important in ensuring that every child has the best possible start in life. The overall quality of provision within the early years sector remains high and, as of 31 March 2021, 96% of providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register were judged good or outstanding, which is a substantial increase from 74% in 2012. Ofsted are responsible for monitoring the quality of provision.

We continue to monitor the sufficiency of childcare through regular attendance data collection and monitoring the open or closed status of providers. We also discuss sufficiency of provision in our regular conversations with local authorities. Local authorities are not currently reporting any significant sufficiency or supply issues and we have not seen any significant number of parents unable to secure a childcare place, either this term or since early years settings re-opened fully on 1 June 2020.

Ofsted data shows that as of March 2021 the number of childcare places available on the Early Years Register has remained broadly stable since August 2015.

■ **Sex and Relationship Education: Females**

Sarah Champion: [\[51710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the Government is working with representatives of local Violence Against Women and Girls sector organisations to implement relationship and sex education.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department has not engaged specifically with any local representatives of sector organisations focused on violence against women and girls in relation to the implementation of the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum, which came into force in September 2020. The department commissioned Ofsted to undertake a review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges and they published their report in June 2021. The government accepted the findings in full. The department is developing a new support package for teachers, and we plan to engage with a range of stakeholders, including organisations with expertise in sexual abuse and violence against women and girls to inform that.

We will publish non-statutory RSHE guidance covering specific topics mentioned by the Ofsted review and in response to the Violence against Women and Girls strategy.

To support teachers further, we also plan to host a national webinar on specific topics in RSHE for teachers and other interested professionals using subject sector experts from the field and run smaller RSHE regional events to support teachers to network and share best practice.

■ Special Educational Needs**Sir David Evennett:****[51597]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Educational, Health Care Plans have been sought in (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 in (i) Bexley Borough, (ii) Greater London and (iii) England.

Will Quince:

The initial requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans relating to 2019 and 2020 are published at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/1ff67fe5-249c-4a8e-b2a1-a172c1ae0b23>.

The department does not yet hold information on the number of initial requests for EHC plans in 2021, but this will be published in May 2022 at the following link: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.

■ T-levels**Christian Wakeford:****[51901]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to encourage more colleges and schools to provide T Levels.

Alex Burghart:

We are introducing T Levels in a phased implementation with the number of providers increasing year on year. Just over 100 providers are now teaching T Levels and from next September this number will rise to around 200. For this initial rollout we selected high performing providers to ensure high-quality from the start. Providers are now registering their interest to deliver T Levels from 2023 at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-register-to-deliver-t-levels-in-2023-to-2024-academic-year>, and we have seen a positive response to this.

We continue to work closely with sector representatives, such as the Association of Colleges and Association of School and College Leaders, as well as academy trusts and local/combined authorities to raise awareness and encourage providers to register for 2023 delivery.

Christian Wakeford:

[51902]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to encourage more businesses to offer T Level placements.

Alex Burghart:

We have provided an extensive programme of employer and provider support to help with the delivery of high-quality industry placements. We have invested £165 million over the past 3 years to help providers build their capacity and relationships with employers and we have published practical industry placement delivery guidance for both providers and employers. We are engaging directly with employers through the National Apprenticeship Service to provide a strong pipeline of employers ready to offer placements and there is a comprehensive package of support available for employers offering online guidance, webinars and direct hands-on support to help them prepare for industry placements. We have established a T Level employer ambassador network to engage with others in their industries on T Levels and placements, and we are further developing our communications materials to continue to raise the profile of T Levels to an employer audience. We have also recently put in place a short-term incentive fund, offering employers £1,000 per industry placement, to encourage employer engagement in the post COVID-19 outbreak period.

■ **T-levels: Bury South**

Christian Wakeford:

[51898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many students studying T Levels in Bury South constituency (a) there were in the 2020-21 academic year and (b) there are in the 2021-22 academic year.

Alex Burghart:

We are introducing T Levels in a phased implementation - 43 providers started teaching these pioneering qualifications last September to around 1,300 students. In this first wave of rollout, no providers based specifically in Bury offered T Levels.

From this September, provider numbers have grown to just over 100, which includes Bury College. In the wider area providers include Hopwood Hall, Bolton College and Oldham College. Providers are still enrolling students at this point and data on student numbers nationally will be available later in the autumn, with provider level data available next year.

Keeping provider numbers small in these initial stages of rollout has meant we can work closely with them to ensure a high-quality start. Feedback from students and providers involved in the first year of teaching has been positive.

Christian Wakeford:

[51899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the impact of T Levels on social mobility in Bury South constituency.

Alex Burghart:

The provision of high-quality technical education is key to improving social mobility, and we want as many young people as possible to benefit from T Levels. The introduction of T Levels will help raise the standard of technical education, so that it is seen as equal in esteem to our world class academic route. The industry placement element of T Levels helps to build students' employability skills, developing their confidence in the workplace and giving young people from all backgrounds a head start in accessing skilled work. T Levels carry UCAS points in line with three A levels so will also allow progression to higher education. We have also developed a T Level Transition Programme, which is aimed at students who have potential to complete a T Level but need extra support.

The first T Level providers are situated across the country and we have ensured they are represented in opportunity areas. From this academic year, Bury College and other providers in the wider Bury area began offering T Levels, boosting access to high quality technical education for young people in the area.

■ T-levels: Young People

Christian Wakeford:

[51900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to encourage more young people to study T Levels.

Alex Burghart:

We want as many young people as possible to benefit from T Levels. The T Level communications campaign launched in October 2019, aimed at potential students and parents of 14-16 year olds. We are working with the Careers and Enterprise Company to ensure that careers staff can articulate their benefits to students and have included T Levels in the Apprenticeships Support and Knowledge programme, which offers free support and resources to schools to upskill their staff.

We continue to support T Level providers with their recruitment, and going forward T Levels will be part of a new 'Young People's Futures' campaign. This will support 14-19 year olds to understand the range of education, training and work options open to them, including T Levels. T Levels also feature in our Employer Support campaign, helping to increase awareness nationally.

■ Vocational Education: Qualifications

Kim Johnson: [\[52619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that students can continue to study BTEC qualifications in the future.

Kim Johnson: [\[52620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the effect on students of removing funding for certain BTEC qualifications.

Alex Burghart:

Employers are facing a skills shortage that we must act to address. It is vital in a fast moving and high-tech economy that we close the gap between what people study and the needs of employers. This is why we are introducing over 20 T Levels and are strengthening the routes to progress into skilled employment or further study with high quality qualifications that are fit for the future. T Levels are challenging qualifications developed with 250 leading employers. They include a meaningful nine-week industry placement and will equip more young people with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to access skilled employment or further training.

We set out the qualifications we intend to fund alongside A levels and T Levels at level 3 in July 2021. We are clear that any qualifications that are funded to be taken alongside or instead of A levels or T Levels must be high quality and lead to good outcomes. We will fund level 3 BTECs and/or other Applied General or similar qualifications where there is a clear need for skills and knowledge that T Levels and A levels cannot provide. These must meet new quality criteria to be approved for funding.

We have been clear that we expect the changes to be generally positive as students will have access to higher quality qualifications in the future, including new T Levels. This will put students in a stronger position to progress onto further study or skilled employment.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Sustainable Development

Adam Holloway: [\[52433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the details available to farmers on the Sustainable Farming Incentive.

Victoria Prentis:

Last November, we published our [Agricultural Transition Plan](#) setting out all our future environmental land management schemes, starting with the Sustainable Farming Incentive.

We set out what we intend to achieve by 2028 and how we will help farmers manage the move away from Direct Payments over a seven-year transition period to give everyone time to plan and adjust.

In March of this year, we launched the pilot of the Sustainable Farming Incentive. This was so that we could test, at scale, the future scheme in real-world scenarios, with a wide range of farmers and land managers. Our goal is to collaborate with farmers and land managers to design and deliver a scheme that works best for them.

We are currently undertaking user research and surveys on these pilot applicants with a view to informing and improving the scheme. From this we will learn how farmers and land managers have fared in understanding the information presented to them.

In June, we published a [progress update](#) of the Agricultural Transition Plan. Here, we gave further details of the early rollout of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme and what it will pay for. We also set out clear guidance on the scheme's eligibility criteria and how farmers can be rewarded for their environmentally sustainable actions when it opens in 2022.

We will be publishing more information about the Sustainable Farming Incentive in November, including confirmation of the standard payment rates.

■ Agriculture: Technology

Dr Luke Evans:

[51871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to support innovation and the use of new technology by farmers.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is investing to unlock innovation and translate our world leading research into practical farmer-led solutions that improve the productivity, sustainability and resilience of agriculture and move towards net zero emission farming systems.

Our £90 million investment in the 'Transforming Food Production' (TFP) challenge, launched in 2018, is supporting ground-breaking research and development so farmers will be able to harness the latest technology to produce high quality food, increase their productivity and move towards net zero emission farming systems by 2040. This will put the UK at the forefront of advanced sustainable agriculture and food production while reducing emissions, pollution, waste and soil erosion.

We have also recently launched a £14.5 million Defra-funded collaborative agricultural Research & Development competition 'Farming Innovation Pathways' targeting existing and new farm focused innovation, which will also be delivered through the TFP initiative.

In Autumn we are building on this momentum and launching a new R&D funding package for England as part of the proposed measures to stimulate innovation and boost sustainable productivity in agriculture and horticulture as we move away from

the CAP system of farming subsidy payments. The Farming Innovation Programme will de-risk industry investment in innovation and pull-through R&D to deliver farmer-led solutions to common challenges and opportunities. Our ambitious proposals for future investment in R&D for England will enable more farmers and agri-food businesses to become involved in R&D, maximising the impact of investment and improving the take up of innovation on farms.

Later this year we will also be opening the new Farming Investment Fund which will provide grants to farmers, foresters and growers (including contractors to these sectors) so that they can invest in the equipment, technology and infrastructure that will help their businesses to prosper, while improving their productivity and enhancing the environment. These grants will help producers to focus on more efficient production methods that will reduce resource costs, improve yields, and give them a better return.

■ Bivalve Molluscs

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[51014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of shortages of water treatment chemicals and sewage treatment on water classification in areas used for the production of bivalve molluscs.

Rebecca Pow:

England has an adequate supply of water chemicals, there is no shortage.

The situation with hauliers may lead to a requirement for a temporary reduction in chemical dosing at some wastewater treatment sites. The Regulatory Position Statement (RPS) was issued by the Environment Agency (EA) to facilitate a reduction in dosing requirements as a last resort. The RPS does not allow changes to discharges to shellfish waters and therefore will not impact the classification of shellfish harvesting areas used for the production of Bivalve Molluscs.

■ Environmental Land Management Scheme

Adam Holloway:

[\[52434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what comparative assessment he has made of the support available to farmers (a) under environmental land management schemes and (b) in the countries with which the Government is pursuing free trade deals.

Victoria Prentis:

We are undertaking an assessment of our proposed reforms to the agricultural industry as they are developed, including the impact of our future schemes that reward environmental land management. It is our intention to publish a comprehensive assessment in due course.

The Government also produces and publishes analysis for each new free trade agreement it pursues and is committed to publishing a full impact assessment following the conclusion of negotiations prior to implementation of an agreement.

The OECD publishes an [annual agricultural policy monitoring and evaluation report](#) which contains estimates of support to agriculture. One metric of particular interest from that publication is the 'producer support estimate' (PSE) as a percentage of receipts. As an example, it shows that for the UK the PSE is approximately 20% of receipts compared with 1% in New Zealand and 2% in Australia.

Adam Holloway:

[52435]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the delivery timeline of environmental land management schemes will ensure timely access to new payments for farmers moving on from old payments.

Victoria Prentis:

The first Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) pilot agreements will start this year. Then, next year we will start to rollout core elements of the SFI, expanding those elements until we have the full offer available in 2024/2025. Importantly, we are running Countryside Stewardship and the SFI in parallel, and both are open to new and existing scheme agreement holders, though we will not fund the same action twice.

The final round of Countryside Stewardship will open in 2023, with agreements starting on 1 January 2024. We plan to start a phased rollout of the Local Nature Recovery scheme from 2023. We will be launching at least ten Landscape Recovery projects between 2022 and 2024. This makes us confident that the full environmental land management offer will be on tap before the end of the transition period.

■ Fisheries: Wales

Liz Saville Roberts:

[51012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has conducted an impact assessment of the potential effect of introducing quotas on present non-quota species in Welsh waters in the period to 2024.

Victoria Prentis:

Assessment of the impacts of any potential fisheries management measures in Welsh waters is the responsibility of the Welsh Government, as UK fisheries management is devolved.

UK Fisheries Administrations are working closely together on the development of future plans, including for non-quota fisheries, to ensure we secure sustainability of our stocks, the environment and a thriving industry.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[51013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the introduction of quotas on present non-quota fish species.

Victoria Prentis:

Discussions with UK Fisheries Administrations, including the Welsh Government, on non-quota fisheries management have focused on implementing the provisions of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement in relation to applying a tonnage limit to fishing of non-quota species in UK and EU waters. Longer term management of non-quota species will be reflected in Fisheries Management Plans and in discussions on shared stocks with the EU.

Whilst it is for the Welsh Government to develop and implement measures in Welsh waters, all UK Fisheries Administrations are part of a Fisheries Management Plan Working Group to collaborate on the development of future plans.

■ Fishing Vessels

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[51011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the feasibility of reducing vessel monitoring system polling frequency of all non-UK registered fishing vessels 12 metres and above to 10-minute intervals.

Victoria Prentis:

As an independent coastal state, the UK has full responsibility over how it ensures compliance in its fisheries. It is for each Devolved Administration to decide how best to control its waters. Defra and the Marine Management Organisation continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations to ensure a coordinated approach to fisheries control and enforcement.

It is a legal requirement for all licensed fishing vessels over 12m in length operating within UK waters to be fitted with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) device which reports their position at least once every two hours. In line with the conditions set out in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK will notify the EU Commission of any new VMS requirements that apply to EU vessels in UK waters, should any be brought forward. It will be the responsibility of those vessels to ensure they have a functioning VMS device on board that meets the requirements.

■ Fly-tipping

Adam Holloway:

[\[52432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he has taken to coordinate (a) Police and Crime commissioners, (b) the Environment Agency and (c) local police forces to ensure that they are adequately responding to fly-tipping.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra is committed to working with partners to stamp out the menace of fly-tipping wherever we can. Our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy set out our strategic approach to tackling waste crime, including fly-tipping. Our focus is on enabling local action by providing a clear legal framework of rights, responsibilities and powers and setting national standards.

Local authorities and the Environment Agency are encouraged to work in partnership with national and local police bodies in carrying out their enforcement functions against fly-tipping. Defra are working with a wide range of interested parties through the National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group (NFTPG) to raise awareness of fly-tipping and to develop a fly-tipping toolkit. Members of the NFTPG include local authorities, the National Police Chiefs Council and the Environment Agency. The toolkit will support partnership working, intelligence sharing, dealing with fly-tipping associated with unauthorised encampments and the use of technology to report fly-tipping.

In the Environment Bill, we are bringing forward measures to go further, giving agencies and authorities enhanced powers of entry and access to evidence to strengthen their ability to tackle waste crime, and enhancing our ability to track waste and to crack down on rogue operators.

■ Food and Drinks: Vacancies**Carolyn Harris:**[\[51002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the effective operation of food and drink supply chains in the context of labour shortages.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 response. It is well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. Our high degree of food security is built on access to a range of sources, including robust supply chains domestically, and from other countries. Government has well established ways of working with the industry monitor and address risks that may arise. Measures currently in place to ease supply chain pressures include a relaxation to driver's hours rules and food retail delivery hours restrictions. Up to 5,500 poultry workers and 5,000 HGV drivers transporting food and fuel will be able to enter the UK for work in the lead up to Christmas 2021. Defra continues to work closely across Government and with key stakeholders to assess how we can best facilitate food supply sectors to operate normally through this period.

The Government is also working closely with the industry on specific measures to support the logistics sector as it experiences shortages of qualified HGV drivers, including a package of measures to support recruitment and retention of new drivers.

We are encouraging all industry sectors to make employment more attractive to UK domestic workers through offering training, careers options, wage increases and

investment in automation technology. In 2021 and beyond, food and farming businesses also continue to be able to rely on EU nationals living in the UK with settled or pre-settled status. Over 5.3 million EU citizens and their families have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme and EU nationals who have settled status can continue to travel to the UK to do work in the food and drink sector in 2021.

■ Food Supply

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[51873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help ensure that UK food security is incorporated into the Government's national emergency preparedness.

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[51874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to maintain UK (a) food security and (b) self-sufficiency in key food products.

Victoria Prentis:

Food supply is one of the UK's 13 Critical National Infrastructure sectors. Defra and the Food Standards Agency (FSA) are joint Lead Government Departments (LGDs), Defra leading on supply and the FSA on food safety. As such we work closely with the Cabinet Office and other LGDs ensuring food supply is fully incorporated as part of emergency preparedness, including consideration of dependencies on other sectors.

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 response. It is well equipped to deal with situations with the potential to cause disruption. Our high degree of food security is built on access to a range of sources, including robust supply chains domestically, and from a diverse range of other stable countries. We produce 60% of our entire food supply need, and that increases to 74% for indigenous food that we can grow or rear here in the UK for all or part of the year. These figures have been steady over the past 20 years. UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

Defra and the FSA have well established ways of working with the industry and across Government to monitor risks that may arise. This includes extensive, regular and ongoing engagement in preparedness for, and response to, issues with the potential to cause disruption to food supply chains.

The Government has a duty to report triennially on food security in Section 19 of the Agriculture Act 2020. The reports will cover a range of current issues relevant to food security including the resilience of the food supply chain. The first such report is due to be published before 25th December 2021.

■ Food: Exports

Dr Luke Evans:

[51872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to involve (a) Leicestershire and (b) other food and drink producing counties in the development of a marketing strategy for British food exports.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government has a manifesto commitment that 'we want people, both at home and abroad, to be lining up to buy British'.

We are working with the sector to raise domestic and international awareness of the UK's growing reputation for high-quality food and drink produced to high standards of food safety, animal welfare and sustainability. This will provide a catalyst for growth for all regions of the UK and increase global recognition of the UK as an innovative food nation.

Defra works in tandem with the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Cabinet Office to deliver the food and drink pillar of the GREAT campaign, which helps businesses to succeed in overseas markets by building global recognition of UK excellence in food and drink. The campaign showcases exemplar food and drink products from all parts of the UK, including quality local and protected food and drink from our regions. For example, in recent activity we have highlighted traditional Melton Mowbray pork pies, Red Leicester cheese and craft gin from Leicestershire.

The GREAT food and drink campaign is focused on priority markets, including the USA, China, Japan and the UAE. Activity is being planned across all priority markets for the coming year, where we will work with UK businesses and UK overseas posts to promote the best of UK food and drink on the international stage.

In addition, the Government is appointing more dedicated 'agri-food attachés' to act as representatives on the ground to unlock key markets across the world. This will build on the excellent teams already working in our Embassies around the world.

We are also establishing a Food and Drink Exports Council to work collaboratively to expand our food and drink exports strategy. In tandem, we are strengthening our technical expertise as well as our farmers and producers' understanding of export markets to ensure that food and drink exporters are able to benefit from market opportunities.

We are providing food and drink companies with advice and tools to build export capability. DIT recently launched its Open Doors campaign with a focus on the food and drink sector. This provides companies with access to online tutorials, webinars, mentoring and specialist advice to help them capitalise on export opportunities across the world.

Taken together, this range of initiatives will support food and drink businesses from across the UK to access growing opportunities to export.

■ Food: Public Sector

Dr Luke Evans:

[51875]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to encourage local public sector bodies to procure locally produced food.

Victoria Prentis:

We have a manifesto commitment to encourage the public sector to buy British. To help meet this commitment, we will be consulting on proposals to strengthen the Government Buying Standards for Food and Catering Services early in 2022. The consultation will seek views on ways to promote greater take-up of local produce and make public procurement more accessible to SMEs.

We are also working across Government to identify and trial innovative approaches to public food procurement. This includes a pilot in the South West, in collaboration with Crown Commercial Services, aimed at simplifying the route into the public sector for local and sustainable SME businesses. If successful, the trial could be rolled out nationally, extending opportunities to food producers from all regions and nations of the UK.

■ Horses: Transport

Henry Smith:

[52468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the evidence presented in the BBC Panorama documentary, entitled The Dark Side of Horse Racing, broadcast on 24 July 2021, that some horses are travelling from Ireland to Great Britain to be slaughtered, whether his Department has plans to review its policy and legislation on the distance travelled by horses for slaughter in response to that evidence; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government is committed to the highest standards of animal welfare during transport.

We consulted earlier this year on a wide range of proposals to improve how animals are transported in England and Wales, including reduced journey times for horses. In August we published a joint response, with the Welsh Government, to the consultation^[1] outlining how we will be taking reforms forward.

[1] [Improvements to animal welfare in transport: summary of responses and government response \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

■ Litter: Coastal Areas

Damien Moore:

[52596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department plans to take to tackle littering in coastal areas.

Rebecca Pow:

Local councils are responsible for keeping public land clear of litter and Defra is committed to supporting them in doing so. We published the Litter Strategy for England in April 2017, setting out our aim to deliver a substantial reduction in litter. We have almost doubled the maximum fixed penalty fine for littering to £150. Through a recent grant scheme administered by the environmental charity WRAP, we have also awarded almost £1m to local councils to provide new litter bins. We have been proud to support national clean-up days such as the Great British Spring Clean and the Great British Beach Clean, and we will continue to do so in future. Measures in the Environment Bill, including the Deposit Return Scheme and restrictions on single-use plastic items, will also provide significant additional support to local councils in tackling this issue.

■ Livestock: Air Pollution**Hilary Benn:**[\[51595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to reduce methane and CO₂ emissions from animal agriculture in order to help meet the UK's net zero emissions target.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is committed to take action to mitigate climate change and to adapt to its impact. We are introducing three schemes that reward environmental benefits: the Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery. Together, these schemes are intended to provide a powerful vehicle for achieving the goals of the 25 Year Environment Plan and our commitment to net zero emissions by 2050, while supporting our rural economy. Through these schemes, farmers and other land managers may enter into agreements to be paid for delivering public goods, including adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.

The Agricultural Transition Plan outlined how the government will support farmers and land managers by investing the money freed up from phasing out direct payments to pay for improvements to the environment, improve animal health and welfare and reduce carbon emissions.

Defra takes a key role in supporting emissions reduction by providing scientific advice and evidence. This includes long term breeding work to develop more efficient, productive and resilient crops and livestock, as well as research on more efficient feeding strategies for livestock. Innovation in livestock feeds is resulting in promising technologies to reduce methane emissions. We have commissioned work to holistically evaluate suitability, scalability and net mitigation effects of methane-inhibiting livestock feed supplements in a UK context.

More detail on the Government plans to help the UK meet its climate targets will be set out in the Net Zero strategy, to be published ahead of COP26.

■ River Tame: Flood Control

Liam Byrne:

[\[50949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timeframe is for (a) completing flood defence work on the river Tame in Hodge Hill constituency and (b) restoring play facilities located there.

Rebecca Pow:

The Environment Agency (EA) has been working hard to improve flood defences at Bromford and Castle Vale, which will see more than 1,500 homes better protected from the risk of flooding. The scheme is expected to be completed by winter 2022/23.

The EA hopes the embankment area which is of particular concern to residents and Birmingham City Council will open in winter 2021/22. This is pending Section 278 approval from Birmingham City Council required before the EA can complete flood embankment works.

The EA has committed more funding to complete the scheme and deal with the various challenges the project has faced. The contractor's senior management has also provided commitments to improve delivery confidence. They are both fully committed to completing this scheme at the earliest opportunity.

While work has been happening, some areas have had to close for the safety of the workforce and community, such as the play area in Bromford. The EA ensured the Multi Use Games Area and Skatepark adjacent to the under 12's play area re-opened at the start of the summer holidays and has provided safety barriers to enable the community to run pop-up play sessions for younger children towards the end of the holidays. Birmingham City Council is responsible for progressing and re-opening the play area and I cannot comment on its timescales.

■ Roads: Freight

Tim Farron:

[\[50967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many meetings (a) he and (b) Ministers in his Department have had with the haulage industry since the start of 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

My Rt Hon Friend the Environment Secretary and I meet regularly with representatives of the food industry to discuss a wide range of issues, and we continue to work across Government, including with the Department for Transport, to find solutions to any issues. Officials in our Department also meet regularly with trade association and the haulier industry directly.

■ Tree Planting

Jim Shannon:

[\[52494\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many trees have been planted in England in the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

The Forestry Commission produces statistics on all new planting of woodland for the UK. These can be found in [Forestry Statistics](#) and in [Provisional Woodland Statistics: 2021 edition](#) on the Forest Research website. These statistics are reported for each financial year in thousands of hectares. The latest available figures are for 2020-21.

For all new planting of woodland since 2020-21, there is also a published estimate of the approximate number of trees this represents available from the [Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators](#) on the gov.uk website.

The areas of new planting (woodland creation) for England taken from the published statistics are shown below:

YEAR (ENDING 31 MARCH)	NEW PLANTING IN ENGLAND (THOUSAND HECTARES)	NEW PLANTING IN ENGLAND (ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TREES)
2016-17	1.15	..
2017-18	1.50	..
2018-19	1.42	..
2019-20	2.34	..
2020-21 (provisional)	2.18	4,252,000
2021-22 quarter 1 partial interim report	0.47	926,000

Source: Forestry Commission, Forestry England, grant schemes and with estimates for areas planted without grant aid.

Planting rates in 2020/21 were impacted by Covid-19. The England Tree Action Plan published in May 2021 stated our aim to at least treble tree planting rates in England by end of this Parliament.

Note 1: ‘..’ denotes data not available. Estimates of numbers of trees in newly-planted woodland are incomplete for years before 2020-21.

Note 2: Estimates for areas planted without grant aid are believed to be under-reported and, as a result, the reported figures are likely to under-estimate the true level of planting activity. For England, woodland planting funded by sources other than the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant and the former English Woodland Creation Grant, the Woodland Carbon Fund and the High Speed 2 Woodland Fund, include planting supported by the Woodland Trust, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the National Forest Company, in the Northern Forest, and by the Community Forests.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Asylum****Charlotte Nichols:**[\[51879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to respond individually to asylum cases from Afghanistan raised by hon. Members with her predecessor.

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. As Minister Cleverly said in the House on 9 September, we are determined to work with the Home Office and the MOD to assess all cases which have come through to us as quickly as possible. Cases which are to be dealt with by the MoD under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) or the Home Office under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will be passed on to the relevant Department. The team at the FCDO is thoroughly analysing to ensure they go to the right Department. Asylum applications will be handled by the Home Office and would not be for the FCDO to answer in detail.

■ Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad**Afzal Khan:**[\[51842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate her Department has made of the number of British citizens currently in Afghanistan.

Amanda Milling:

Between 15-28 August over 8,000 British nationals and dependents were evacuated from Afghanistan. Additionally the FCDO has supported over 60 British nationals and their eligible dependants to leave Afghanistan on Qatari Government charter flights. We continue to work to support British nationals and their dependants to leave Afghanistan if that is their wish. We expect British people to take responsibility for themselves and their safety while overseas. The FCDO does not routinely ask British nationals to register with a British Embassy or High Commission overseas. Recognising the circumstances in Afghanistan, British nationals still in Afghanistan were asked to register their continued presence to allow the FCDO to maintain contact after the evacuation phase ended. We use this information to communicate with British nationals and assess the data provided by those who have registered.

Afzal Khan:[\[51843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to repatriate British citizens from Afghanistan.

Amanda Milling:

Under Operation PITTING, our armed forces and Civil Service staff worked around the clock to evacuate around 15,000 people - including around 8,000 British Nationals. We evacuated more British nationals and their families than we previously thought were in Afghanistan. Working closely with the Government of Qatar we have supported a further 60+ British nationals and their dependents leave Kabul. Our immediate focus is on ensuring safe passage for anyone remaining in Afghanistan who is eligible to come to the UK and wishes to leave. We continue to work closely with the Qatari authorities to facilitate the evacuation of British nationals from Kabul. Rapid Deployment Teams have been sent to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to reinforce our Embassy staff to process arrivals from Afghanistan. Teams have also deployed to Qatar and UAE to assist our operations there and we are providing consular support to British nationals who were evacuated by other allies, including via US airbases in Europe.

■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Defence**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[51654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the UK, US and Australia security partnership announced on 15 September 2021, what recent assessment she has made of the potential future strategic importance of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Wendy Morton:

The joint United Kingdom - United States defence facility on the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) helps to keep people in Britain and around the world safe. For over 40 years the facility has helped the United Kingdom, United States, other allies and our regional partners, including Mauritius, combat some of the most challenging threats to international peace and security, including those from terrorism and piracy. The facility also remains ready for a rapid and impactful response in times of humanitarian crisis in the region and plays an important role in maintaining the Global Positioning System, space debris avoidance for the International Space Station, and prevention of satellite collisions. These functions are only possible under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. The joint facility is the result of a uniquely close and active defence and security partnership between two long-standing allies. We have a long-standing commitment, first made in 1965, to cede sovereignty of the territory to Mauritius when it is no longer required for defence purposes. We stand by that commitment.

■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Mauritius**Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[51655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the French Government's support for Mauritius' claim to sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory on UK national security.

Wendy Morton:

France continues to be a valued and longstanding ally and security partner for the UK. The French Government has a longstanding approach to the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) which has not changed since our last assessment.

Daniel Kawczynski:[\[51656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans she has to impose sanctions against Mauritius in relation to its attempts to overturn the 1968 Treaty granting sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory to the UK; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the actions of the Government of Mauritius on UK national security.

Wendy Morton:

The UK and Mauritius remain close friends and Commonwealth partners. We remain open to dialogue on all shared issues of mutual interest, including the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) and its Marine Protected Area (MPA). The joint United Kingdom - United States defence facility on BIOT helps to keep people in Britain and around the world safe. For over 40 years the facility has helped the United Kingdom, United States, other allies and our regional partners, including Mauritius, combat some of the most challenging threats to international peace and security, including those from terrorism and piracy. This is only possible under the sovereignty of the United Kingdom. The joint facility is the result of a uniquely close and active defence and security partnership between two long-standing allies.

Daniel Kawczynski:[\[52443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his French counterpart on Mauritius' claims to sovereignty of the British Indian Ocean Territory.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary speaks to French counterparts on a large range of issues. This issue has not, however, been recently raised.

■ Developing Countries: Education**Marion Fellows:**[\[52523\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of reductions to Official Development Assistance for education on the education of children with disabilities.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO is committed to ensuring that children with disabilities are able to access a quality education as set out in our 2018 Education Policy and the Disability Inclusion Strategy. The then Foreign Secretary and Ministers considered equalities impacts as they made decisions on 2021/22 Official Development Assistance spend.

Marion Fellows:

[\[52524\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the total Official Development Assistance for education budget is for financial year 2021-22; and what percentage change does that represent compared with the previous year.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO will spend £400 million of bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) on girls' education for 2021-22. ODA is reported on a calendar year basis, and includes sectoral breakdowns such as education. The FCDO National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development' includes this information. Provisional ODA spend for 2020 is available, with sectoral breakdowns due to be published in the autumn. The UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset, will be published next year.

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

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Disability

Marion Fellows:

[\[52525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she plans to revise the DFID Disability Inclusion Strategy for her Department; and what changes she plans to make.

Wendy Morton:

The FCDO will publish an enhanced Disability Inclusion Strategy by end 2021 which will reaffirm the UK's commitment to disability inclusion internationally.

The Strategy will be adapted to reflect the FCDO's combined diplomatic and development resources and wider geographical reach. It will incorporate a longer term vision to 2030. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and global climate crisis, it will include new and emergent thematic and cross-cutting issues alongside the existing themes. In line with our partnership approach and 'nothing about us without us' the Strategy is being developed in consultation with people with disabilities and their representative organisations across our geographic remit.

■ Iraq: Kurds

Patrick Grady:

[\[52520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish a response to Early Day Motion 457 on Arrests and detentions in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the detention and conviction of a number of journalists and activists in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and we are following the situation closely.

I have raised my concerns over restrictions on media freedom in the KRI with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Masrour Barzani. Our Ambassador in Baghdad and our Consul General in Erbil discuss these issues with their interlocutors in the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Foreign Secretary discussed the stability of Iraq and the KRI with the KRI's President Nechirvan Barzani during his visit to London over 15-17 September.

■ Iraq: Turkey**John McDonnell:****[50938]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of recent reports that the Turkish army attacked a village with chemical weapons in the Duhok region of Northern Iraq on 4 September 2021.

James Cleverly:

We have not made an assessment of this report. We take seriously all allegations of the use of chemical weapons - it is important that the full facts are established. We continue to reiterate the importance of dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism, ensure regional security, and protect civilians. We welcome discussions between Iraqi and Turkish Defence Ministers regarding Ankara's military operations against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a proscribed terrorist group, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The Foreign Secretary discussed the stability of Iraq and the KRI with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's President, Nechirvan Barzani, during his visit to London of 15-17 September.

■ Israel: Jordan**Jim Shannon:****[51695]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to help improve relations between Israel and Jordan.

James Cleverly:

Both Jordan and Israel are close friends and partners of the UK. We welcome recent engagement between the two, including the meeting between PM Bennett and HM King Abdullah II on 29 June, and new bilateral agreements on water and trade. During her meeting with Jordanian Foreign Minister Safadi on Monday 20 September, the Foreign Secretary discussed how the UK, Jordan and Israel could work together to advance regional security and prosperity.

■ Lithuania: Conference Centres**Dr Matthew Offord:****[51683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to her Lithuanian counterpart on the proposed construction of the Vilnius National Convention and Conference Centre on Shnipishok cemetery land.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government understands that the Lithuanian government has indefinitely postponed the renovation of the Soviet-era Vilnius Palace of Concerts and Sports, located in the Šnipiškės Jewish cemetery. We are pleased to note the current and previous Lithuanian governments' efforts to work alongside the Jewish Community of Lithuania and the international Jewish community on the issue of this renovation.

■ Myanmar: Food Aid**Rushanara Ali:****[51699]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the level of demand for food assistance in Myanmar (a) for internally displaced people, (b) in Kachin, and (c) in Northern Shan.

Amanda Milling:

The UK remains one of the leading donors supporting the humanitarian response in Myanmar. Since the coup, we have provided £15.3 million in humanitarian funding for the Red Cross, UN, and local and International Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Where necessary, we have also reprioritised humanitarian funding towards urgent needs, including food and Covid assistance, in Kachin, Shan, Chin and the Southeast. Over the last year the UK has been building up the humanitarian response capacity of communities themselves through partners. This has enabled the UK to get support to very hard to reach communities. Through a network of local responders and communities, 25,000 newly displaced people have been reached with cash and emergency food support in Northern Shan. In Kachin, our partners have reached over 7,500 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with food and cash assistance. UK support has been critical in covering major food gaps in several IDP camps between March and August 2021, when other partners could not reach or support these people. The UK remains strongly committed to helping those most in need in Myanmar.

■ Myanmar: Politics and Government**Rushanara Ali:****[51698]**

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

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government condemns the military coup in Myanmar, the violence against the people of Myanmar and the detention of members of the civilian government and civil society, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint.

The state of emergency, and all restrictions on rights and freedoms, should be lifted immediately and power should be returned to a democratically elected government. I [Minister Milling] am particularly concerned at recent reports of significant, indiscriminate violence by the military in Chin State, and elsewhere in the country. The UK is committed to supporting a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

■ **Paul Rusesabagina**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[52476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of the conviction of Paul Rusesabagina in Rwanda on 20 September 2021.

Vicky Ford:

Rwanda has made significant progress on social and economic rights in recent years, and we work in partnership on a range of priorities including girls' education, building back from COVID-19, climate and the Commonwealth. But the UK Government remains concerned about restrictions on civil and political rights. On 21 September I publicly stated that the UK shares the concerns of our international partners about due process in the case of Paul Rusesabagina and his co-accused, and that whilst there must be accountability for violence against civilians, we will always defend the right to a fair trial. We regularly raise specific cases of concern with the Government of Rwanda and the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, and call for due process for all those in detention.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Accident and Emergency Departments**

Damien Moore:

[\[49264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to discourage GPs from making non-urgent referrals to accident and emergency departments.

Maria Caulfield:

In 2021/22 the Investment and Impact Fund (IIF) will recognise general practitioner (GP) practices, organised into Primary Care Networks (PCNs), for developing and implementing plans to reduce unnecessary accident and emergency attendances and emergency hospital admissions. In 2021/22 and 2022/23, the IIF will also recognise PCNs for making and implementing plans to increase referrals from general practice to the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service. We have launched the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service which is providing GPs, emergency departments and NHS 111 pathways for referring patients to a consultation with a pharmacist for lower acuity conditions.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Children and Young People

Rachael Maskell: [\[50722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps is he taking to tackle alcohol consumption among children and young people.

Rachael Maskell: [\[50723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of hospital admissions for significant alcohol consumption in children and young people.

Maggie Throup:

Public Health England (PHE) works with other Government departments to support investment in programmes supporting young people to avoid the misuse of alcohol and drugs. In 2021/22 we are investing £3.3 billion in local government public health services, including treatment services which provide specialist support to children and young people affected by alcohol misuse.

PHE's Local Alcohol Profiles for England provide national and local data on alcohol-related harms, including a measure of the rate of hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions among 0 to 17 year olds over a three-year period. Hospital admission rates have more than halved over the past decade, from 72.1 per 100,000 between 2006/07 and 2008/09 to 30.7 per 100,000 between 2017/18 and 2019/20

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Misuse

Steve Reed: [\[51713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what figures his Department holds on the amount spent by local authorities in England on providing counselling advice and support for people affected by alcohol abuse and dependency.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The information is not held in the format requested.

■ Allergies: Health Services

Kim Leadbeater: [\[50786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the UK has a patient-focused allergy strategy that focuses on prevention and rapid treatment for those who suffer allergies.

Gillian Keegan:

Whilst there are currently no plans to develop an allergy strategy, the Government recognises the challenges faced by people with allergies and is taking several actions to support them.

This includes The Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019 which will come into effect on 1 October 2021, requiring food retailers and operators to

display full ingredient and allergen labelling information on every pre-packed food item they sell. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency also continues to issue and update guidance for prescribing and use of adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs), including a communications campaign to improve the safe and effective use of self-administered AAIs.

The Department continues to invest in research into food allergy, with £2.3 million awarded to the National Institute for Health Research over the last five years.

■ **Alzheimer's Disease: Diagnosis**

Greg Smith:

[\[50152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to improve patient access to (a) FDG-PET and (b) CSF tests for the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease in line with NICE guidelines.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations for health and care, including on assessment, management and support for people living with dementia and their carers. NICE's guideline NG97 states that FDG-PET and CSF tests should be considered when the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease is uncertain.

Clinical commissioning groups are expected to commission appropriate services, including such testing, in line with their local population health needs.

■ **Baroness Harding of Winscombe**

Deidre Brock:

[\[19613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 29 April 2021 to Question 174153 on Baroness Harding of Winscombe, if he will publish the diary of Baroness Harding of Winscombe, in her role as Executive Chair of Test and Trace for the first month of her appointment.

Maggie Throup:

We have no plans to do so. Information on meetings at Ministerial and Permanent Secretary level only are routinely published at GOV.UK.

■ **Bio Products Laboratory**

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[29744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many times officials in his Department have met with representatives of Bio Products Laboratory Limited in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 13 July 2021]: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has had eight meetings with Bio Products Limited concerning maintenance of

their product licences and inspections in relation to its licensed manufacturing process over the last three years.

■ Blood Tests: Bottles

Caroline Lucas:

[\[41795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of blood collection tubes available to the NHS; if he will publish the total number of blood collection tubes that were (a) required and (b) available to (i) hospitals, (ii) GP surgeries and (iii) community testing facilities in the most recent period for which that information is available; when he plans for blood testing to resume at the levels previously undertaken prior to the recent shortages of blood collection tubes; what plans and systems he is putting in place to help avoid further future restrictions of blood tests in response to shortages of such diagnostic consumables; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

We have secured in excess of 15 million of additional blood tubes, by importing additional supplies from the European Union and the United States. During August and September, an average of 1.96 million tubes were supplied into hospitals each week against a pre-disruption weekly requirement of 2.04 million. Due to the multiple channels through which blood tubes are provided to different areas of the health and social care system, information on the supply into general practitioner and community testing facilities is not held centrally, as many will receive this via hospitals.

The additional stock secured combined with recovery of supply through normal channels has allowed for normal testing to resume from 20 September. The Department is working closely with suppliers, NHS England, the devolved administrations and the National Health Service to enhance future resilience through strategic planning, rebuilding local and national stockpiles, introduction and validation of supplier product and the adoption of best practice within the health system to make best use of the available resources.

■ Blood Tests: Shortages

Damien Moore:

[\[52597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to tackle the shortage of blood test kits.

Edward Argar:

We have secured tens of millions of additional blood tubes, including importing additional supplies from the European Union and the United States of America, to ensure clinically urgent testing continues. The Department is working closely with NHS England, the devolved administrations and the National Health Service to minimise any impact on patient care.

■ Blood: Donors

Florence Eshalomi: [\[45320\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to update blood donation criteria to remove the three month restriction on donating blood for anyone whose partner has had sex with someone from parts of the world where HIV is very common.

Florence Eshalomi: [\[45321\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for his decision not remove the three month restriction on donating blood for anyone in England whose partner has had sex with someone from parts of the world where HIV is very common; and if he will publish that this scientific advice.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 13 September 2021]: The Department has considered the evidence presented by the For the Assessment of Individual Risk steering group on the removal of the question that asks potential blood donors about whether they have recently had sex with a partner who may ever have had sex in an area where HIV is endemic.

Retaining this deferral ensures we maintain a robust and careful approach to blood donation that protects both donors and those receiving this potentially life-saving intervention. The safeguards in place to ensure the safety of those donating and those receiving blood and blood products remain under regular review.

■ Cancer: Coronavirus

Lee Anderson: [\[50762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people who have missed cancer appointments as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Health Service is focusing on reducing the number of people waiting over 62 days on cancer pathways, particularly rescheduling diagnostic procedures or treatments for those whose care was delayed by the pandemic. An additional £1 billion has been made available to the NHS in 2021/22 to support the recovery of elective activity and cancer services.

The NHS is supporting adults experiencing cancer with access to Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) mental health services, which provide evidence-based therapies for people with anxiety disorders and depression. The implementation of IAPT-Long Term Condition pathways has been identified as a priority to support integration of mental health and physical health services for people with co-morbid long-term conditions, such as cancer.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Dr Julian Lewis: [\[51570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made in tackling the backlog of cancer cases resulting from covid-19 outbreak; what steps he has taken to cover the shortage of specialist cancer nurses; what steps he will take to encourage trainee nurses to become specialist cancer nurses; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: Data for July 2021 shows fewer than 19,000 people waiting longer than 62 days for treatment following an urgent referral for suspected cancer in England. This is a decrease from 35,000 in May 2020 and is just above pre-pandemic levels.

In 2021/22 Health Education England will continue to take forward the priorities outlined in the Cancer Workforce Plan. Training grants are being offered for 250 nurses to become cancer nurse specialists and 100 nurses to become chemotherapy nurses.

■ Cancer: Screening

Peter Gibson: [\[51848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that all trans people are included in necessary cancer screenings applicable to them.

Maria Caulfield:

Public Health England (PHE) has published a leaflet advising both trans men and women to contact their general practitioner (GP) about breast screening, as long-term hormone therapy may increase their risk of developing breast cancer. The leaflet also advises that transgender men registered as male should ask their GP to update their records to ensure that they are invited for cervical screening.

PHE also provides advice to health professionals on working with trans men and women, to ensure that patients feel comfortable or can access services in other ways if necessary.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Mr Mark Harper: [\[R\] \[45813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the requirement for a person entering a CQC registered care home to be vaccinated against covid-19 will apply to people entering a care home who (a) don't have contact with residents and (b) all other people.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 15 September 2021]: The regulations will require all those who enter a care home to have received a complete course of their COVID-19 vaccination

unless they are exempt. Any professionals visiting a care home will also be required to show they have been vaccinated before entering the home. The requirement does not apply to people who only work in the outdoor surrounding grounds of care home premises.

The condition also does not apply to service users and their visiting friends or relatives, under 18 year olds, members of the emergency services carrying out their duties, people who are providing emergency assistance, people undertaking urgent maintenance work or those visiting service users who are dying or experiencing bereavement. Individuals who should not be vaccinated for clinical reasons can secure an exemption from the requirement.

■ Carers and Social Services: Advocacy

Steve Reed:

[\[51711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department holds figures on how much local authorities in England have spent on advocacy for carers and social care clients in each of the last five years.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The information requested is not held centrally.

■ Cervical Cancer: Screening

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[50167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that trans men and non-binary people with a cervix are invited for routine cervical screening.

Maria Caulfield:

All individuals are invited for cervical screening based on their registered gender in their general practitioner (GP) records. Only those who are registered as female will be invited for cervical screening according to the normal intervals. As such, if a transgender man or non-binary person is registered with their GP as male, they will not receive these invitations.

However, GPs can, if requested, update records to ensure individuals are invited for the screening to which they are entitled. We encourage all trans men and non-binary people to contact their GP to ensure that they are invited for the right screening appointments.

■ Chronic Fatigue Syndrome: Medical Treatments

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[44240\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NICE on the timeline for the publication of clinical guidelines on myalgic encephalomyelitis and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[44241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is providing to people with myalgic encephomyelitis and chronic fatigue syndrome pending the publication of updated clinical guidelines for that condition.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body and is responsible for developing its guidelines in line with its established methods and processes. NICE the Department regarding its publication of an updated guideline on chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME). NICE now plans to host a roundtable event in October to determine how it can gain support for the guideline to ensure effective implementation.

Services for CFS/ME are commissioned locally by clinical commissioning groups to plan the provision of services subject to local prioritisation and funding. NICE's existing guideline on CFS/ME provides guidance on diagnosing and managing the condition. Health and care professionals should continue to take this into account until the updated guideline is published.

■ Chronic Illnesses: Mental Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to help ensure that mental health support is integrated with physical healthcare support for people with (a) Parkinson's and (b) other long-term conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Health Service recognises that two thirds of people with a common mental health problem also have a long term physical health condition. Integrating Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services with physical health services can provide better support and achieve better outcomes. The priorities for developing IAPT - Long Term Conditions services have been established to support integrated pathways for people with long term conditions, including Parkinson's. All clinical commissioning groups are expected to commission IAPT services integrated into physical healthcare pathways.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of involving mental health practitioners in the care of people with (a) Parkinson's and (b) other long-term conditions.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England commissions specialised neurological care for people with Parkinson's and has stated that such care should include access to psychologists to manage symptoms like anxiety and depression. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's best practice for the management of long term conditions includes how mental health professionals should be involved, where appropriate.

■ Clinical Commissioning Groups: Per Capita Costs

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[41704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the proposal by NHS England to incorporate Clinical Commissioning Groups into integrated care systems, whether his Department monitors the per capita expenditure of ICGs by region.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: We have interpreted the hon. Member's question to refer to the intended future monitoring of integrated care boards (ICBs) as the successor to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). The proposals for ICBs are set out in the current Health and Care Bill. ICBs will be established from April 2022 and will take on the merged allocations from CCGs. The Department does not currently monitor the per capita expenditure of CCGs and there are no plans to monitor the per capita expenditure of ICBs.

■ Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia: Medical Treatments

Martyn Day:

[\[45887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve NHS treatment provision for patients with congenital adrenal hyperplasia.

Edward Argar:

NHS England is working with local hospitals through clinical network arrangements to improve service provision and ensure care is close to where patients reside. NHS England commissions paediatric and adult services for patients with congenital adrenal hyperplasia, with specialist paediatric endocrinology services providing the diagnosis and management of children and young people

■ Contraceptives

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[49971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he made of the adequacy of contraceptive funding required to meet need (a) nationally and (b) in Kingston upon Hull North constituency.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: No recent assessment has been made. In 2021/22 the national Public Health Grant to local authorities in England is £3.234 billion. The Grant supports the delivery of their public health functions, including contraceptive services. It is for individual local authorities to determine how funding is spent to meet local population health needs.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[50636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, ahead of World Contraception Day on 26 September 2021, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that

contraceptive consultations are patient-centred, with users feeling able to openly discuss their preferences and participate in decision-making effectively.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: Contraception services will be a focus of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy planned for publication later this year. The Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare is responsible for providing clinical guidance for contraception services. The Faculty's Service Standards for Consultations highlight that sexual and reproductive health consultations should provide safe, efficient and effective healthcare that is patient-centred and equitable.

■ **Coronavirus**

Rachael Maskell:

[49194]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the number of (a) hospital and (b) ITU admissions for patients with covid-19; and what assessment he has made of the prevalence of covid-19 in the community based on those figures.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: Daily and cumulative numbers of COVID-19 patients admitted to hospital are available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/healthcare>

Public Health England (PHE) also publishes hospitalisations data, including intensive care admissions at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2021-to-2022-season>

The analysis is based on data from a sentinel network of acute National Health Service trusts contributing enhanced data. PHE has not made an assessment of prevalence of COVID-19 in the community based on this data.

Stephen Flynn:

[50134]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment his Department has made of the rate of transmission of covid-19 between (a) people who know each other and (b) people who do not know each other.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: Public Health England has not made a comparative assessment. We continue to advise that members of the public continue to wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed spaces where they are likely to come into contact with those they do not regularly meet.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[50598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the information made publicly available on covid-19 symptoms.

Maggie Throup:

I refer the Rt hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston (Justin Madders MP) on 23 July to Question [25024](#).

■ Coronavirus: Care Homes**Rachael Maskell:**[\[45196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department made of the reasons for vaccine hesitancy in advance of mandating the covid-19 vaccine in care homes.

Maggie Throup:

The adult social care workforce has a higher percentage of women and people from ethnically diverse communities and evidence shows that people in these groups are more likely to be hesitant about taking the COVID-19 vaccine. The reasons for hesitancy in these groups could include lack of knowledge about the vaccine, misinformation and perceptions of equality and discrimination. There is evidence that women may also face more barriers to accessing the vaccine.

We are working to give health and social care workers information about the vaccine in a format that connects with them, to share information from trusted, local leaders who understand people's specific circumstances and to ensure there is appropriate outreach from clinicians and their vaccine services.

■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**Justin Madders:**[\[41929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 4 August 2021 to Question 35699 on Coronavirus: Contact Tracing, for what reason the information requested has not been provided in the same format as it has been for previous questions.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: The information requested for Question 35699 is not yet available as it is being centrally validated.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Fleur Anderson:**[\[35922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which companies and organisations (a) are taking and (b) have previously taken part in the covid-19 daily contact testing pilot scheme.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: The organisations with sites approved for the daily contact testing workplace evaluation are as follows:

- John Lewis;
- Jaguar Land Rover;

- Primula (Kavli) ;
- Northumbria Water;
- Oxford Biomedica;
- Greencore;
- Co-op - Castlewood;
- British Steel;
- Longley Farm;
- Agrial Fresh Produce;
- Pilgrim's;
- Moy Park;
- AB Foods Silver Spoon;
- Danish Crown Pork;
- Apetito;
- Network Rail;
- Transport for London;
- London Heathrow;
- Border Force; and
- Cabinet Office.

Organisations which have previously piloted daily contact testing are as follows:

- Tata Steel;
- Barts Health NHS Trust;
- Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust;
- London Ambulance Service NHS Trust;
- Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust;
- South Wales Police; and
- Asda.

The following workplaces were also involved in daily contact testing as part of the Liverpool COVID-SMART Community Testing Pilot:

- Merseyside Police;
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service; and
- Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

In addition, some small private care providers were also involved in the Liverpool Community Testing Pilot. However, we are unable to provide this information for data protection reasons. Due to the size of these organisations, there is the possibility that individuals could be identified.

Julian Sturdy:

[40883]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the support that is available to meet the needs of clinically extremely vulnerable people who are choosing to shield since the move to stage 4 of the coronavirus roadmap on 19 July 2021.

Maggie Throup:

The shielding programme has now ended in England, meaning that people who were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable will not be advised to shield in the future or follow specific national guidance. The same general guidance for the whole population should now be followed. Those who remain concerned should discuss any risks their National Health Service clinician.

Julian Sturdy:

[40884]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what targeted support his Department is putting in place during stage 4 of the coronavirus roadmap from 19 July 2021 for people with serious underlying health conditions.

Maggie Throup:

The shielding programme has now ended in England. People who were previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable will not be advised to shield or follow specific national guidance. The same guidance for the general population should now be followed.

Those who remain concerned should discuss any risks with their National Health Service clinician.

Mr David Davis:

[45040]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has any plans to impose temporary lockdowns in October 2021.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 September 2021]: The success of the vaccination programme means that stringent economic and social restrictions may not be needed to prevent unsustainable pressure on the National Health Service this autumn. The risk of COVID-19 is now being managed through pharmaceutical interventions like vaccines and antivirals, including vaccines for those aged 12 to 15 years old, continuing the Test, Trace and Isolate programme, and managing risks at the border.

Andrew Rosindell:

[49048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help prevent a national lockdown as a result of covid-19 during autumn 2021.

Andrew Rosindell:**[49049]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential effect on people's mental health of a further covid-19 lockdown in 2021.

Andrew Rosindell:**[49050]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effectiveness of a firebreak lockdown on preventing the transmission of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

The success of the vaccination programme means that stringent economic and social restrictions may not be needed this autumn. The risk of COVID-19 will be managed through pharmaceutical interventions like vaccines and antivirals, including vaccines for those aged 12 to 15 years old and measures such as continuing the test, trace and isolate programme; continued support for the National Health Service and social care; and managing risks at the border.

A Department of Health and Social Care and Office for National Statistics paper analysing the direct and indirect health impacts of COVID-19, including a case study on the mental health impacts and the use of mental health services during the pandemic is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dhsc-direct-and-indirect-health-impacts-of-covid-19-in-england-long-paper-9-september-2021>

'COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021' sets out potential measures which will be kept under review, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021>

Vicky Foxcroft:**[51782]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what resources his Department plans to provide to clinically extremely vulnerable people to improve their awareness of rates of covid-19 in their community; and what steps his Department is taking to protect the health and wellbeing of those people since the end of covid-19 shielding guidance.

Maggie Throup:

There are no plans to provide specific resources. However, more information about the rates of COVID-19 in the last seven days in local authority areas is available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

The COVID-19 vaccination programme is playing a key role in protecting the health and wellbeing of people formerly considered as clinically extremely vulnerable, most of who will be well protected by the vaccine. The vast majority of people who were on the Shielded Patient List will also be eligible for a booster vaccine to help maintain their protection against severe COVID-19. In addition, a range of mental health and

wellbeing support is available to everyone, including those previously considered as clinically extremely vulnerable.

■ Coronavirus: Drugs

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[49111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is (a) funding or (b) plans to fund the development of emerging covid-19 antibody therapy drugs (i) Ronapreve, (ii) Sotrovimab and (iii) AstraZeneca's AZD7442.

Maggie Throup:

We are monitoring clinical trials and development of monoclonal antibodies including Ronapreve, Sotrovimab and AZD7442.

Ronapreve was part of the Government supported RECOVERY trial and in August the Medicines and healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved Ronapreve as the first neutralising monoclonal antibody combination product for use in the prevention and treatment of COVID-19 in the United Kingdom. While we have not funded the development of Sotrovimab or AZD7442, company-funded trials for AZD7442 were prioritised by the National Institute for Health Research as urgent public health COVID-19 studies.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[49112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has (a) funded or (b) has plans to fund the development of the antiviral treatment for covid-19 Pfizer's PF-07321332/Ritonavir.

Maggie Throup:

We have monitored company trials and development of a number of antivirals including Pfizer's PF-07321332/Ritonavir but are not funding development. We are in contact with a number of manufacturers to ensure that United Kingdom patients have access to COVID-19 antivirals as evidence emerges.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[49113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has ordered doses of the covid-19 monoclonal antibody treatment Sotrovimab produced by GSK.

Maggie Throup:

The Government has entered into an agreement with GlaxoSmithKline for the procurement of 100,008 doses of sotrovimab.

This procurement is subject to independent approval of sotrovimab by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency who will assess the medicine for safety and efficacy for treatment of COVID-19.

■ Coronavirus: Mental Health and Suicide

Chi Onwurah: [\[49127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak and associated lockdowns on the (a) mental health and (b) suicide rates of young people.

Gillian Keegan:

We continually monitor the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had on the mental health of children and young people as new evidence becomes available.

There has been no rise in the number of registered suicides in England in 2020 compared to previous years, including amongst under 25 year olds, based on the latest available data. However, it remains too early to understand the full long-term impact of the pandemic on mental health and suicide rates among young people.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Justin Madders: [\[34514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will list the organisations participating in the daily covid-19 testing pilot.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 July 2021]: The organisations participating in the workplaces daily contact testing pilot evaluation scheme are as follows: - John Lewis; - Jaguar Land Rover; - Primula (Kavli); - Northumbria Water; - Oxford Biomedica; - Greencore; - Co-op - Castlewood; - British Steel; - Longley Farm; - Agrial Fresh Produce; - Pilgrim's; - Moy Park; - AB Foods Silver Spoon; - Danish Crown Pork; - Apetito; - Network Rail; - Transport for London; - London Heathrow; - Border Force; and - Cabinet Office Building 5.

James Wild: [\[47063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many lateral flow device testing kits the UK Health Security Agency (a) has purchased, (b) has distributed and (c) holds in storage; and how much has been spent to date on those testing kits.

Maggie Throup:

As of 7 September, 1.8 billion lateral flow tests have been purchased, 1,168 million have been dispatched and 325 million are held in storage. We are unable to provide the cost of lateral flow devices purchased to date as this information is commercially sensitive.

Steven Bonnar: [\[50763\]](#)

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

Maggie Throup:

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

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination**Marsha De Cordova:**[\[41226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on arrangements for UK citizens to access the EU covid-19 pass.

Maggie Throup:

Following technical discussions with the European Union, we have now applied to join the EU's Digital COVID Certificate scheme. This will enable digital verification of COVID-19 certification. In the meantime, passengers can continue to demonstrate their status via physical checks.

Caroline Lucas:[\[41808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to allow patients with primary care records of covid-19 vaccines received overseas to view their vaccine status in the NHS App where those vaccines have been recorded by a general practice with no access to a point of care system; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

Vaccination events not recorded within one of the English vaccination programme point of care solutions do not appear in the national vaccination database. In line with the development of the overseas vaccination service, general practitioners (GPs) will be directed to refer patients to this service that will be available at a number of English vaccination sites from October. This will support those who have been vaccinated overseas and who require a NHS COVID Pass. There are currently no plans for GP foundation IT clinical systems to send data into the vaccination database. However, some of these private system suppliers are developing point of care systems that could in future be included in the national vaccination programme.

Damien Moore:[\[42092\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that vaccines administered to British citizens overseas are displayed on the UK's Vaccination Database and the NHS Medical Records Database.

Maggie Throup:

The vaccination programme is developing an overseas vaccine service to support English citizens and residents. This will enable these vaccination events to appear in the national vaccine database and general practitioner records. The devolved administrations are considering establishing similar solutions. This service will be piloted by the end of September for wider deployment in early October. It will initially support the four vaccines recognised by the Medicines and Healthcare products

Regulatory Agency and administered within the jurisdiction of a recognised medical regulator.

Damien Moore:

[42093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that British citizens vaccinated overseas and travelling for work purposes to and from the UK are able to acquire a vaccination passport.

Maggie Throup:

The vaccination programme is developing an overseas vaccine service to support English citizens and residents. This will enable these vaccination events to appear in the national vaccine database and general practitioner records. The devolved administrations are considering establishing similar solutions. This will support those who have been vaccinated overseas and travelling for work who require a NHS COVID Pass. It will initially support the four vaccines recognised by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and administered within the jurisdiction of a recognised medical regulator.

Ian Mearns:

[43490]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to publish the data and evidential basis to support any deviation from the advice provided by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on administration of a covid-19 vaccine to children aged between 12 and 15.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 9 September 2021]: The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' (CMOs) advice to offer universal vaccination to children and young people aged 12 to 15 years old and the data and evidential basis underpinning it was published on 13 September at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19>

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) noted in its advice of 3 September that while the health benefits of vaccinating healthy 12 to 15 year olds outweighed the risks, the margin was too small to recommend vaccination on health grounds alone. The JCVI therefore suggested that the Government may wish to seek further views on the wider societal and educational impacts from the UK CMOs, with representation from the JCVI in these subsequent discussions. Noting the advice of the JCVI, Health Ministers then requested that the UK CMOs consider the matter, in line with JCVI advice. Accepting the JCVI's advice, the UK CMOs considered the wider public health benefits of universal vaccination for this age group.

On 13 September, the Government accepted the advice of the UK CMOs to offer universal vaccination with a first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to children and young people aged 12 to 15 years old. This advice covers all those in this age group who were not already recommended for COVID-19 vaccination by existing advice from the JCVI.

Emma Hardy:

[\[43643\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to establish exemptions to vaccine passports for people who are medically exempt from covid-19 vaccinations.

Maggie Throup:

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

Helen Hayes:

[\[45215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that people vaccinated against covid-19 outside of the UK are able to (a) register their vaccination status with the NHS and (b) access a domestic Covid Pass through the NHS App.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 September 2021]: Currently only people fully vaccinated under the United Kingdom's vaccination programme can be certified through the NHS COVID Pass. Work is underway to determine which non-Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved vaccines we could recognise with confidence to enable UK residents vaccinated abroad to demonstrate their vaccination status. A pilot will be launched in England from the end of September.

Sarah Owen:

[\[45279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the JCVI recommendation to vaccinate 12 to 15 year olds against covid-19; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 September 2021]: In their advice of 3 September, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) suggested that the Government may wish to seek further views on the wider societal and educational impacts of universal vaccination of 12 to 15 year olds from the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), with representation from the JCVI in these subsequent discussions. Consequently, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and the UK health ministers wrote to the CMOs to ask that they consider the vaccination of 12 to 15 year olds from a broader perspective, as suggested by the JCVI.

The UK CMOs have recommended the extension of the offer of a first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to all children and young people aged 12 to 15 years old on public health grounds. The Government has accepted this advice.

Damian Green:

[\[45791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure that UK citizens fully vaccinated outside of the UK have full rights of travel to and from the UK; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

All United Kingdom citizens and those with the rights to reside in the UK who are fully vaccinated outside the UK have full rights to travel.

Justin Madders:

[\[45851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with relevant stakeholders on the delivery of covid-19 vaccinations for people who have a needle phobia.

Maggie Throup:

There have been no specific recent discussions.

Peter Gibson:

[\[49280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on the recognition of covid-19 vaccines administered in Saudi Arabia for use on the NHS Covid pass.

Maggie Throup:

Work is ongoing to determine which non-United Kingdom vaccines we might be confident to recognise, including those administered in Saudi Arabia. A pilot scheme to enable some UK residents vaccinated overseas to demonstrate their vaccination status through the NHS COVID Pass will be launched in England from the end of September. Further development will be undertaken once the pilot is underway.

Ian Mearns:

[\[49996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the effect the cancellation of the Valneva covid-19 vaccine order during the trial of that vaccine on people (a) who are part of that trial who may or may not have received the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine but do not yet know which vaccine they received and (b) who wish to remain as part of that trial.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The cancellation of the Valneva supply contract does not directly impact the clinical trials which are ongoing. Clinical trial participants who received a Valneva vaccination as part of their trial will continue to be able to prove their vaccination status and will be treated as fully vaccinated in domestic settings and at the United Kingdom border.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[50020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the technical specifications for the iProov vaccine passport in respect of that system comparing facial data with anonymised photo IDs held for the NHS app.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The company iProov does not provide a vaccine passport service and therefore no technical specification exists that could be shared. In addition, their service does not compare facial data. It scans a user-submitted photograph in real-time, as part of identity checks when registering to use NHS Login to gain access to health records or personal information. NHS Login, under strict controls, compares this image and an image captured from a user's ID document, such as a driving licence or passport. No information is either shared or stored within iProov or the NHS App.

Sir Charles Walker:[\[51623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timeframe is for rolling out the covid-19 booster vaccine to people identified as being clinically extremely vulnerable.

Maggie Throup:

The first COVID-19 booster vaccination was administered on 16 September from 20 September, over 1.5 million people were invited to receive the vaccine.

Booster vaccines will be offered to individuals who received vaccination in phase one of the vaccination programme in priority groups one to nine, including all those aged 16 to 49 years old with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advises that the dose is offered no earlier than six months after completion of the primary vaccine course, and that the programme should as far as possible be deployed in the same order as phase one.

Thangam Debbonaire:[\[51728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that people who were participants in the Valneva vaccine trial have their vaccination status recognised by foreign countries for the purpose of international travel.

Maggie Throup:

The Government continues to make the case internationally, including through groups such as the G7, G20, European Commission and the World Health Organization, that anyone on a COVID-19 vaccine trial should be treated the same in terms of certification as someone who has received a deployed vaccine. Ultimately it is for Governments to set their inbound travel policy, including for clinical trial participants on Valneva and other trials.

Sarah Olney:[\[51800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timetable is for ensuring that covid-19 vaccinations completed overseas are recognised under the NHS COVID Pass.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: Since 30 September a pilot has been in place for overseas vaccinations to be recorded in the National Immunisation Management

Service with some data available through the NHS COVID Pass. The Vaccine Data Resolution Service are contacting patients with overseas vaccinations in their health records to present evidence of their vaccination at their regional centre and receive any additional vaccinations required. The pilot involves three vaccination sites in England with additional locations available from 11 October as the pilot is deployed nationally. At the end of October, there will be one vaccination site in every region in England offering this service. Currently any Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Janssen or Moderna vaccinations administered by the European Medicines Agency, the Food and Drug Administration or Swissmedic will be recorded via the NHS COVID Pass.

Peter Gibson:

[51849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help people who have participated in the NOVAX covid-19 trial to receive international recognition of their vaccination status.

Maggie Throup:

The Government continues to make the case internationally, through groups such as the G7, G20, the European Commission and the World Health Organization, that COVID-19 vaccine trial participants should be treated the same in terms of certification as someone who has received a deployed vaccine. Ultimately it is for Governments to set their inbound travel policy, including for clinical trial participants on Novavax and other trials.

Damien Moore:

[52599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on recognising the covid-19 inoculation status of people vaccinated outside the UK, US, and Europe.

Maggie Throup:

From 4 October we are extending our inbound vaccination policy to 17 new countries and we continue to work with international partners to explore further expansion of the policy.

Jonathan Gullis:

[52617]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the progress of the covid-19 vaccine rollout in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire.

Maggie Throup:

As of 23 September 2021, 177,685 first doses and 161,108 second doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in Stoke-on-Trent Upper Tier Local Authority Level (UTLA) and 661,325 first doses and 615,517 second doses were administered in Staffordshire UTLA.

■ Coronavirus: Yellow Card Scheme

Alex Sobel:

[51823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to publish (a) the number of cases of successful recovery from covid-19 and (b) the number of deaths under the yellow card scheme.

Maggie Throup:

The Department have no plans to do so as there is no agreed definition of a 'recovered' case. Many people will have recovered without National Health Service treatment and therefore this information is not collected. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency publishes a weekly report on data received through the Yellow Card Scheme, including the number of fatal events where the patient was reported as dying shortly after vaccination, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-adverse-reactions>

■ Dementia: Diagnosis

Margaret Ferrier:

[50048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to invest in equipment for diagnosing dementia to prepare the NHS for the availability of disease-modifying treatments for Alzheimer's disease.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently exploring which pathways, processes and equipment might best support future disease modifying treatments, including for Alzheimer's disease.

Greg Smith:

[50151]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to (a) restore dementia diagnosis to pre-covid-19 levels and (b) improve the diagnosis rate to above those levels.

Gillian Keegan:

We continue to closely monitor the dementia diagnosis rate on a monthly basis. The Government has made £17 million available this financial year to NHS England and NHS Improvement to reduce dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working to deliver targeted efforts to support recovery of referrals, diagnosis, and where appropriate, support access to post-diagnostic support.

We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course, including improving diagnosis rates.

■ Dementia: Research**Daisy Cooper:** [\[45276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 15 June 2021 to Question 12211 on Dementia: Research, if he will publish a timetable for the Government's delivery of the dementia moonshot.

Gillian Keegan:

There is currently no planned date for publication of a strategy to deliver the dementia moonshot. We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England, including dementia research, for future years in due course.

Caroline Lucas: [\[50976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 43598 on Dementia: Research, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of doubling funding for dementia in the upcoming Spending Review.

Edward Argar:

There have been no specific discussions.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[51024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase funding to support dementia research.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: We are currently working on ways to significantly increase further research on dementia at all stages including medical and care interventions. The Department funds research on health and social care through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The usual practice of NIHR is not to ring-fence funds for expenditure on particular topics. The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health including dementia. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[51025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on delivering the Dementia Moonshot.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: Plans for increasing funding for dementia research and delivering a moonshot are subject to the forthcoming spending review settlements. We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course.

■ Dementia: Social Services

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[51023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of support available to families affected by dementia in (a) Slough and (b) the South East.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: Through the Spending Review allocation, integrated care systems (ICS) in the South East region have received almost £3 million additional funding to reduce any backlog to memory assessment clinics resulting from the pandemic, with £205,000 specifically for Frimley ICS. This funding is also aimed at enhancing the support available for people waiting for an assessment following diagnosis.

Frimley ICS has advised NHS England and NHS Improvement that post-diagnosis support is widely available across their area and in Slough additional funding will be used to employ additional mental health practitioners to increase the capacity to conduct initial assessments.

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[50788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that patients will have timely access to dental appointments following the backlog caused by the covid-19 outbreak.

Maria Caulfield:

We are working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to increase access to dental care, taking into account infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements. National Health Service dentists have been asked to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups followed by overdue appointments. The NHS has also issued guidance on flexible commissioning to share best practice on targeting the available capacity at those most in need.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Flags

Justin Madders:

[\[50067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which companies have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

Edward Argar:

The Department has procured all flags from Flagmakers Limited, operating as part of Specialist Canvas Group, since 2019.

Justin Madders:

[\[50068\]](#)

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

Edward Argar:

Three Union flags were purchased by the Department in 2020/2021. There have been no purchases made to date during 2021/22. All flags purchased were manufactured in the United Kingdom.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[52465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 41808 on Coronavirus: vaccination, tabled on 3 September by the hon. Member for Brighton Pavilion.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 11 October to Question [41808](#).

■ **Dermatitis: Mental Health Services**

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[50947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase mental health services for those suffering with eczema.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[50948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support National Eczema Week.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: Where appropriate, patients can be referred to specialists in psychodermatology. the treatment of skin diseases using psychological techniques, through a network of specialised clinicians. The specialised dermatology Clinical Reference Group is currently reviewing the standards of care for psychodermatology, working closely with Psychodermatology UK. As part of the Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, the Government is accelerating key commitments in the NHS Long Term Plan, investing £110 million to expand Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services. IAPT - Long Term Conditions services have been established across the country to support integrated pathways between IAPT services and physical health pathways for people with long term conditions, including eczema.

Whilst we had no specific events related to National Eczema Week, we recognise and commend the work of the voluntary and community sector organisations, who continue to raise awareness of eczema and the issues facing those living with the condition.

■ Disability: Children

Alexander Stafford:

[\[52627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on health recovery funding for disabled children.

Gillian Keegan:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chancellor of the Exchequer discuss a range of issues related to health and care services.

To tackle the elective backlog, the Government agreed in September 2021 an additional £1 billion this year - £2 billion in total for 2021/22 - and £8 billion over the next three years, which will deliver an additional nine million checks, scans and operations, reducing waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

As part of COVID-19 recovery planning, we are also working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services for disabled children.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[52628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure the effectiveness of NHS support for disabled children (a) during covid-recovery and (b) generally.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision and effectiveness of health services for disabled children. To tackle the elective backlog as part of COVID-19 recovery, an additional £1 billion this year and £8 billion over the next three years has been allocated to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

As we enter the recovery phase following the outbreak, we aim to have clear oversight of local areas' performance in delivering special education needs and disabilities (SEND) services. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission re-started their revisit programme of areas where SEND services received a written statement of action in April and full inspections in June.

■ DNACPR Decisions: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper:

[\[51861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many (a) investigations and (b) prosecutions into the unlawful use of blanket do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation decisions taken during the covid-19 pandemic (i) are in progress, (ii) have been completed, and (iii) have been discontinued.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department does not collect information on investigations or prosecutions relating to Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions.

The Care Quality Commission continues to ensure providers understand their responsibilities if allegations of inappropriate application of DNACPR decisions are brought to their attention and raise cases as appropriate with the relevant bodies.

■ **Drugs: Northern Ireland**

Gareth Thomas: [\[52404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many medicines have been (a) pre-notified for withdrawal and (b) withdrawn from the Northern Ireland Market up to 31 August 2021.

Gareth Thomas: [\[52405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of medicines being removed from the Northern Ireland Market as a result of the consequences of the Northern Ireland Protocol on the health of the people of Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

The Department regularly receives notifications of discontinuations and possible discontinuations from suppliers. However, we are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

The Government is considering all possible steps to help ensure the continuity of medicines in Northern Ireland. We are currently engaging with stakeholders to understand their plans for supplying medicines to Northern Ireland.

■ **Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services**

Wera Hobhouse: [\[42061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 17 June 2021 to Question 10548 on NHS: Staff, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that eating disorder services can recruit and retain the staff needed to meet rising demand for those services.

Gillian Keegan:

We are investing approximately £1 billion to improve care for adults with a range of severe mental health problems, including eating disorders, in England by 2023/24. The majority of this funding is to be spent on staffing and contracting the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, with an ambition to recruit 10,000 new staff in community mental health services, including eating disorder services

The NHS People Plan seeks to improve staff retention, through areas such as flexible working, health and wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion. In addition, the NHS Retention Programme supports staff to stay whilst keeping them well to ensure we can retain staff, including those working in eating disorder services.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[51850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department monitors waiting times for treatment for Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[51851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what monitoring his Department undertakes on demand for treatment for avoidant restrictive food intake disorder.

Gillian Keegan:

We have established the first waiting time standard to improve access to treatment for children and young people in need of eating disorder treatment in England, including avoidant restrictive food intake disorder, to allow 95% to start treatment within one week if urgent and within four weeks if routine. However, it is not possible to separately identify the different types of eating disorders within this data. Data on waiting times and demand for adult eating disorder services is not currently collected centrally.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[51852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of people waiting for treatment for avoidant restrictive food intake disorder.

Gillian Keegan:

No specific estimate has been made.

Wendy Chamberlain:

[51853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of life for those suffering with Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder.

Gillian Keegan:

In 2019/20, NHS England and NHS Improvement funded a pilot project to improve access, assessment and treatment for children presenting with Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID). Learning from this pilot has been disseminated to community eating disorder teams in England.

In 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement commissioned the research charity Autistica to produce an 'ARFID and Autistic People' briefing paper, based on a systematic review of research literature. This informed two awareness raising webinars for staff from the eating disorders charity BEAT and commissioners, clinicians and providers, to consider how autistic children and young people with ARFID could benefit from eating disorder support and services.

■ Electroconvulsive Therapy

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[48363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of commissioning a review into the use of electroconvulsive therapy.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 16 September 2021]: We have made no such assessment.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides guidelines which includes recommendations on the use of electroconvulsive therapy. The Department expects commissioners and providers of services to pay due regard to these guidelines and NICE keeps its guidance under regular review.

■ Electronic Cigarettes: Children

Jim Shannon:

[\[52496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Education on reports of the (a) prevalence of vape use by children and (b) potential health effects of that use including prolonged nose bleeds, chest pains and dizzy spells.

Maggie Throup:

No recent discussions have taken place.

However, the Department, working with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, will continue to carefully monitor e-cigarette use amongst children and any potential health effects.

■ Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards

Mark Pawsey:

[\[50660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to tackle misinformation on the harms of vaping relative to other nicotine delivery and tobacco products.

Maggie Throup:

In 2022, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) will publish an independent review of the up-to-date evidence on the safety of vaping products. The review will include information about the relative harm of smoking and vaping.

New guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), to be published in November 2021, will make recommendations about using electronic cigarettes to help people stop smoking.

The OHID will use the upcoming NICE guidance publication as an opportunity to communicate with the public and healthcare professionals about the relative harms of using nicotine containing products and smoking to support an informed choice.

■ First Aid: Medical Equipment

Andrew Rosindell: [\[43411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an estimate of the number of bleeding control packs that are publicly available.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[43412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the number of bleeding control packs that are available in public places.

Edward Argar:

We have made no such estimate and no assessment has been made.

The number of bleeding control packs is determined at local level and it is for National Health Service bodies working with organisations such as local businesses, education establishments and other community outlets to decide where packs should be located.

■ Fluoride: Drinking Water

Rosie Cooper: [\[51647\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the findings of the paper entitled Assessment of Lake Water Quality and Eutrophication Risk in an Agricultural Irrigation Area: A Case Study of the Chagan Lake in Northeast China published by Xuemei Liu et al on 14 November 2019, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies on water fluoridation of the research findings that increased environmental fluoride levels contribute significantly to eutrophication.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has advised that eutrophication of lakes is driven by excess nutrients, phosphorus and nitrogen, the main sources of which are agriculture and sewage effluent. Fluoridation of drinking water supplies is not considered to have an effect and the low levels of fluoride that occur naturally in most waters in the United Kingdom are not felt to be an influence on the risks and impacts of eutrophication.

■ Foetal Alcohol Syndrome: Health Education

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[52424\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the Government has spent on public health messaging for foetal alcohol spectrum disorder in each of the last five years.

Maggie Throup:

No specific public health messaging on foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) has been undertaken in the last five years. However, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, NHS England and NHS Improvement and local commissioners

continue to raise awareness and education on the dangers of drinking alcohol while pregnant. The United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers' low risk drinking guidelines published in 2016 provide clear advice to women not to drink alcohol if they are planning for a pregnancy or are pregnant.

In 2020/21, the Department allocated £531,928 funding to five voluntary organisations to support grassroots initiatives to develop resources and training programmes for professionals and to help improve support for children and families affected by FASD.

■ Food: Advertising

Greg Smith:

[50150]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with representatives of the food and drink industry to discuss the potential for loss of revenue as a result of introducing restrictions on the promotion and placement of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including the food and drink industry, on proposals for restrictions on the promotion of high fat, salt and sugar products. We have been careful to consider the views of industry through two consultations and extensive engagement throughout the development of the regulations. The final impact assessments on the proposals to restrict the promotion of foods high in fat, salt and sugar by location and by volume are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/restricting-promotions-of-food-and-drink-that-is-high-in-fat-sugar-and-salt>

■ Food: Labelling

Paul Maynard:

[49981]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Food Standards Agency oversight of the provision of allergen information by home-based food businesses.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has made no such assessment. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is a non-Ministerial department which acts independently as a food safety regulator. The FSA has responsibility for the regulation of food allergen information and issuing guidance to food businesses and local authorities on the proper implementation and monitoring of allergen information regulations. Oversight of business compliance with requirements on the provision of allergen information lies with local authority food officers. Local authority food officers will assess a food business' level of compliance with the allergen information requirements and provide advice or take corrective action where non-compliance is identified.

■ G4S: Quarantine

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[48305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of reports of inappropriate behaviour from G4S staff assigned to UK quarantine hotels housing refugees from Afghanistan.

Maggie Throup:

We have a dedicated complaints team which received one such complaint which did not involve security staff. However, we regularly meet with security companies to ensure all staff adhere to the highest professional standards. It is a requirement that our contracted security staff have passed the Security Industry Accreditation process. If staff fall below these standards, we demand an immediate investigation by the company, including police involvement where necessary, resulting in the suspension and/or dismissal of individuals where appropriate.

■ Gender Recognition: Drugs

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[50758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that people recommended gender transition medication by a Gender Identity Clinic in England receive that medication promptly and consistently, whether or not their GP has the specialist knowledge and confidence to be involved in prescribing it and monitoring the patient.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: Timely and consistent access to gender transition medication is promoted by through guidance issued to practitioners, with standards upheld through regulation by the Care Quality Commission. Guidance has been published by the General Medical Council to ensure transgender patients are able to receive high quality, quick and effective care when accessing general practitioner (GP) services for medication. This guidance for GPs covers transgender patient pathways and entering into a shared care agreement with a gender dysphoria clinic for the purpose of prescribing medication. This ensures that support is in place for any change in medication or in other circumstance, so GPs are confident in prescribing any medication the patient needs.

■ Gender Recognition: Surgery

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[50163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department takes to communicate the awarding of a contract for phalloplasty to a new team; and what steps are being taken to support people who have been on the waiting list for that surgery a significant amount of time.

Maria Caulfield:

A contract to provide phalloplasty services has now been awarded to the New Victoria Hospital in London. We expect patients to be seen in order of clinical need.

The Gender Dysphoria National Referral Support Service will write to all patients on the waiting list and contact patients individually as soon as they are ready to be referred to the new provider.

■ General Practitioners

Rachael Maskell: [\[45201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 July 2021 to Question 33266, for what reasons the Government is not collating data on GP appointments which relate to hospital waiting lists for (a) appointments, (b) treatments or (c) surgery to improve patient flow and pressure on the system.

Maria Caulfield:

This data is not collected centrally as it is not possible to link general practitioner appointments to other data sets on activity in secondary care. Appointments in the general practice dataset do not have a unique identifier, such as a National Health Service Number, which can link the data to hospital waiting lists.

■ General Practitioners: Burton

Kate Griffiths: [\[50771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP surgeries in Burton constituency offer appointments in the evening and at weekends.

Kate Griffiths: [\[50772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to enable the provision of additional services in GP surgeries in Burton constituency.

Maria Caulfield:

The information is not held in the format requested. However, evening and weekend face to face and virtual appointments are offered by East Staffordshire Primary Care Network, with practices providing appointments on a rota system. Weekend appointments are also available from a hub location within the East Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) area.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that work is underway across providers, CCGs and the local authority to optimise care provision in the area. The Staffordshire Integrated Care System continues the launch of general practitioner (GP) referrals into the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) and there are plans for East Staffordshire Primary Care Network, to begin implementing the GP CPCS later in the year.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[49972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to mandate the NHS, integrated care systems and local authorities to (a) commission

collaboratively and (b) adhere to nationally-recognised quality standards on sexual and reproductive health.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Department is currently developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which is planned for publication later this year. The Strategy will consider issues related to collaborative commissioning and national sexual and reproductive health standards across the National Health Service and local authorities. The Health and Care Bill will facilitate collaborative commissioning by establishing statutory integrated care boards and requiring the creation of integrated care partnerships. The proposed legislation also seeks to remove barriers to collaborative commissioning by permitting a wider set of arrangements for joint commissioning, pooling of budgets and delegation of functions.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[50790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the needs of (a) all populations and (b) people from low income backgrounds are supported in the development of the sexual and reproductive healthcare strategy.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: The Department is currently developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which is planned for publication later this year. The Strategy seeks to ensure that the sexual and reproductive health needs of all population groups are met, including people from low income backgrounds. We are engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure these populations are represented in the development process.

The new Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will continue to monitor and publish data relating to inequalities in access to contraception and other sexual and reproductive health services, including how key indicators vary by Index of Multiple Deprivation. Public Health England has also recently published the Variation in Outcomes Toolkit that supports local and regional partners to address inequalities in sexual and reproductive health services.

■ **Genito-urinary Medicine: Females**

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[50638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities plans to take to prioritise women's sexual and reproductive healthcare, including tackling the unmet need for contraception.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) will be established on 1 October 2021. The OHID will develop a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy planned for publication later this year and will consider issues related to women's sexual and reproductive healthcare, including addressing the unmet need for contraception.

■ Genito-urinary Medicine: Surveys

Dame Diana Johnson:

[50640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to undertake public surveys on reproductive health in the future.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: Public Health England commissioned the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to conduct a national Women's Reproductive Health Experiences Survey. The survey responses will feed into the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy, which will be published later this year. The final survey will then be used nationally to understand more about women's reproductive health experiences over time. The survey tool will be made available for use by partners across the system to analyse local reproductive health needs and preferences in their area.

■ Health Professions: Misconduct

Daisy Cooper:

[47058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by the Professional Standards Authority entitled *Bad apples? Bad barrels? Or bad cellars? Antecedents and processes of professional misconduct in UK Health and Social Care: Insights into sexual misconduct and dishonesty*, published in 2017, what steps his Department has taken to implement the recommendations in that report.

Daisy Cooper:

[47059]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to implement the recommendations of the report by the Professional Standards Authority, *Sexual Misconduct In Health And Social Care: Understanding Types Of Abuse And Perpetrators' Moral Mindsets*, published in September 2019.

Edward Argar:

The recommendations in the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care's reports have been used by all of the statutory healthcare regulators as a basis for reviewing and aligning their own guidance to registrants on standards of professional behaviour. In addition, Fitness to Practise Committees consider the guidance when making decisions on sanctions in cases involving sexual misconduct by registrants to ensure they are proportionate and equitable across professions. Regulators have also committed to working with registrants, employers, education providers and other stakeholders to develop more effective ways to prevent sexual misconduct by registrants and to improve the detection of perpetrators of sexual misconduct.

■ Health Professions: Training

Ed Davey: [\[50600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact on applicants of Health Education England's change in policy to require applicants to have two years of qualified practice before receiving funding.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]:

We have made no such assessment.

■ Health Services

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[44280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that people are not denied access to NHS services as a result of a lack of access to internet or mobile phone devices.

Gillian Keegan:

One of the priorities of the phase three National Health Service response to COVID-19 is to help prevent digital exclusion. NHS England and NHS Improvement's health inequalities improvement team is working closely with NHSX in developing a strategic plan to tackle digital inclusion and access.

All NHS organisations have been asked to ensure that no matter how people choose to interact with services, they should receive the same levels of access, consistent advice and the same outcomes of care.

Rachael Maskell: [\[52536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a population health model of strategic leadership in order that communities can determine local health priorities.

Edward Argar:

We have no plans to make such an assessment. The Health and Care Bill establishes new National Health Service bodies known as integrated care boards (ICBs) and requires the creation of integrated care partnerships (ICP). Each ICB and their partner local authorities will be required to establish an ICP, bringing together health, social care, public health, and other perspectives, such as social care and housing providers, to develop a strategy to address the needs of the population in the area.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Influenza

Mr Mark Harper: [\[45960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care whether, with reference to the consultation entitled Making vaccination a condition of deployment in the health and wider

social care sector, whether he has plans to extend domestic vaccine certification to include flu vaccines.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 14 September 2021]: The consultation 'Making vaccination a condition of deployment in the health and wider social care sector' relates specifically to health and care workers, not to wider use of domestic vaccine certification. There are no plans to extend domestic certification to include flu vaccination.

■ **Health Services: Foreign Nationals**

Lee Anderson:

[\[50142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to increase the amount of money recovered from foreign nationals using the NHS.

Edward Argar:

The Department has no current plans to increase the rates charged to overseas visitors for National Health Service care. However, we continue to work with NHS England and NHS Improvement to help trusts improve overseas charging processes and increase debt recovery.

■ **Health Services: Rural Areas**

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[51706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the challenges of providing healthcare in remote and rural areas.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The development of integrated care systems will create a new method of responding to and tackling local challenges, such as delivering healthcare in remote and rural areas. NHS England continues to work with trusts to develop a standard model of delivery in smaller acute hospitals which serve rural populations as part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

■ **Health Services: Undocumented Migrants**

Catherine West:

[\[52563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to ensure that undocumented migrants without proof of address or ID (a) are not refused by GP surgeries and (b) can access covid-19 vaccinations.

Maggie Throup:

The national patient registration guidance from NHS England states that a fixed address or identification is not required to register or access treatment at general practitioner (GP) practices. Where necessary, the practice can use its address to register the patient.

Whilst an individual's National Health Service number might be used for administration purposes, it is not a pre-requisite to be offered the COVID-19 vaccine.

For those not registered with a GP, NHS regional teams, working with various local systems, will contact those individuals to ensure they are offered the vaccine. Vaccinations against COVID-19 are offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status and no immigration checks will be carried out.

■ **Health: Disadvantaged**

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[45125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the level of funding awarded to Clinical Commissioning Groups on regional health inequalities.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 13 September 2021]: NHS England continues to target a higher share of funding towards geographies with high health inequalities as outlined in the 2021/22 Planning Guidance.

The new Health and Care Bill will form new integrated care systems to ensure the healthcare system is effectively managing population health and tackling health inequalities. The Bill will ensure that duties previously applied to clinical commissioning groups to reduce health inequalities will also apply to the newly formed integrated care boards (ICBs). The reforms will place a greater emphasis on population health outcomes and health inequalities. NHS England will continue to have a national level duty and ICBs will tackle health inequalities over a larger area, working with a range of partners including local authorities.

■ **Heart Diseases: Havering**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[51618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the additional resources required to tackle the backlog of heart disease diagnoses and treatment in Havering.

Edward Argar:

No formal assessment has been made.

However, an additional £1 billion this year and £8 billion over the next three years has been announced to tackle elective backlogs and recover services across England, including heart disease diagnosis and treatment in Havering.

■ **HIV Infection: Disease Control**

Dan Carden:

[\[51820\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding is being made available to deliver the Government's commitment to end new cases of HIV by 2030.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: Funding for HIV treatment and care services is provided by NHS England and NHS Improvement through specialised commissioning. HIV testing and prevention is funded by local government through the ringfenced Public Health Grant. In addition, in March 2020, the Government announced that the HIV prevention drug pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) would be routinely available across England. The Public Health Grant in 2021/22 includes £23.4 million to cover local authority costs of routine commissioning of PrEP in addition to £11 million in 2020/2021. PrEP is now routinely available in the specialist sexual and reproductive health services throughout the country.

■ Home Care Services**Steve Reed:**[\[45840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 2 August 2021, to Question 31414, on Home Care Services: Local Government, if he will publish the content of the service continuity and care market review referred to in that Answer.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 14 September 2021]: The Service Continuity and Care Market Review took the form of all local authorities carrying out a self-assessment in autumn 2020, to ascertain the risk to the continuity of care across all adult social care markets in England over the winter to the end of March 2021. We are unable to provide the content of these self-assessments as they are commercially sensitive and the disclosure of information may prejudice local authorities' ability to deliver their services.

However, the National Audit Office published a high-level summary of the review findings in, 'The adult social care market in England' in March 2021, which is attached.

Attachments:

1. The adult social care in England [The-adult-social-care-market-in-England (1).pdf]

Giles Watling:[\[50761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's policy is on the role of housing-with-care within the social care system.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government's plan for health and social care, announced on 7 September, recognised the important role of housing in providing care and support to people in the community. There is clear evidence that the right housing arrangements can deliver improved outcomes and meet people's preferences to remain in their own home. We will invest in supported housing, including housing-with-care, as well as exploring other innovative housing solutions to support more people to live independently at home for longer, with personalised care and support. We will

continue to work closely with the sector, including as part of the white paper on adult social care reform which will be published later this year.

■ Hospices: Pay

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[49063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the challenges facing hospices to (a) recruit and (b) train healthcare staff, in the event that care homes are unable to match the 3 per cent pay rise for NHS staff.

Gillian Keegan:

We have made no specific assessment as most hospices are independent, charitable organisations and develop and adopt terms and conditions of employment to recruit the staff they need to deliver services.

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement, will continue to engage with the sector to understand the issues they face, including determining any funding arrangements and implications for non-National Health Service organisations providing NHS services as a result of the 3% pay uplift for NHS staff. Health Education England provides comprehensive training for all health and care staff involved in palliative and end of life care through the end of life care for all resources. These are regularly updated and publicised throughout the system including to the hospice community.

■ Hospitals: Construction

Siobhain McDonagh:

[\[50942\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS Trusts including Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust have been asked to submit cheaper proposals for their proposed hospital rebuilds.

Edward Argar:

Organisations have been asked to submit a range of options for their new hospital schemes, with individual allocations for schemes to be determined once the respective full business cases have been reviewed and agreed.

The information requested from Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust will provide an objective evidence base for decision making at the business case stage. The central programme team are working with all lead organisations involved to ensure that schemes realise value for money, sustainability and digitalisation.

■ Hospitals: Consultants

Zarah Sultana:

[\[45934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has made with the British Medical Association on a pay rise for all NHS consultants.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 14 September 2021]: We are in regular contact with the British Medical Association and other National Health Service trade unions to work collaboratively in developing guidance and policy.

The Government has looked to the independent Review Body for Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration (DDRB) for a pay recommendation for NHS doctors and dentists not already in multi-year pay and contract reform deals.

The DDRB recommended a uniform 3% pay uplift for medical staff not already in multi-year pay deals, which includes consultants. The Government has accepted the DDRB's recommendation in full, meaning once implemented consultants will receive a 3% pay increase, backdated to April 2021.

Hospitals: Coronavirus**Mr David Davis:**[\[48140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS has spent on private hospital facilities since the start of March 2020 for booked procedures that have failed to take place.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 September 2021]: The information request is not held centrally. Payments were made to independent providers on a cost recovery basis rather than by procedure or per bed, to use facilities as flexibly as needed.

Mr David Davis:[\[48141\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much the NHS has spent on private hospital facilities that have gone unused since the start of March 2020.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held centrally. Contracts for the bulk purchasing of hospital facilities on a cost recovery basis do not record unused capacity. The bulk purchasing of private hospital services ended on 31 March 2021.

Dr Matthew Offord:[\[48201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of private hospital services that were purchased in bulk during the covid-19 outbreak that were not used over the last 18 months.

Edward Argar:

The information requested is not held centrally. Contracts for the bulk purchasing of hospital facilities on a cost recovery basis do not record unused capacity. The bulk purchasing of private hospital services ended on 31 March 2021.

Rachael Maskell:[\[52530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45205 on Hospitals: Waiting Lists, when he plans to publish details of his Department's plans for dealing with fines and charges for late delivery of

services; and what assessment he has made of the impact of fines and charges on hospitals' ability to tackle the backlog in healthcare.

Edward Argar:

We have no plans to do so as we have paused work on dealing with such fines and charges. This is to allow the National Health Service to focus capacity on the recovery of elective services. No formal assessment has been made of the specific impact of the fines and charges.

■ **Hospitals: Private Sector**

John Redwood:

[\[48125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much NHS England plans to spend on (a) private hospital capacity and (b) work by private hospitals in 2021-22.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently in discussion with NHS Providers and the independent sector regarding spending private hospital capacity work in 2021-22.

■ **Hospitals: Staff**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[50965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of delays in the Hospitals Transformation Programme on (a) recruitment and (b) the filling of rosters in the local hospitals.

Edward Argar:

We have not made a specific assessment. Staffing and recruitment is affected by many factors at a local level and although delays to planned build programmes and the condition of the estate may contribute, data has not been collected at national level.

■ **Hyperactivity: Mental Health Services**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[51730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of implementing (a) a single, established dataset to monitor referrals for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) assessments and treatments and (b) a maximum waiting time standard from referral for an assessment of ADHD to the point of diagnosis.

Gillian Keegan:

We have no plans to do so.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence do not recommend a maximum waiting time standard from referral for an assessment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to the point of diagnosis.

■ Infectious Diseases: Disease Control

Caroline Lucas: [\[41797\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 26 August 2021 to Question 16063 on Disease Control, for what reason he cannot reveal information that relates to the formulation or development of Government policy; and if he will make a statement.

Caroline Lucas: [\[41799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 26 August 2021 to Question 16063 on Disease Control, for what reason publication at the current time of further information on the pandemic preparedness Exercise Alice of 2016 would be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs; at what time and for what reasons publication would be less likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has robust plans for responding to disease outbreaks that are regularly tested through preparedness exercises and we recognise the public interest in making this information available. Exercise Alice tested preparedness for handling an outbreak of Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). As both MERS and COVID-19 are caused by coronaviruses, the Department assesses that the publication of further information related to Exercise Alice could lead to false parallels being drawn between the hypothetical response to the MERS outbreak scenario in Exercise Alice and the response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. This could undermine faith in and support for the National Health Service, resulting in negative health impacts through a possible reduction in care-seeking behaviour.

The Department is currently reviewing its decision to withhold the Exercise Alice report. A number of factors will influence this decision, including the current stage of the COVID-19 pandemic response.

■ Influenza: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell: [\[49199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prevent the spread of the winter flu; and whether he plans to introduce public health measures to prevent its spread in 2021.

Maggie Throup:

We are continuing with an extended flu vaccination programme for the 2021/22 flu season and over 35 million people will be eligible for a free seasonal flu vaccine. This year includes a continued offer of vaccination for 50 to 64 year olds, and the programme is being extended to additional cohorts in secondary school to help prevent disease transmission.

The National Health Service continues to recommend hand washing, using tissues to catch coughs and sneezes and disposing of tissues as quickly as possible to help

reduce the risk of flu. However, vaccination remains a cost-effective measure to protect those at risk and reduce hospitalisations.

■ Influenza: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[50705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will expedite the distribution of the flu vaccination in 2021-22.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: We have no plans to do so as local providers such as general practitioner practices and community pharmacies place orders for their flu vaccine stocks.

The Department works closely with vaccine manufacturers to assess any delays on the delivery of flu vaccinations to ensure there is no impact to the flu programme.

Rachael Maskell:

[50706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to prioritise people for the flu vaccination in the same groups as for the covid-19 vaccination.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: The prioritisation of cohorts eligible for a free flu vaccination varies from the COVID-19 vaccination cohorts for clinical reasons. Those eligible for the flu vaccine should seek to have their vaccine as soon as possible, regardless of their COVID-19 vaccination cohort.

Damien Moore:

[52598]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure there is a sufficient supply of flu vaccinations for elderly and clinically vulnerable citizens.

Maggie Throup:

General practitioners and community pharmacists are responsible for ordering flu vaccine to deliver the national flu programme to adults, including the elderly and clinically vulnerable. We have issued guidance asking all providers to order sufficient vaccine to at least equal the levels of uptake achieved in 2020/21. The Department is also in regular contact with vaccine manufacturers to ensure there are sufficient amounts of flu vaccines available in the system to vaccinate eligible cohorts.

■ Loans: Quarantine

Caroline Lucas:

[45833]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to make available long-term zero interest loans to people who cannot afford the upfront costs of managed covid-19 hotel quarantine but need to travel to a red list country for the purposes of (a) seeing a terminally ill loved one, (b) attending a funeral and (c) other

compassionate grounds to be assessed on a case by case basis; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

For those who will suffer severe financial hardship as a result of paying for the full cost of managed quarantine before travel, hardship arrangements may be available if their travel has been for essential purposes. This includes repayment plans, where the cost of managed quarantine is paid for in monthly instalments and in exceptional circumstances, fee reductions or waivers may be granted. Individuals will not be charged interest on repayment plans.

■ **Long Covid: Health Services**

Richard Fuller:

[44281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made in fulfilling the aims of the document entitled Long COVID: the NHS plan for 2021/22, published in June 2021.

Maria Caulfield:

An additional £70 million has been allocated to expand 'long' COVID-19 services delivered through Post-COVID Assessment Clinics and integrated care systems have submitted their service expansion plans. £30 million has also been allocated for an enhanced service for general practice, with a specification published in June 2021 and a draft self-assessment template published in August.

Fourteen paediatric hubs have been established across England to provide advice and help coordinate care for children and young people up to the age of 18 years old. The online Your Covid Recovery service is also being improved to enhance its accessibility and promote its use.

The first monthly data publication on referrals and specialist assessments in post-COVID-19 services was published on 9 September and is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-post-covid-assessment-service/>

Rachael Maskell:

[44397]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of long covid on workforce planning within the NHS; and what steps he is taking in response to that matter.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service will continue to monitor the impact of 'long' COVID-19 on staff as part of operational planning for service recovery and winter. For NHS staff suffering from 'long' COVID-19, the support offer includes a package of comprehensive support for health and wellbeing including mental health hubs, rapid referral to services, local occupational health and online wellbeing resources.

Kim Leadbeater:

[50787]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure equitable access to Long Covid clinics across the country.

Maria Caulfield:

Since November 2020, £104 million has been invested by NHS England and NHS Improvement in developing and expanding 89 'long' COVID-19 clinics, which included plans to ensure the most underserved populations are reached. 'Long COVID: the NHS plan for 2021/22', published in June 2021, details a system requirement to understand how services are meeting the needs of local populations, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2021/06/C1312-long-covid-plan-june-2021.pdf>

NHS England and NHS Improvement have established a 'long' COVID-19 health inequalities workstream to provide direction to their 'long' COVID-19 programme on the potential impact of health inequalities and advise on mitigations.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[51731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing healthcare support for people with long covid.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: COVID-19 is a new disease and we continue to increase our understanding of the physical, psychological and rehabilitation needs for those experiencing long-term effects of the virus. On 15 June, NHS England and NHS Improvement published a new 10-point plan and announced an additional £100 million expansion of care for patients, taking the total investment in 'long' COVID-19 support in England to £134 million. This includes £70 million to facilitate the expansion of Post-Covid Assessment Clinics and £30 million for an enhanced service for general practice.

Fourteen paediatric hubs have been established in England to provide advice and help coordinate care for children and young people up to the age of 18 years old. Also, the 'Your COVID Recovery' online service, provides a digital, interactive, personalised recovery programme for people recovering from COVID-19.

■ Lung Cancer: Screening

Jim Shannon:

[51697]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 July 2021 to Question 36637, on Lung Cancer: Screening, what criteria his Department plans to use to inform its decision regarding the introduction of population screening for lung cancer following the recommendation from the National Screening Committee.

Maggie Throup:

The United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) is currently considering the evidence for a population lung cancer screening programme. The UK

NSC will assess the effectiveness of the test and subsequent interventions, as well as cost effectiveness and feasibility of implementation in making their recommendation. Ministers will review these criteria alongside the recommendation when making their final decision.

■ **Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum**

Caroline Nokes:

[\[52485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) membership of the Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum, (b) dates on which that Forum has met and (c) policy recommendations that Forum has made to Government.

Maria Caulfield:

The Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum met on 13 October 2020 and 21 April 2021. The forum has not made any specific recommendations to the Department to date. We are unable to provide the membership of the Maternity Inequalities Oversight Forum as it relates to the formulation of Government policy.

■ **Maternity Services: Coronavirus**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[49088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 4 January 2021 to Question 127680 on Maternity Services: Coronavirus, if he will make it his Department's policy to collect information on the differences in policies at hospital Trusts and the main reasons from Trust risk assessments leading to those differences; what steps he is taking to help Trusts in finding solutions where barriers exist in implementing guidance; and if he will make a statement.

Maria Caulfield:

Processes are in place to monitor compliance with the NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance 'Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic: Actions for NHS providers' updated in April 2021. No National Health Service trust in England is currently reporting that pregnant women are prevented from taking birth partners or supporters to hospital antenatal appointments, including scans.

■ **Maternity Services: Finance**

Justin Madders:

[\[41931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which NHS Trusts have applied for the additional funding that was made available in response to the findings of the Ockenden report; how much each such Trust has (a) applied for and (b) received to date.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: The information requested is shown in the following table.

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
Airedale NHS Foundation Trust	1,252,192	148,803
Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	807,732	408,904
Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust	284,877	193,089
Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	518,511	124,995
Barts Health NHS Trust	2,590,042	693,225
Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust	1,378,502	1,040,098
Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	456,291	261,476
Bolton NHS Foundation Trust	541,505	201,313
Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1,070,526	1,344,456
Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	318,337	219,466
Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust	488,208	412,414
Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust	495,114	380,316
Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	612,378	420,628
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	2,364,103	1,270,115

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	400,761	318,066
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	843,183	314,466
County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust	1,583,072	634,923
Croydon Health Services NHS Trust	1,461,591	557,411
Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust	1,027,109	455,416
Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	567,988	220,725
Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	827,660	248,454
East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust	834,962	482,419
East Cheshire NHS Trust	636,124	258,510
East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust	1,147,954	886,774
East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	853,426	362,131
East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	571,587	188,113
Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	253,900	86,304
Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust	966,167	818,568
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust	530,181	240,808

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust	1,093,090	225,558
Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	815,905	383,925
Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	533,570	338,133
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	982,451	562,385
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1,373,665	766,847
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	423,669	273,125
Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	972,472	1,238,318
Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	715,349	129,893
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust	540,633	362,198
Isle of Wight NHS Trust	554,009	241,584
Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	483,415	448,795
King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1,004,043	719,567
Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1,264,801	464,460
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	389,393	138,797
Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	899,543	332,181
Lewisham and Greenwich	1,620,632	782,098

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
NHS Trust		
Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust	1,298,096	217,777
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust	1,261,169	759,539
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	1,136,540	495,878
Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust	2,471,658	583,693
Medway NHS Foundation Trust	1,035,684	393,221
Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust	1,262,103	1,948,672
Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	482,978	284,865
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	255,689	144,326
Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust		
Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (lead trust)*	1,503,738	1,556,665
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn, NHS Foundation Trust		
James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust		
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (lead trust)*	934,755	1,017,201
North Cumbria Integrated	786,935	386,333

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
Care NHS Foundation Trust		
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust	488,080	108,031
North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust	1,030,383	1,294,487
Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust	568,109	191,966
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	243,027	152,338
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust	2,232,040	931,611
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	623,081	269,818
Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust	1,799,999	2,716,293
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	933,750	156,226
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	1,115,415	711,830
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	814,130	610,888
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust	447,824	462,235
Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust	553,762	310,237
Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust	431,030	390,084
Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	546,072	262,598
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust	492,788	331,795

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust	369,900	317,437
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust	728,672	427,623
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1,215,276	1,256,381
Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	683,524	171,677
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust	821,370	291,675
Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust		
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust (lead trust)*	875,734	550,860
South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1,427,975	513,838
South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust	729,908	243,746
South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust	430,933	177,328
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	532,610	264,757
St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1,246,578	682,149
St Helens and Knowsley Hospital Services NHS Trust	783,726	159,799
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust	408,193	661,922
Surrey and Sussex	874,006	523,048

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
Healthcare NHS Trust		
Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust	595,864	76,664
The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust	1,021,397	438,694
The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	608,616	407,188
The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	913,583	505,490
The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust	722,952	376,861
The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust	252,492	55,389
The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust	390,212	182,462
Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust	444,384	207,723
United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust	317,227	258,891
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust		
Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust		
The Whittington Health NHS Trust		
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (lead trust)*	2,767,608	1,550,305
University Hospital Southampton NHS	250,975	186,379

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
Foundation Trust		
University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust	932,997	697,617
University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust		
North Bristol NHS Trust (lead trust)*	711,100	624,157
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust	1,665,250	705,716
University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust	1,208,036	535,947
University Hospitals of Derby And Burton NHS Foundation Trust	1,728,332	417,735
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust	732,539	789,937
University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust	753,140	223,162
University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust	295,052	282,039
University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust	538,932	484,576
University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust	2,521,058	725,640
Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust	869,333	596,393
Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	519,827	294,297
West Hertfordshire Hospitals	1,123,433	658,402

TRUST	ORIGINAL BID TOTAL VALUE 6 MAY 2021 £	TOTAL 2021/22 ALLOCATION (PART YEAR SEPTEMBER 2021) £
NHS Trust		
East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust		
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (lead trust)*	1,793,858	1,576,451
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	423,542	398,582
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	308,613	316,217
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust	1,023,668	370,698
Wye Valley NHS Trust	591,237	85,481
York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	1,384,798	505,506

Note:

*Collaborative bid partnerships with the joint figure listed with to the nominated lead trust.

■ Maternity Services: Safety

Navendu Mishra:

[\[52614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the report by the Care Quality Commission, entitled Safety, equity and engagement in maternity services, published on 21 September 2021, what steps his Department is taking in response to the findings in that report on lessons learned and the recording of incidents involving patients' safety on maternity wards.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement recently invested an additional £95 million in maternity services to support the recruitment of 1,200 more midwives and 100

consultant obstetricians. An equity and equality strategy, funded by a further £6.8 million, has been published to address the causes of inequalities in outcomes and experiences of maternity care. The NHS Resolution Maternity Incentive Scheme is working to improve the recording of incidents through its ten safety actions, by encouraging the use of the Perinatal Mortality Review Tool and improving the quality of reporting to the Maternity Services Data Set.

■ **Medical Equipment and Medical Treatments: Manufacturing Industries**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[52421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will bring forward legislative proposals to require medicine and medical device makers to declare all payments made to (a) doctors, (b) teaching hospitals, (c) research institutions and (d) charities.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government's response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review accepted in principle the need for stronger reporting of payments made by industry to healthcare professionals and organisations. The Department continues to explore options to expand and reinforce current industry schemes, including making reporting mandatory through legislation.

■ **Medical Treatments: Radioisotopes**

Peter Dowd:

[\[48259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to (a) support the rollout of nuclear medicines across the NHS and (b) prevent regional variations in access to those medicines.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 September 2021]: Nuclear medicine is already used widely in the National Health Service in England to diagnose and treat a variety of diseases. NHS England and NHS Improvement routinely fund licensed medicines that have been recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence or off-label use of licensed medicines that have been approved via the NHS England clinical commissioning policy process.

NHS England and NHS Improvement commission positron emission tomography/computed tomography scan while other diagnostic imaging involving nuclear medicine is commissioned by clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). It is for CCGs to commission those services according to the needs of their local population.

■ **Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency: Redundancy**

Grahame Morris:

[\[49096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with executive officers at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency regarding the proposed redundancies at that agency.

Grahame Morris:

[\[49097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of staffing levels at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to carry out its day-to-day functions.

Grahame Morris:

[\[49098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with staff representatives at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on proposed redundancies at that agency; and if he will undertake an equality impact assessment relating to those proposed redundancies.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: Ministers and officials meet regularly with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to discuss a range of issues, including its transformation plans to become a more dynamic and efficient organisation. The Department has not made a specific assessment of the MHRA's staffing levels.

The MHRA is carrying out a series of equality and diversity impact assessments throughout the transformation continues to engage with trade unions and employees through a formal consultation as well as continuing opportunities for engagement with senior leaders.

Chris Stephens:

[\[50074\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will instruct the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to publish the business case on the redundancies announced at that agency.

Chris Stephens:

[\[50075\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on whether additional funding is needed to avoid job losses at the agency.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Department currently has no plans to do so.

The Department meets regularly with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to discuss a range of issues.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[14150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, dated 26 March 2021, regarding the Health and Social Care White Paper, ref ZA56056.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[14151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire, dated 9 April 2021 on Integrated Care Systems and CCG staff, ref ZA55780.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 23 September 2021.

Hilary Benn:

[\[49952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason CTM has yet to respond substantively to the case referred to them in May 2021 by the hon. Member for Leeds Central on behalf of his constituent, Mr Q.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: CTM has advised the Department that they have no record of the Rt hon. Member's correspondence. However, following the Rt hon. Member's letter of 28 April to the Department, CTM aim to ensure that the booking system as simple and accessible as possible particularly during times of high demand.

While accommodating very large family groups can be challenging hotels will prioritise allocating larger or connected rooms to families.

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[50607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Health on 10 September 2021, Official Report, Column 631, when he plans to respond to the email from the hon. Member for Christchurch dated 14 September 2021 on arranging the meeting which the Minister agreed to help convene.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 14 September and 23 September.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[50641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 16 April 2021 from the hon. member for West Lancashire on the backlog in cancer appointments due to the covid-19 outbreak, reference ZA56223.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 29 September 2021.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[50645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter of 16 June 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on oncology waiting times, reference ZA56777.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 24 September 2021.

■ Menorrhagia: Steroid Drugs

Jim Shannon:

[\[51694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the University of Edinburgh's recent study which found that a common steroid could reduce heavy menstrual bleeding.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement will await guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists on whether the findings from this research should be used to develop best practice care. Currently clinical commissioning groups have a duty to give due regard to implementing NICE's guidance. NHS England and NHS Improvement encourage all providers to adopt NICE's guideline NG88, 'Heavy menstrual bleeding: assessment and management', which covers assessing and managing heavy menstrual bleeding and also helps healthcare professionals to investigate the causes.

■ Mental Health Services

Kate Griffiths:

[\[50770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to mental health services in community settings.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have consulted on introducing five new waiting time standards that have been developed with pilot and early implementer sites. These include waiting time standards for access to community mental health services for adults and children and young people. The consultation closed on 1 September 2021 and NHS England and NHS Improvement expect to publish the response to the consultation on the proposals by the end of this year.

In addition, we have published our Mental Health Recovery Action Plan for 2021/22, which includes an additional £110 million to expand adult community mental health services including psychological therapies, implementing the community mental health framework, investment in crisis services, as well as additional investment in suicide prevention programmes.

■ Mental Health Services and Social Services: Liability

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[52498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that the CQC, NHS, local authorities, care providers and other relevant organisations are co-operating effectively to strengthen the discharge of their

collective oversight and duty-of-care responsibilities to minimise the risks of harm to people in (a) mental health, (b) learning disability and (c) other care settings.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England and NHS Improvement's Mental Health Safety Improvement programme focuses on improving patient safety for those who use inpatient mental health and learning disability services. This work brings together individuals and organisations concerned with safer care and improved outcomes in mental health.

We are consulting on new duties to ensure the adequate supply of community services, placing Care, Education and Treatment Reviews on a statutory footing and putting in place a single point of Ministerial oversight. In any setting, local authorities must safeguard people with care and support needs who are at risk, in cooperation with the Care Quality Commission, care providers and other relevant organisations. These duties have remained through the pandemic and we have supported the sector with guidance, training and increased funding for local authorities.

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

Chi Onwurah:

[\[49139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of children referred to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by (a) Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Trust and (b) Cumbria Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust received a routine assessment within four weeks of referral; and what steps his Department is taking to reduce waiting times for CAMHS services.

Gillian Keegan:

The data requested is not held centrally.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to invest at least an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health by 2023/24, providing an additional 345,000 children and young people a year with access to National Health Service-funded mental health support. We are investing an additional £79 million in 2021-22 to address waiting times, allowing around 22,500 more children and young people to access community health services, 2,000 more to access eating disorder services and accelerate the coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have consulted on a new waiting time standard for children and young people presenting to community-based mental health services, to receive care within four weeks from referral. This consultation closed on 1 September 2021 and the outcomes will inform a recommendation to Government on implementation.

Chi Onwurah:

[\[49140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on defining a national access and waiting times standard for child and adolescent mental health services.

Gillian Keegan:

The National Health Service is piloting a four-week waiting time standard for access to specialist mental health treatment for children and young people in twelve areas of England. Based on these pilots, NHS England and NHS Improvement have consulted on a new waiting time standard for children and young people presenting to community-based mental health services, to receive care within four weeks from referral. This consultation closed on 1 September 2021 and the outcomes will inform a recommendation on implementation to Government in due course.

■ Mental Health Services: Health and Social Care Levy**Rachael Maskell:**[\[52534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Health and Social Care Levy allocation process will adhere to the commitments of the Mental Health Investment Standard.

Gillian Keegan:

The NHS Long Term Plan reiterated our commitment to achieving parity of esteem between mental and physical health, including through maintaining the Mental Health Investment Standard. Further details on how the Health and Social Care Levy will be allocated will be set out in due course.

■ Mental Health Services: Schools**Kate Green:**[\[46986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether Government plans to fund a full roll out of mental health support teams to all schools and colleges.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 15 September 2021]: We are planning for approximately 400 operational mental health support teams in schools and colleges in England by 2023, covering an estimated three million children and young people (around 35 per cent of pupils in England). This will be determined by future funding settlements.

■ Mental Health Services: Waiting Lists**Janet Daby:**[\[41248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the average NHS waiting times for psychiatric care in July 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

The data is not held in the format requested as a national access and waiting times standard for National Health Service mental health services has not yet been defined. Currently, access and waiting times standards exist for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services and performance data is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-sets/improving-access-to-psychological-therapies-data-set> ;

Early intervention for psychosis services performance data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/eip-waiting-times/>

Children and young people's eating disorder services performance data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cyped-waiting-times/>

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to invest at least an additional £2.3 billion a year into mental health services by 2023/24. This increased investment will ensure that an additional 345,000 children and young people and 380,000 more adults will have timely access to NHS funded mental health services.

Justin Madders: [48268]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish his Department's timescale for responding to the consultation on five new waiting time standards that mental health providers have been piloting, which closed on 1 September 2021.

Justin Madders: [48269]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the findings of the mental health pilots on the five new waiting time standards.

Gillian Keegan:

NHS England and NHS Improvement expect to publish the response to the consultation on the proposals for five new waiting time standards by the end of this year. There are no current plans to formally publish the findings of the mental health pilots. However, they are being shared with appropriate stakeholders and participants to help inform the development of the standards.

■ Mental Health: Young People

Chi Onwurah: [49128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to include young people in efforts to tackle the mental health challenges for young people, which have been exacerbated by the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

The 'Government Response to the Consultation on Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper and Next Steps', agreed with consultation respondents that young people should continue to be involved in how we implement the proposals. We expect local areas to consider how to involve children and young people in taking forward their proposals.

■ Motor Neurone Disease: Research

Paul Girvan:

[\[48337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will commit £50 million over five years to establish and operate a motor neurone disease translational research institute.

Paul Girvan:

[\[48338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make it his policy to support the Spending Review submission from the Motor Neurone Disease Association, MND Scotland and the My Name's Doddie Foundation which calls for £50 million of funding for motor neurone disease-specific research.

Maria Caulfield:

The next Spending Review will set out the Government's spending plans for health and social care for future years.

Over the past five years, the Department has spent over £10 million on motor neurone disease (MND) research through the National Institute for Health Research. Additionally, UK Research and Innovation, through the Medical Research Council, has spent £49.5 million on MND research over the past five years. This includes research which aims to increase our understanding of the causes and genetic mechanisms of MND. We are currently working on ways to significantly increase further research on dementia and neurodegeneration including medical and care interventions.

Paul Girvan:

[\[48339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential benefits of increased investment in motor neurone disease research for other neurological conditions.

Maria Caulfield:

No specific assessment has been made. The Government makes funding available for research but does not generally ring-fence funds for particular disease areas. Research proposals in all areas compete for the funding available. These applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality.

■ Nabiximols

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[50740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with Clinical Commissioning Groups in England on the availability of Sativex to patients with MS.

Edward Argar:

The Department has not had any direct discussions. However, the Department has discussed the issue with NHS England which has issued a reminder to clinical commissioning groups in England of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidance and their responsibilities and will be monitoring uptake.

The latest guidelines from NICE recommend Sativex to treat moderate to severe spasticity in adults with multiple sclerosis, if other pharmacological treatments for spasticity are not effective. The decision on whether to prescribe must be taken by a specialist clinician on a case by case basis and funding of this medicine is subject to local National Health Service decisions.

■ NHS and Social Services: Coronavirus**Kim Leadbeater:**[\[51903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what additional mental health and wellbeing support his Department is making available to health and social care workers as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

Our package of support for all National Health Service staff includes access to health and wellbeing apps, a help and text service and enhanced practitioner health and professional nurse advocacy training. In addition, 40 dedicated mental health hubs are either established or currently mobilising across the country to proactively identify at-risk people and groups and focus on staff with more complex needs.

Support for the adult social care workforce includes helplines, guidance, bereavement resources and a bespoke package for registered managers. We have announced an additional £500 million investment in the workforce, which will include funding for further development of our mental health and wellbeing resources and improve care workers' access to occupational health.

■ NHS Test and Trace**John Redwood:**[\[48119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what is the projected spend on Test and Trace is for 2021-22; and how that figure compares with 2020-21.

Maggie Throup:

NHS Test and Trace has been allocated £15 billion in 2021-22 compared to £22 billion in 2020-21 and expects to deliver within the current agreed funding. A final audited figure for spending in 2020-21 is not yet available.

■ NHS Test and Trace: Consultants

Jonathan Ashworth:

[\[50980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the average daily cost is of a consultant employed to support NHS Test and Trace; and how many consultants were employed to support NHS Test and Trace on 1 September 2021.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: As of 1 September 2021, there were 1,707 consultants in NHS Test and Trace.

We are unable to provide information on the average cost of consultants as this is commercially sensitive.

■ NHS: Coronavirus

Sir Peter Bottomley:

[\[51575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason boxes of three months supply of covid-19 tests are no longer available to people working for and volunteering in the NHS.

Maggie Throup:

Previously, NHS Test and Trace supplied tests directly to National Health Service distribution centres. However, from July 2021, we moved to the universal testing offer to enable staff to order directly from GOV.UK, and maintain a regular supply delivered to their home. This testing offer can be used by both NHS staff and volunteers.

■ NHS: Drugs

Paul Girvan:

[\[51804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to support earlier engagement and horizon scanning between NHS England and the pharmaceutical industry, to identify solutions to drug pricing challenges that may be faced by new innovative treatments exceeding the Budget Impact Test threshold.

Edward Argar:

The 2019 Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access made a joint commitment between the Government and the pharmaceutical industry for the National Health Service to have complete and accurate information about the products coming through the development pipeline. NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) committed to working together and with industry to develop and implement a joined-up approach to earlier engagement and case management. On 23 February 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement published the NHS commercial framework for new medicines setting out the opportunities for companies to engage with NHS England and NHS Improvement and NICE and the commercial options available.

■ **NHS: Equality****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[51682\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are employed in the NHS as diversity managers or coordinators.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held centrally.

■ **NHS: Expenditure****Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[51702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 28 January 2020 to Question 4740 on NHS: Expenditure, how much NHS England and clinical commissioning groups have spent in aggregate on (a) mental health services, (b) acute health services, (c) social care services, (d) primary care services and (e) other main areas of spending in each year since 2015-16; and how much those organisations plan to spend in aggregate in each of those areas in 2021-22.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The information requested is shown in the following table.

	2015-16 £ BILLION	2016-17 £ BILLION	2017-18 £ BILLION	2018-19 £ BILLION	2019-20 £ BILLION
Specialised services	14.8	15.4	16.4	17.2	18.5
Primary medical care	8.7	9.1	9.4	9.7	10.6
Community services	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.5	8.1
Continuing care	4.3	4.7	4.6	4.7	5.0
Clinical commissioning group (CCG) acute	38.2	40.1	41.4	42.9	45.9
CCG core mental health	7.3	7.6	8.1	8.5	9.3
Other	18.9	17.8	18.3	18.6	18.4
Total programme spend	99.4	102.0	105.5	109.1	115.7
Of which:					
Payments to local authorities	3.1	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.6

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that the 2020-21 accounts are currently being finalised.

Planning for budgets in the second half of 2021-22 and is underway therefore information on expenditure in these areas is not yet available.

■ **NHS: Managers**

John Redwood: [\[48120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many chief executives there are of bodies that are part of the NHS in England.

Edward Argar:

The Department does not hold the information requested.

■ **NHS: Pay**

Rob Roberts: [\[48376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are employed by the NHS in a non-clinical capacity with a salary in excess of £160,000 as at 13 September 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 16 September 2021]: NHS Digital produces information on staff earnings in the hospital and community health sector which covers staff working for hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups in England but does not cover the independent sector, social care or primary care. There were 383 staff with total earnings of at least £160,000 in National Health Service infrastructure support in the period April 2020 to March 2021, which is the latest data available.

■ **NHS: Recruitment**

Rachael Maskell: [\[49203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help recruit staff to tackle the NHS backlog in medical procedures.

Edward Argar:

Financial support is being made available to support recruitment initiatives, including a healthcare support worker programme and the introduction of medical support workers to provide additional capacity for clinical support roles and qualified doctors. The Landmark programme aims to attract those that have supported the pandemic response into permanent and flexible health and care careers and further responses are being developed by the National Health Service as part of its elective recovery planning process.

■ **NHS: Voluntary Work**

Dr Luke Evans: [\[51876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that volunteer capacity is available to support the NHS when needed.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England will shortly be launching a programme to further increase volunteering capacity available to National Health Service hospital and ambulance trusts via roles designed to reduce pressure on NHS services, support wellbeing of staff and enhance patient experience.

We also continue to work closely with our partners in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector such as St John Ambulance Re:Act, the British Red Cross, Age UK and the Royal Voluntary Service. We continue to co-deliver the NHS Cadets programme, which aims to develop 10,000 new NHS Cadets within three years, we have a renewed focus on the Volunteer to Career pathway and we have partnered with #iwill and the Pears Foundation to identify new opportunities for young volunteers.

■ NHS: Workplace Pensions**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[50035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress his Department has made on its work on NHS pensions to remove disincentives for professionals to stay in their professions for longer.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Government addressed the annual allowance taper issue in March 2020 by increasing thresholds by £90,000, removing all staff with earnings below £200,000 from scope. This restores the incentive to continue working or take on additional work for the majority of previously affected staff, with an estimated 96% of general practitioners and 98% of consultants now out of scope of the taper based on their National Health Service earnings

NHS England and NHS Improvement are implementing a programme to help employers to engage with senior staff to improve understanding of pension tax and to address concerns. NHS Employers has published guidance on the approaches employers can take locally to support staff who wish to continue working up to and beyond retirement age.

■ Oral Tobacco**Mr David Jones:**[\[50630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of (a) creating a separate regulatory category for non-combustible nicotine products and (b) including snus in that category.

Maggie Throup:

There are no current plans to make such an assessment. However, the Department is due to publish its post implementation review on the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 by the end of the year. Following this review, the Department will consider the need for any regulatory changes, including on non-combustible nicotine products and oral tobacco.

■ Palliative Care

Daisy Cooper:

[51860]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to implement the recommendations from the Care Quality Commission's report Protect, respect, connect – decisions about living and dying well during COVID-19 published in March 2021 to (a) establish a Ministerial Oversight Group to look into the issues of end of life care in more detail, (b) support people, their families and their representatives to understand good practice when reaching DNACPR decisions, and (c) work with health service and care partners, voluntary sector organisations and advocacy services to establish a unified approach to guidance that supports DNACPR decisions for service users.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department established a Ministerial Oversight Group responsible for the delivery of the recommendations of the Care Quality Commission's report. The first meeting was held on 8 June and will meet quarterly to monitor progress.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have published patient-facing information on Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) to support people in understanding good practice around such decisions, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/do-not-attempt-cardiopulmonary-resuscitation-dnacpr-decisions/>

The Ministerial Oversight Group is working closely with health and care partners, voluntary sector organisations and advocacy groups to ensure adherence to guidance on how DNACPR decisions are used.

■ Pancreas: Medical Equipment

Jim Shannon:

[50023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of artificial pancreas technology being made available on the NHS.

Edward Argar:

NHS England is working with a number of specialist centres around the country to pilot the use of artificial pancreas technology. Data and analysis will be shared with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to inform their assessment on the future use of this technology.

■ Pharmacy

Rachael Maskell:

[51763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with community pharmacies on the support those pharmacies can provide to the NHS through (a) supporting routine health care and (b) preparing people for the winter period.

Maria Caulfield:

The Department has regular discussions with the community pharmacy sector. The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 agrees a range of services support people to live healthily, including advice on minor illness and healthy living, to effectively use medications and services to identify people at risk of developing disease. Community pharmacy also has an increasing role in the flu and COVID-19 vaccination programmes and are offering free lateral flow testing.

■ Primary Health Care**Kate Griffiths:**[\[50768\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help increase access to primary care services in the community.

Maria Caulfield:

We have committed to delivering an extra 50 million appointments a year in general practice by increasing and diversifying the workforce. This will improve access for patients and additional support for staff to provide a wider range of care options for patients outside of hospital. We have made available an additional £270 million from November 2020 until September 2021, ringfenced for general practice, to ensure general practitioners (GPs) and their teams are able to continue to support all patients during the pandemic.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have advised that National Health Service sight tests are now back to, or above, pre-pandemic levels. NHS dentists have been asked to meet as many prioritised needs as possible, focussing first on urgent care and vulnerable groups, followed by overdue appointments. The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to increase access to dental care, taking into account infection prevention and control and social distancing requirements.

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework 2019-24 sets out how community pharmacy will support the NHS Long Term Plan by providing more clinical services such as treating minor ailments. Since 2019 a range of services have been introduced that reduce some pressure on other parts of the NHS, in particular GPs.

■ Primary Health Care: Consultants**Kate Griffiths:**[\[50769\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to hospital specialists in community settings.

Maria Caulfield:

As part of its work to expand access to diagnostic services in the community, the National Health Service is establishing community diagnostic hubs. The hubs will provide acute diagnostic services normally provided in hospitals, including computed tomography, magnetic resonance imaging, X-rays, echocardiograms and endoscopy.

The NHS is planning to open 44 hubs this year which will deliver an additional one million scans.

■ Radiotherapy

Tim Farron:

[\[50968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to reduce the number of visits needed to complete a full course of radiotherapy treatment.

Maria Caulfield:

Stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR), which can be delivered over fewer treatments than standard radiotherapy, is now available as a treatment for lung cancer patients in every radiotherapy provider. Over 3,600 patients benefited from this treatment in 2020-21 and work is ongoing to complete the SABR expansion programme.

■ Radiotherapy: Finance

Tim Farron:

[\[50969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to update reimbursement tariffs to incentivise a transition to adaptive radiotherapy.

Maria Caulfield:

The NHS Long Term Plan set out NHS England and NHS Improvement's commitment to review the national tariff, in particular to ensure that appropriate incentives are in place to encourage providers to deliver modern techniques and to upgrade and replace equipment. This work has been delayed due to the pandemic.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell:

[\[48291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what preparations are being made to enable refugees from Afghanistan with medical or other health professional qualifications to work in the NHS.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[48292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will put training in place to assist refugees from Afghanistan to work in the social care sector.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service has several recruitment pathways for refugees based in the United Kingdom and in third countries, with the aim of supporting doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Rapid induction training is available for all people joining the social care sector. We will work with stakeholders in these sectors and partners across the Government to understand what is needed to best support eligible refugees from Afghanistan.

■ Respiratory System: Medical Equipment

Chris Green:

[\[38294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the implications for its policies of the US Food & Drug Administration Safety Communication entitled Flexible Bronchoscopes and Updated Recommendations for Reprocessing, issued on June 25th, 2021; and what discussions he has had with (a) his US counterpart, (b) the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and (c) relevant stakeholders on the potential implementation of US FDA recommendations in the UK.

Edward Argar:

There are currently no plans to implement the United States Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recommendations in the United Kingdom. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is aware of the FDA's 'Flexible Bronchoscopes and Updated Recommendations for Reprocessing: FDA Safety Communication', issued on 25 June 2021. While there have been no specific discussions the FDA's recommendations broadly align to the UK guidelines and work practices set out in 'Management and decontamination of flexible endoscopes' Health Technical Memorandum, published in 2016 and regularly updated.

■ Skin Diseases: Health Services

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[50619\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish (a) the latest data on waiting times for a dermatology appointment in England and (b) comparable data for the last three years.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: The following table shows the median waiting times in the last three years for National Health Service dermatology services in England.

MONTH	MEDIAN WAITING TIME IN WEEKS
July 2018	6.1
August 2018	6.7
September 2018	7.2
October 2018	6.9
November 2018	6.9
December 2018	7.8
January 2019	7.6

MONTH	MEDIAN WAITING TIME IN WEEKS
February 2019	6.1
March 2019	6.2
April 2019	6.6
May 2019	6.9
June 2019	6.6
July 2019	6.5
August 2019	7.4
September 2019	7.6
October 2019	7.7
November 2019	8
December 2019	8.8
January 2020	8.7
February 2020	7.4
March 2020	8.9
April 2020	12.2
May 2020	14.9
June 2020	16.6
July 2020	12.9
August 2020	9.5
September 2020	9
October 2020	9
November 2020	8.7
December 2020	9.7
January 2021	10.5
February 2021	10.4
March 2021	8

MONTH	MEDIAN WAITING TIME IN WEEKS
April 2021	7.7
May 2021	7.7
June 2021	7.6
July 2021	8.4

Source:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/rtt-waiting-times/>

■ Smoking

Mr David Jones: [50628]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of 27 July 2021 to Question 36588 on Tobacco, if he will publish his planned timetable for publication of the Tobacco Control Plan for England.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: The Department is currently in the process of drafting the new Tobacco Control Plan working closely with Public Health England and other Government departments. We expect the final Tobacco Control Plan to be published by the end of the year.

Mark Jenkinson: [52601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2021 to Question 31543, on Tobacco, whether statistics from the ONS bulletin, entitled Adults smoking habits in the UK, will be incorporated into the Tobacco Control Plan for England following the delay in publication of that bulletin until November 2021.

Maggie Throup:

The Tobacco Control Plan will utilise data from the Office for National Statistics' bulletin when it is published later this year.

■ Smoking: Health Education

Mark Pawsey: [51686]

To ask the Secretary of State and Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's data on vaping published on 4 March 2020 and 23 February 2021 which show that the number of people vaping in England has plateaued, whether he plans to increase communications to smokers on ways to quit tobacco, including the use of less harmful alternatives to smoking.

Maggie Throup:

Public Health England's smoking cessation marketing activity, including the current 'Stoptober' campaign, signposts to a range of quitting support such as replacing

tobacco with electronic cigarettes. The updated National Health Service Quit Smoking app launched in advance of Stoptober will continue beyond the campaign with ongoing development planned.

In 2022, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will publish an independent review of the up-to-date evidence on the safety of e-cigarettes. The review will include information about the relative harm of smoking and vaping. New guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, to be published in November 2021, will advise the public and health professionals on the most effective ways of stopping smoking and reducing its burden of death and disease.

■ Social Services

Rosie Cooper:

[\[51648\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he plans to take to expand housing-with-care options as part of the Government's social care reforms.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government's plan for health and social care, announced on 7 September, recognised the important role of housing in providing care and support to people in the community. There is clear evidence that the right housing arrangements can deliver improved outcomes and meet people's preferences to remain in their own home. We will invest in supported housing, including housing-with-care, as well as exploring other innovative housing solutions to support more people to live independently at home for longer, with personalised care and support. We will continue to work closely with the sector, including as part of the white paper on adult social care reform which will be published later this year.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 September 2021 to Question 37509 NHS: Emergencies, for what reason the Government does not collect Operational Pressures Escalation Levels data in order to monitor pressures across the care system.

Gillian Keegan:

Operational Pressures Escalation Levels (OPEL) is a method used by the National Health Service to measure the stress, demand and pressure a hospital is under rather than social care systems.

Care Quality Commission-registered care homes and home care providers in the adult social care sector are monitored through the Capacity Tracker which collects data on workforce, personal protective equipment status, designated setting vacancies, infection prevention and control measures in place and vaccine rates for COVID-19 and flu. The Department also works with local authorities and social care providers to share data via its dashboard and regional teams to ensure that systems are prepared if pressures on services rise. If a trust is raised to OPEL 3 or 4, any potential resulting pressures on social care could be reflected in these monitoring systems.

■ Social Services: Career Development

Rachael Maskell: [\[47011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to help ensure long term career development for people employed in social care; and what assessment he has made of the correlation between career development and (a) recruitment and (b) retention of social care staff.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 15 September 2021]: Evidence conducted by the sector shows that access to training and development can have a positive impact on recruitment and retention. Research undertaken by Skills for Care last year found that providing training reduces care worker turnover from 37% to 29%. To help raise career prospects in social care, the Government announced new investment of at least £500 million in new workforce measures over three years, delivering new career pathways, hundreds of thousands of training opportunities and wellbeing support.

The Government will continue to support a wide range of apprenticeships within social care. These provide opportunities for people to train when they join the sector and options to progress onto higher apprenticeships into roles including social work and nursing.

■ Social Services: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell: [\[45195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will pilot a programme of supported conversations for people working in social care to determine how a greater take up of the Covid19 vaccine could be achieved.

Rachael Maskell: [\[45203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he made an assessment of the potential merits of providing supported conversations to care home staff to increase covid-19 vaccine take up, before vaccination was made mandatory for those staff.

Maggie Throup:

We have made resources on supported conversations available, including webinars and communications to address the concerns of those who may be hesitant to receive the vaccine. The 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination of people working or deployed in care homes: operational guidance' includes a toolkit which can be used to support conversations with trusted peers or medical professionals.

■ Social Services: Finance

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[51679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide financial support to the social care sector ahead of the availability of additional funding raised by increasing National Insurance contributions.

Catherine West:

[\[52562\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make immediate funding available for adult social care ahead of the increase in National Insurance Contributions and Dividend tax rates by 1.25 per cent from April 2022.

Gillian Keegan:

Over the next three years we will invest £5.4 billion in adult social care reform. During the pandemic, we have made available over £2 billion for adult social care and a further £6 billion to local authorities to address COVID-19 pressures. We also provided councils with access to over £1 billion for social care in 2021-22 to support them to maintain care services and meet demand.

■ Social Services: Reform

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[51705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish the social care White Paper.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: We are committed to the delivery of world-leading health and social care across the whole of the United Kingdom and our announcement of 7 September 2021 marked an important step on the journey to reforming adult social care. We will work with care users, providers, and other partners to develop these plans and publish further detail in a white paper for reform later this year.

■ Social Services: Task Forces

Rosie Cooper:

[\[51649\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the debate on Covid-19: Effect on retirement communities held in Westminster Hall on 1 July 2021, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a task force to expand housing-with-care options.

Gillian Keegan:

We are engaging closely with the sector and a range of stakeholders to consider the merits of different models, including proposals for a cross-Government taskforce.

■ Social Services: Vacancies

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle labour shortages in the social care sector.

Gillian Keegan:

A national recruitment campaign for adult social care will be launched in the autumn. We are also providing free and fast-track disclosure and barring service checks for

staff recruited in response to the pandemic and promoting of adult social care careers in Job Centres.

We will invest at least £500 million across three years in social care workforce professionalisation and development, wellbeing and mental health support, which will support retention of staff in the sector. We continue to work closely with the sector to understand how we can further support recruitment and retention.

■ Social Services: Vulnerable Adults

Debbie Abrahams:

[\[52499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that local authorities where people are placed in care are undertaking their statutory Care Act 2014 Section 42 safeguarding duties consistently.

Gillian Keegan:

We work collaboratively with leaders in local government to support sector-led improvement in safeguarding practice and fund the Care and Health Improvement Programme. We have supported experts including the Social Care Institute for Excellence to provide information and resources on safeguarding. The Health and Care Bill will introduce a new duty for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to assess local authorities' delivery of their adult social care duties, including safeguarding. The Department is working closely with the CQC and other stakeholders to design a system which will ensure the best possible outcomes for care users.

■ Special Educational Needs

Alexander Stafford:

[\[52629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle backlog in needs assessments to ensure that disabled children can access effective health support.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health and care services for disabled children. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who require additional provision will receive an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The SEND Regulations 2014 make clear that local authorities must complete an EHC plan assessment within twenty weeks after the request is received unless exceptional circumstances apply. The Department for Education monitors local authority performance on EHC plan assessments to establish where there are long-standing delays and provide support. This could include training for staff, extra monitoring or engagement with partners to improve joint working.

■ Travel Restrictions: Turkey

Zarah Sultana:

[42176]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the evidence that supports the placement of Turkey on the covid-19 red list for international travel.

Maggie Throup:

Decisions to place countries on the 'red list' are taken by the Government, informed by evidence including the Joint Biosecurity Centre risk assessments alongside other factors. We are unable to provide the information requested as the advice, evidence and methodology that informs these decisions relates to on-going development of Government policy. However, further information on the data informing international travel risk assessments is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-informing-international-travel-risk-assessments>.

You will find further information on the methodology for international travel risk assessments here at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-risk-assessment-methodology-to-inform-international-travel-traffic-light-system>.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Paula Barker:

[41387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of reducing or eradicating travel covid-19 test costs to support the travel industry; and what assessment he has made of the current effectiveness of those tests.

Maggie Throup:

We have recently invited the Competition and Market Authority to conduct a review into pricing and standards in the market for international travel tests. The cost of NHS Test and Trace tests for international arrivals has been reduced from £88 to £68 for fully vaccinated travellers from 'green' or 'amber' list countries and from £170 to £136 for two tests for those who are not fully vaccinated arriving from 'amber' list countries. By the end of October, fully vaccinated passengers travelling from non 'red' list countries will also be able to replace their day two test with a cheaper lateral flow test, reducing the cost of tests on arrival into England.

All polymerase chain reaction currently used by private providers have been independently assessed as effective. Private providers of COVID-19 tests are assessed individually and in order to become accredited, a provider must demonstrate that their test device has been independently verified to meet the required clinical performance standards. This evidence is scrutinised as part of their initial application and further verified in the laboratory before accreditation is granted to that provider.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[43630]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether a person who receives the first dose of the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine in England and the second dose in the United States will be regarded as fully vaccinated for the purpose of entry requirements in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 9 September 2021]: The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel and Operator Liability) (England) Regulations 2021 states a traveller who has received one vaccine in England and another in the United States of America will not be regarded as fully vaccinated for the purpose of entry into the United Kingdom having passed through or transited through an amber country in the last 10 days.

Navendu Mishra:

[43695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support his Department is providing to people who have received the Novavax vaccine with international travel.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 9 September 2021]: Individuals who took part in clinical trials and received a full dose of the Novavax vaccine can now use the NHS COVID Pass to demonstrate their COVID-19 status. However, it is the decision of the Government of the country the person is travelling to to set their inbound travel policy. The Chief Medical Officer has written to his counterparts in the European Union and European Economic Community and discussions are ongoing with other countries, including through the G7, the European Commission and the World Health Organization to shape the approach taken around the world to sharing health status for travel.

The Vaccines Taskforce and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are working with Novavax to help ensure their COVID-19 vaccine is authorised as quickly as possible. The decision to license a vaccine is made by the MHRA.

Seema Malhotra:

[51708]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on refunds for PCR tests provided by private providers for British citizens travelling abroad or returning home who are required to take PCR tests, when the test results do not arrive; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: Those purchasing tests from private providers have access to the full range of consumer rights and as individuals are contracting a private service, we advise customers to report any issues directly to the test provider. If the issue cannot be resolved, consumers should contact their local trading standards office.

The Department monitors the performance of all private providers and those with inadequate services receive a five-day warning to demonstrate they have rectified their service and if not, they are removed from the GOV.UK list.

Emma Hardy:

[\[51816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to provide free covid-19 PCR testing for people who wish to travel internationally.

Maggie Throup:

We currently have no plans to do so.

Emma Hardy:

[\[51817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence his Department used to inform the covid-19 PCR test rules for people travelling internationally without a double vaccination; and if he will publish that evidence.

Maggie Throup:

We are unable to provide the specific advice and evidence as it relates to the ongoing development of Government policy. However, the Department used evidence from Public Health England to inform polymerase chain reaction testing rules. This indicated that immunisation of travellers would reduce the risk of a traveller having become infected before starting their journey and reduce the risk of transmission in groups of travellers where large proportion have been immunised.

Daisy Cooper:

[\[51855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will recognise travellers from the EU and US as fully vaccinated where their first and second dose of covid-19 vaccinations are different approved vaccines.

Maggie Throup:

From 22 September, travellers who have received a full course of COVID-19 vaccination, including any mix of approved vaccines, under the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, Federal Drug Administration, European Medicines Agency or Swissmedic programmes are eligible for the reduced quarantine and testing requirements for fully vaccinated travellers when travelling to the United Kingdom from non-‘red list’ countries.

■ Travel: Quarantine

Nick Fletcher:

[\[35956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to review its current guidance on the need for individuals to quarantine after arriving from France.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 22 July 2021]: From 8 August passengers returning from France who have been fully vaccinated with an authorised vaccine in the United Kingdom,

United States of America or certain European countries for 14 days do not need to quarantine or take a day eight test.

Sarah Olney:

[\[36722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the evidential basis is for the decision that adults who have received both doses of a covid-19 vaccine in the UK will need to isolate for 10 days when arriving from France.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: From 8 August, arrivals from or transited through France in the last 10 days who have been fully vaccinated under the United Kingdom vaccination programme approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency do not need to quarantine. They are still expected to take a day two test.

Duncan Baker:

[\[38425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will (a) clarify the rationale and (b) make available the data that informed the decision for people returning from France regardless of vaccination status to quarantine for 10 days in the UK from 19 July 2021.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: As of 19 July, GISAID data showed there have been to date 2,959 cases of the Beta variant in France or 5.2% of all cases, compared to 1,052 cases of the Beta variant in the United Kingdom or 0.2% of all cases, 44 cases or 0.5% of all cases in Greece and 621 cases or 1.4% of all cases in Spain since the start of the pandemic. As of 14 July, more sequences uploaded to the GISAID international database in the last three to four months were attributed to the Beta variant in France, than in Spain or Greece. The precautionary measure of the current quarantine rules and testing for travellers into the UK from France was meant to significantly reduce the risk of importing cases of the Beta variant, preventing community clusters or outbreaks.

From 8 August, arrivals from and those who have transited through France in the last ten days who have been fully vaccinated under the UK vaccination programme approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency do not need to quarantine. They are still expected to take a day two test.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many quarantine hotels have had sightings of rats (a) in the bedrooms, (b) in the common areas and (c) in staff areas, including kitchens; and what steps he is taking to tackle the presence of rats in those hotels.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the safety of children staying in quarantine hotels including where there are rats in that accommodation

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason residents have not been moved to alternative accommodation after rats have been found to be present in their existing quarantine hotel.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[44388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will put in place contractual arrangements to disapply accommodation fees and pay compensation to residents who have witnessed a rat in their room in a quarantine hotel in connection with covid-19 travel restrictions.

Maggie Throup:

A single complaint was reported in one managed quarantine facility. Following this incident, a full risk assessment was carried out by the hotel, including introduction of improved vermin controls and subsequently an environmental health officer upon inspection gave the facility a five-star rating, which is the highest rating that can be achieved. There has been no indication of vermin or further sightings reported by staff or guests in other managed quarantine hotels.

We work closely with the hospitality sector providing quarantine accommodation and continue to monitor the operation of the managed quarantine service to ensure it remains appropriate. Our facilities team work directly with local environmental health teams to ensure that the accommodation offered meets the appropriate hygiene and cleanliness standards and is safe for all guests. In this specific instance, the guest and other occupants were not removed from the facility to prevent the risk to public health and potential transmission to other locations.

To ensure all our managed quarantine hotels are safe environments, we have standard operating procedures (SOPs), testing and infection prevention control processes for staff and guests. Each hotel has dedicated Departmental on-site liaison officers who monitor compliance with SOPs and report back compliance issues, breaches, opportunities to improve services and other matters including health and safety breaches.

Within the Managed Quarantine Service (MQS), we have introduced an assessed refund policy. All complaints are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Where appropriate we give guests full or partial refunds where it is evidentially proven that the service we offer has not met MQS facility standards.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason a resident of a quarantine hotel who has had rats in their room is required to pay for the full price for that accommodation.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 9 September 2021]: We are aware of one case of vermin across the Managed Quarantine Service estate and a refund is being issued to the guest affected.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43576\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with suppliers of quarantine accommodation on environmental standards in that accommodation; and what plans he has to terminate contracts where rats have been found within that accommodation.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[43577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has published for covid-19 quarantine hotels on cleaning hotel rooms (a) during and (b) after a person's stay; and whether his Department has issued guidance suggesting that quarantine hotels leave rooms vacant for 10 days between guests.

Maggie Throup:

We work closely with the hospitality sector providing quarantine accommodation and continue to monitor the operation of the managed quarantine service. CTM is the Government's hotel quarantine service supplier. To ensure all our managed quarantine hotels are safe environments, we have standard operating procedures (SOPs), testing and infection prevention control processes for staff and guests. Each hotel has dedicated Departmental on-site liaison officers who monitor compliance with the SOPs and report back compliance issues, breaches, opportunities to improve services and other matters including health and safety breaches.

In a particular case where a resident had observed a rodent, the guest was moved and subsequently an environmental health officer upon inspection gave the facility a five-star rating, which is the highest rating that can be achieved. While a single or exceptional instance of non-compliance does not automatically trigger a contract termination, but the Department's contract management and commercial teams do monitor standards and performance and will terminate contracts where performance or standards remain below what is required. Contracts are designed to terminate in the event of sub-optimal performance.

We require hotels to ensure that rooms are cleaned and COVID-19 secure after a positive case. After a guest checks out the room is left for 24 hours prior to accessing it to 'deep clean'. Strict protocols should be adhered to by all hotels by following the World Health Organization's guidance on cleanliness.

Dan Jarvis:

[49149]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on reducing the cost of hotel quarantine accommodation and its impact on the accessibility of holidays.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly discusses a range of issues with Cabinet colleagues on border health measures. On 17 September, the Government announced a simplified system for international travel providing greater stability for industry and passengers.

Sam Tarry:

[50785]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether British citizens residing overseas who have been double vaccinated abroad and want to return to the UK from amber list countries need to quarantine after returning from those countries; and what steps he is taking to alleviate the need for those people to have to enter quarantine on arrival in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

Currently, British citizens returning to England must have received the full course of COVID-19 vaccination under any of the following programmes in order to qualify for 'amber list' countries relaxed inbound travel measures and need not quarantine:

- A United Kingdom vaccination programme approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA);
- A UK vaccine programme overseas, approved by the MHRA;
- A vaccination programme authorised by the European Medicines Agency or Swissmedic;
- A vaccination programme authorised by the Food and Drug Administration and must also be resident in the United States of America.

From 4 October, the 'red', 'amber' and 'green' traffic light system will be replaced with a single 'red list' of countries and the rest of the world. The rules for travel from countries and territories not on the 'red list' will depend on the international arrivals' vaccination status. Fully vaccinated British citizens residing in seventeen countries and territories will be able to travel to the UK without the need to quarantine.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[51571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will expedite decisions on applications for exemption to managed quarantine from applicants seeking to return to UK in response to relatives becoming seriously ill.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: All requests for exemptions from Managed Quarantine are carefully considered. In extremely limited circumstances, an exemption on compassionate grounds may be granted. To expedite the decision-making process applicants should provide supporting medical evidence and apply at

least 14 days before travel. Requests for exemptions are identified and prioritised in the same way and applications processed in order of receipt and prioritised based on the proposed date of travel.

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[51574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to recognise, for the purposes of exemption from managed quarantine, AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccinations given to UK citizens in Gambia through the World Health Organisation's COVAX programme.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: We do not exempt people from managed quarantine based on vaccination status. Gambia is not a designated 'red list' country, so travellers to the United Kingdom are not required to enter managed quarantine unless they have transited through a country on the 'red list'.

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[51725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment he has carried out on the policy of requiring travellers to the UK from EU countries who are fully vaccinated against covid-19 to isolate when a member of their party has tested positive for covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

No separate impact assessment has been made. Travellers to the United Kingdom are treated in the same way as any other individual. All those testing positive must self-isolate, regardless of vaccination status or where they were vaccinated. If they have been fully vaccinated in the UK, they are exempt from self-isolation if identified as a close contact. If they were vaccinated abroad, regardless of whether they received a vaccine approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, they are required to self-isolate if identified as a close contact.

Emma Hardy:

[\[51818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what evidence his Department used to inform the quarantine rules for people travelling internationally without a double covid-19 vaccination; and if he will publish that evidence.

Maggie Throup:

Decisions to inform quarantine rules are taken by the Government is based on the latest scientific advice, alongside wider public health factors. We are unable to provide the specific advice and evidence which informs these decisions as it relates to the ongoing development of Government policy.

■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Mark Pawsey:

[\[50661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether officials in his Department have consulted consumers of (a) vaping and (b) other reduced-risk products

ahead of the Ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has not consulted consumers on vaping or other reduced-risk products ahead of the Ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. However, the Department meets with the Independent British Vape Trade Association to discuss a range of policy and regulatory issues.

HOME OFFICE

■ Action Fraud

Chris Evans: [\[52480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions officials in her Department have had with relevant stakeholders on tackling fraud in the context of the closing of Action Fraud.

Chris Evans: [\[52481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to assist people whose cases have not been progressed by Action Fraud.

Chris Evans: [\[52482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what agency will take responsibility for the cases open by Action Fraud as at 21 September 2021.

Damian Hinds:

Victims will continue to be able to report frauds centrally to allow us to best tackle the frauds that affect millions of people across the country. The Home Office is working with the City of London Police (CoLP) on plans to replace the current Action Fraud service. The new service will improve the service to victims, provide greater intelligence and insight to policing on fraud and cybercrime affecting communities, and allow for greater prevention and disruption at scale. Home Office officials are engaging a wide range of partners ahead of publication of a Fraud Action Plan after the Spending Review is finished.

In the meantime, we continue to work closely with the City of London Police, who manage the service, and a number of improvements to the existing system have been put in place over the last year to ensure a smooth transition to the new service.

Reports submitted to Action Fraud are considered by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB). Where enough evidence is available and viable leads are identified, the case is sent to the appropriate local police force to consider whether enforcement activity should take place. Reports not deemed viable for investigation by local police forces are not closed but remain under constant consideration for links to newly

reported crimes. The intelligence is also used to identify opportunities to disrupt offenders, protect victims, and prevent further frauds.

It is important that victims of fraud receive the support that they are entitled to. The Action Fraud Economic Crime Victim Care Unit delivers services to vulnerable victims of fraud and cyber crime to help them recover and prevent them from becoming victims in the future. Including those whose cases are not disseminated for investigation. Action Fraud also provides protective advice to individuals who contact the service. Further advice is currently available online at <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>.

■ Asylum: Afghanistan

Chi Onwurah: [50017]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers arriving from Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 24 September 2021]: There is a significant cross Government effort underway to ensure Afghans evacuated to the UK receive the support they need to rebuild their lives. This includes working at pace with local authorities, NGOs, and the commercial sector to secure employment and suitable housing and ensure they have the support they need.

We have seen more than 200 local authorities come forward with commitments to offer housing to displaced Afghans as part of our resettlement plans and we work closely with them to ensure housing meets the needs of those being resettled.

Hilary Benn: [50945]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to identify people in Afghanistan who may be eligible for settlement in the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement and Scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

Afzal Khan: [51829]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to her Department's Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement, published on 13 September 2021, what the UKVI's timeframe is for contacting recent arrivals as part of

the ARAP Scheme or Afghan Locally Employed Staff Scheme in respect of their leave arrangements.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 28 September 2021]: Following the policy statement the Government published on 13 September, we are working through the cases of those who have recently arrived from Afghanistan and will be processing them in line with the published policy. No one will be required to leave the United Kingdom, or be disadvantaged in any way, while we work through their cases.

We issued new guidelines that mean former locally employed staff (LES) under the ARAP scheme who meet the requirements for entry clearance will be issued with indefinite leave to enter. Relevant Afghan citizens already in the UK with limited leave can apply for indefinite leave to remain at any time.

Afzal Khan:

[51834]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of suspending the requirement for biometrics for Afghan (a) nationals ineligible under Operation Pitting trying to join British citizens or settled persons in the UK and (b) family members of refugees already in the UK, given there is no currently option to provide biometrics in Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

There are no plans to suspend the requirement for biometrics from Afghan nationals ineligible under Operation Pitting trying to join British citizens or settled persons in the UK and family members of refugees already in the UK.

This was set out in paragraphs 40 and 41 of the Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement published on 13 September.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement-accessible-version>

Biometrics underpin the UK's immigration system to support identity assurance and suitability checks on foreign nationals who are subject to immigration control. They enable us to conduct comprehensive checks against immigration and criminality records to prevent leave being granted to those who pose a harm to national security or are likely to breach our laws.

Afzal Khan:

[51837]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the backlog of asylum claims is not affected by the change in situation in Afghanistan.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives that will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or

decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff.

We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system. We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy. Claims by Afghan nationals will be considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality.

We do not believe it is appropriate to prioritise claims from one nationality over another as many claimants, irrespective of nationality, are potentially vulnerable and no one is expected to leave the UK while they have a claim outstanding.

Afzal Khan:

[51841]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what priority is being given to Afghan asylum claims that have already been made by people in the UK where a decision is pending.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office are pursuing a programme of transformation and business improvement initiatives that will speed up decision making, reduce the time people spend in the system and reduce the numbers who are awaiting an interview or decision. This includes almost doubling decision makers number to c.1,000 by March 2022 and providing improved training and career progression opportunities to aid retention of staff.

We are continuing to develop existing and new technology to help build on recent improvements such as digital interviewing and move away from a paper-based system. We have three key areas of focus in the short to medium term to reduce the number of outstanding asylum cases by improving efficiency and productivity, reducing the number of outstanding claims and building high performing teams. We are streamlining and digitalising the case working process to enable more effective workflow, appointment booking and decision-making.

All asylum claims are considered on a case by case basis and in line with published policy. Claims by Afghan nationals will be considered in the same way as claims from any other nationality.

We do not believe it is appropriate to prioritise claims from one nationality over another as many claimants, irrespective of nationality, are potentially vulnerable and no one is expected to leave the UK while they have a claim outstanding.

Sarah Owen:

[51870]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will increase the number of Afghan refugees the UK will accept from the current 5,000.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and up to 20,000 in total. This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history.

It is important that we resettle people safely and provide appropriate support including with healthcare, education, jobs and housing. When considering the number of people we resettle, it is right that we take into account the capacity of local communities to provide this support. We would urge the Honourable Members to encourage Local Authorities to come forward with offers of support.

A policy statement covering further details of the Scheme is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>.

Stephen Farry:

[51893]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Notices of Intent have been issued to Afghan asylum seekers in the UK (a) prior to and (b) since the fall of Kabul to the Taliban on 15 August 2021.

Tom Pursglove:

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of notices of intent issued and can be found online at: [How many people do we grant asylum or protection to? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to?utm_campaign=GOV.UK)

A breakdown of these figures into nationality is not currently available. Afghan asylum seekers continue to be issued with notices of intent where appropriate. Inadmissibility rules apply to all nationals where it is considered that there has been an earlier presence or connection to a safe third country.

We have been clear that people should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach and should not seek to enter the UK illegally. Our New Plan for Immigration underpins this principle.

Stephen Farry:

[51894]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to issue Afghan asylum seekers in the UK with Notices of Intent, in response to the Taliban takeover of August 2021.

Tom Pursglove:

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of notices of intent issued and can be found online at:

[How many people do we grant asylum or protection to? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to?utm_campaign=GOV.UK)

A breakdown of these figures into nationality is not currently available.

Afghan asylum seekers continue to be issued with notices of intent where appropriate. Inadmissibility rules apply to all nationals where it is considered that there has been an earlier presence or connection to a safe third country.

We have been clear that people should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach and should not seek to enter the UK illegally. Our New Plan for Immigration underpins this principle.

■ Asylum: Detainees

Liz Saville Roberts:

[51791]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were housed in (a) Brook House Immigration Removal Centre and (b) Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre at the start of each of the last six months; and what proportion of maximum capacity that represents.

Tom Pursglove:

The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient capacity, in the right places and that it provides value for money.

The Home Office will maintain sufficient capacity to support the removal of the men and women it proves necessary to detain for the purposes of removal. In order to meet operational needs and demands, we will continue to operate the immigration removal estate in a flexible manner.

The Home Office publishes statistics on people in detention on the last day of each quarter in the ' [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#) '. Data on people in detention under immigration powers are published in table Det_D02 of the [Detention detailed datasets](#). The data can be broken down by place of detention. The latest data release relates to the number of people in detention at the end of June 2021. The 'contents' sheet contains an overview of all available data on detention.

■ Chevening Scholarships Programme: Afghanistan

Rachael Maskell:

[50090]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department has been contacted by Afghan Chevening scholars in the last three weeks; and what her Department's policy is on eligibility of Afghan Chevening scholars for Government support.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 24 September 2021]: All those brought to the UK under ARAP and ACRS will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds. The Afghan Chevening Scholars who arrived in the UK were given conditions of permission which allow them to start their course of study.

The Government has written to Local Authorities to confirm that evacuees from Afghanistan are eligible for Government support, including Chevening Scholars.

■ Crimes of Violence: Females

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[51681\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services report, Police response to violence against women and girls - Final inspection report, published 17 September 2021.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is absolutely committed to tackling and preventing violence against women and girls (VAWG). That is why the Home Secretary commissioned HM Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to carry out an inspection into the police response to these crimes.

We are considering the report's recommendations and have already supported the recommendation from HMICFRS's interim report to introduce a full-time national police lead for VAWG, which the Home Office is funding. We look forward to working with DCC Maggie Blyth, who has been appointed to the role, to address the report's findings and further support our wider work on VAWG, including our Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, which we published in July.

■ Domestic Violence

Helen Hayes:

[\[51786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure consistency in police force's response to domestic violence across the country.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to clamping down on domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 achieved Royal Assent in April and is a game-changing piece of legislation which transforms our response to these crimes. We plan to publish the Domestic Abuse Strategy later this year. It will seek to transform the whole of society's response to domestic abuse, including by strengthening the systems in place to tackle it and through a focus on pursuing perpetrators of these crimes.

The College of Policing has issued guidance to all police forces on the 'Identification, assessment and management of serial or potentially dangerous domestic abuse and stalking perpetrators'. The key principles set out that forces should have processes in place to identify serial or potentially dangerous domestic abuse or stalking perpetrators and ensure that information about the perpetrator is recorded on the Police National Computer, the Police National Database or ViSOR as appropriate.

The Domestic Abuse Matters training developed by the College of Policing in partnership with SafeLives and has been delivered to 27 forces as of April 2021, with a further six forces in discussion. We continue to work closely with the College to see what more can be done to encourage take up of the Domestic Abuse Matters

programme. We look forward to working with DCC Maggie Blyth as the new NPCC national VAWG lead, a key recommendation of the first ever VAWG strategy which reported this summer.

Our landmark Domestic Abuse Act 2021 places the guidance on which the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (also known as Clare's Law) is based into statute. This will place a duty on the police to apply the guidance unless there is good reason not to and will strengthen the visibility and consistent operation of the scheme across England and Wales.

We are also working to address the recommendations made in the HMICFRS review of policing domestic abuse in the pandemic.

■ Ebrahim Raisi

Theresa Villiers: [\[51625\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of banning President Ebrahim Raisi from entry to the UK in response to his involvement in serious human rights violations, as documented by Amnesty International.

Damian Hinds:

The Home Office does not comment on individual cases.

The Home Secretary can exclude a foreign national where it is conducive to the public good.

■ Home Office: Flags

Justin Madders: [\[50686\]](#)

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

Justin Madders: [\[50687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 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.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has purchased 17 Union Jack flags since 2019, details of which are listed below:

- 2 Marsham Street – 8 Union Jack flags purchased from The Flag Consultancy Ltd;
- Dallas Court – 1 Union Jack purchased from the Bespoke Flag Maker and Flagpoles company;
- Lunar House/Apollo House – 8 Union Jack flags provided by FM provider (Kier).

All of these flags were manufactured in the UK.

■ Immigration

Owen Thompson:

[\[52546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to provide access to free support for vulnerable individuals with pre-settled status to assist them in switching to settled status.

Kevin Foster:

Since April 2019 we have awarded £17 million in grant funding to a network of 72 organisations, who provide a wide range of invaluable support across the UK, ensuring those vulnerable and most at-risk continue to get the help they need.

We committed a further £4.5 million of grant funding for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 to fund the current network of 72 organisations to continue to provide a range of support across the UK well beyond the 30 June deadline. We are committed to making sure everybody eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) can apply for the status they deserve, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. This support is also available to those with Pre-Settled Status applying for Settled Status.

We are currently in consultation with the Grant-funded Network (GFN) to continue this support from 01 October 2021 – 31 March 2022.

We intend to issue reminders to people granted pre-settled status to apply for settled status before their pre-settled status expires if they have not already done so. We will set out the arrangements for this in due course.

Owen Thompson:

[\[52547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department plans to take to remind people with pre-settled status to switch to settled status when necessary to do so.

Kevin Foster:

Since the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) opened in March 2019, the Home Office has undertaken a broad range of communications and stakeholder engagement activity to encourage EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their family members to apply for status under the EUSS. Extensive, and regularly updated information, factsheets and leaflets on the EUSS (including pre-settled to settled status conversion) have also been made available on GOV.UK. Stakeholders, including the Grant Funded Network of 72 organisations, have also been provided with regular updates, including on considerations for pre-settled status holders.

As of 30 June 2021, the Home Office had granted 206,490 applications for settled status from pre-settled status holders.

The Home Office also continues to communicate with EUSS status holders with information relevant to their status, including pre-settled to settled status applications. This currently includes an email exercise to all EUSS status holders, being sent

throughout late September to October 2021 with reminders on key information, including pre-settled to settled status conversion.

When a person is granted pre-settled status, they also receive notification of what pre-settled status means, including the option to apply for settled status as soon as they qualify for it. This will generally be once they have completed five years' continuous residence in the UK. Pre-settled status holders' online UK Visas and Immigration account also provides key information on what a status holder can do in the UK, explains they can apply for settled status once they have lived continuously in the UK for five years and provides a link to GOV.UK with further information on how to do so.

The Home Office intends to provide individual pre-settled status holders with a timely reminder to apply for settled status before their pre-settled status expires. We will set out the arrangements for this in due course.

■ Immigration Controls: Marriage

Hilary Benn:

[51592]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether a British citizen seeking to bring a fiancé to the UK is required to provide proof that the couple have previously met in person.

Kevin Foster:

A British citizen who wishes to sponsor their foreign national fiancé or proposed civil partner to enter the UK and reside here permanently under the family Immigration Rules must provide evidence to confirm the couple have met in person.

Further guidance on the fiancé or proposed civil partner visa can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fiancees-set01/fiancees-set01#set114-what-to-do-after-an-initial-refusal-on-the-grounds-of-not-having-met>

A British citizen who does not wish to reside permanently in the UK with their fiancé can apply for them to enter as a visitor to conduct their wedding. There are no specific provisions under the visitor Rules for the couple to have met in person prior to their application. However, the couple will be expected to prove their relationship is genuine, which having not met in person may call into doubt, however each case is considered based on its individual circumstances.

Further information on the marriage visitor Rules can be found here:

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

■ Immigration: Afghanistan

Claudia Webbe:

[45297]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of Afghan nationals who will be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

Since April 2021, we have relocated around 7,000 under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, and 1,400 former staff and families were relocated between 2013 and March 2021 under the previous scheme for Afghan interpreters. The ARAP scheme will remain open to those eligible, and in addition we are committed to resettling up to 20,000 under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme in the coming years.

Those arriving under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy or Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will receive fee-free indefinite leave to remain in the UK. Those who have already relocated to the UK under Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy or the previous scheme for Afghan Locally Employed Staff and were granted limited leave are able to apply free of charge and at any point within the period of their temporary leave to convert it to indefinite leave to remain.

Peter Kyle:[\[51783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2021 to Question 45845 on the revised policy on overseas fee waivers, whether applications from Afghanistan will be assessed to see if they meet the criteria for urgent applications before being automatically placed on hold.

Kevin Foster:

In line with the current policy on overseas fee waivers and with reference to Question 45845, applicants can still apply for an overseas fee waiver, but the application will be placed on hold pending the revised guidance. If an application is received and it is clear the applicant's need to travel to the UK is urgent, the application will be considered. This applies to all nationalities, including Afghan nationals.

Afzal Khan:[\[51838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what process her Department is using to upgrade the immigration status of Afghans who arrived in the UK and were granted six months leave to enter outside the rules but who are now eligible for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Afzal Khan:[\[51839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department expects Afghan nationals who were in the UK before 2 September 2021 with limited leave under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, including through the Afghan Locally Employed Staff Scheme, to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain; and how that process is being managed.

Victoria Atkins:

Details of the type of leave to be granted to those arriving from Afghanistan, and how they will be supported in obtaining that leave, can be found in the Afghanistan Resettlement and Immigration policy statement.

The Home Office has established a dedicated caseworking team, which is working jointly with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Ministry of

Defence. This team will contact all those who recently arrived to discuss their leave arrangements and ensure they get the right form of leave.

Those who are here with limited leave under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy can apply to convert this to indefinite leave to remain at any time before their limited leave expires.

The policy statement can be viewed here: [Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy)

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Owen Thompson: [52548]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of applications to the EU Settlement Scheme have been successful; and how many and what proportion of those submitted before the June deadline have received their Certificate of Application to date.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) in the '[EU Settlement Scheme statistics](#)'.

The latest published information on EUSS applications concluded to 31 August 2021, by outcome type, can be found in the table on the [EU Settlement Scheme statistics collection](#) page on GOV.UK.

The data requested on Certificates of Application is not available. Where a person who applied to the EUSS by the 30 June 2021 deadline has not yet received a Certificate of Application, they can rely on the Home Office letter or email acknowledging their application to confirm they have made an in-time application.

■ Immigration: Fees and Charges

Peter Kyle: [51784]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2021 to Question 45845 on the revised policy on overseas fee waivers, what proportion of applications for overseas fee waivers have been (a) treated as urgent applications and (b) placed on hold since the previous policy was suspended pending revision.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office Migration Statistics do not currently capture the number of applications for overseas fee waivers received or placed on hold since the previous policy was suspended.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr John Baron: [52419]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to correspondence dated 4 June 2021 and chase up correspondence dated 2 July, 2 August

and 7 September 2021 from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay regarding his constituent, reference JB32688.

Tom Pursglove:

We apologise for the delay and will respond to your correspondence shortly.

■ **Migrant Workers: Food**

Carolyn Harris:

[\[50999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the potential merits of introducing a visa scheme for food and drink workers to support covid-19 economic recovery.

Carolyn Harris:

[\[51000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase access to labour to support the UK food and drink distribution sector.

Carolyn Harris:

[\[51001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will meet with representatives of the food and drink sector to discuss how labour shortages in that sector can be tackled through her Department's policies.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office Ministers and officials meet with a broad range of stakeholders including various sectors and other Government departments. The Government position remains we will not be introducing a short-term visa route such as the 'Covid recovery visa' as has been suggested. Most of the solutions are likely to be driven by industry, with a big push towards improving pay, conditions and diversity needed.

The Points Based System does provide for occupations within the agri-food sector, including butchers, a range of poultry roles, and fishmongers, subject to the requirements of the system – including English language and salary – being met.

Beyond the Points Based System, there is the existing UK labour market, which includes those who come to the UK through our Youth Mobility Schemes (which we are looking to expand), our new British National (Overseas) visa for those from Hong Kong, dependants of those arriving under the expanded skilled worker route, as well as over 6 million applications under the EU Settlement Scheme and those who arrive through family routes, who all have access to the UK labour market.

As a transitional measure, to help farm businesses adjust to changes to the UK labour market, the Seasonal Workers Pilot was extended into this year with 30,000 visas available. Decisions on the future of the pilot will be taken in due course, following evaluation of the scheme.

Adam Holloway:

[52436]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the food and drink sector's proposal for a covid recovery visa scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The Points Based System already provides for a range of roles in the food and drink sector, including roles such as Butchers, subject to the rules and requirements of the system being met, including on salary.

Beyond the Points Based Systems, employers can recruit those with general work rights including the millions of people who have been granted status under the EU Settlement Scheme, those who have arrived via our settlement route for British National (Overseas) normally resident in Hong Kong and their households, those who have arrived via a family visa and those in the UK under our Youth Mobility Schemes. They have full access to the UK labour market and are free to work in the UK and can undertake any role.

But recognising the extraordinary circumstances facing businesses currently, Government is providing visas as a time-limited, temporary measure for the food sector until longer term measures to improve the supply of skills domestically. start to have an impact. This includes visas for up to:

- 4,700 HGV food drivers who will be able to arrive from late October and leave by 28 February 2022 and;
- 5,500 poultry workers will arrive from late October and stay up until 31 December 2021.

However we must see long-term solutions delivered by employers through improved testing and hiring, with better pay and working conditions, as immigration routes do not provide a guarantee of being able to recruit in a competitive global market for skilled workers.

■ Migrant Workers: Hospitality Industry

Layla Moran:

[51821]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the potential merits of introducing a covid recovery visa for the hospitality sector.

Layla Moran:

[51822]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the shortage occupation list, what discussions she has had with stakeholders in the food and drink sector on labour shortages in the food supply chain; and what steps she is taking to resolve those shortages in the short term.

Kevin Foster:

Home Office Ministers and officials meet with a broad range of stakeholders including various sectors and other Government departments. The Government position remains we will not be introducing a short-term visa route such as the 'Covid recovery visa' as has been suggested.

Most of the solutions are likely to be driven by industry, with a big push towards improving pay, conditions and diversity needed, rather than turning to the Home Office for immigration policy changes as an alternative to doing this. Employers with recruitment issues should therefore engage with the Department for Work and Pensions about the support they can provide in recruiting from the UK Labour Market,

The Points Based System does provide for occupations within the agri-food sector, including butchers, a range of poultry roles and fishmongers, subject to the requirements of the system – including English language and salary – being met. An occupation does not need to be on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) to be sponsored for a Skilled Worker visa

Beyond the Points Based System, there is the existing UK labour market, which includes those who come to the UK through our Youth Mobility Schemes (which we are looking to expand), our new British National (Overseas) visa for those from Hong Kong, dependants of those arriving under the expanded skilled worker route, as well as over 6 million applications under the EU Settlement Scheme and those who arrive through family routes, who all have access to the UK labour market.

As a transitional measure, to help farm businesses adjust to changes to the UK labour market, the Seasonal Workers Pilot was extended into this year with 30,000 visas available. Decisions on the future of the pilot will be taken in due course, following evaluation of the scheme.

■ National Asset Management Agency: Northern Ireland**Claire Hanna:**[\[52622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent updates she has (a) sought and (b) received from the National Crime Agency on its inquiry into NAMA's sale of its Northern Ireland loan book.

Damian Hinds:

I receive regular updates on a wide range of operational issues from the National Crime Agency. As the investigation mentioned is ongoing I am unable to comment further.

■ Passports: Applications**John Spellar:**[\[51591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what HM Passport Office's current timescale is for processing applications for a British passport.

Kevin Foster:

[Holding answer 28 September 2021]: I refer the Right Honourable member to the answer given on 9 September 2021, UIN 43418.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

Caroline Lucas:

[41801]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will set out the process by which Afghan nationals in a recognised priority group outside of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy can (a) apply for assistance, (b) have their status as being in a priority group recorded and (c) ask for their case to receive urgent attention; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

Please see the policy statement published on 13th September.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

Further details will be provided in due course.

Kate Osamor:

[45225]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people who have arrived in the UK via the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme have been housed in (a) hotels, (b) self-contained accommodation, (c) permanent accommodation and (d) hostels.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 16 September 2021]: The Government is working at pace to develop the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme. It will relocate 5,000 vulnerable people in its first year. The ACRS is one of the most generous schemes in our country's history, which will give up to 20,000 people at risk a new life in the UK over coming years.

Nobody has arrived in the United Kingdom under this newly announced scheme to date, but some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk, will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS.

Chris Bryant:

[49047]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many additional staff her Department has deployed to countries neighbouring Afghanistan to process Afghans fleeing Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: The Home Office uses a "hub and spoke" model for all overseas visa applications whereby applications made at Visa Application Centres across the globe are routed electronically into regional hubs, including in the UK.

We will be able to meet any increase in demand through redirecting applications and redeploying staff to relevant decision making centres where required. We have not needed to deploy any additional staff to countries neighbouring Afghanistan but will keep this under review.

Claudia Webbe:

[49300]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will ensure that Afghan refugees arriving in the UK have access to toothpaste, nappies, medicines and other basic necessities.

Claudia Webbe:

[49305]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the length of time Afghan nationals will have to wait to be housed in the UK from the opening of the Afghanistan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: All those brought to the UK under Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme will be provided with essential living items whilst accommodated in bridging hotels.

They will also receive comprehensive integration support as they start their new lives in the UK. A package of support to acclimatise to the UK, learn English, and find work, will enable rapid self-sufficiency and social integration in UK communities.

The Government is working closely with local authorities to secure permanent accommodation for families and ensure families are moved into these homes as soon as they become available.

Claudia Webbe:

[49301]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to welcome a larger number of vulnerable Afghans eligible for the Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme in the event that the 5,000 quota is reached within the first six months of the first year.

Claudia Webbe:

[49302]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she plans to welcome a larger number of vulnerable Afghans eligible for the Afghanistan citizens' resettlement scheme in the event that the 20,000 quota is reached by the second year.

Claudia Webbe:

[49303]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Afghan nationals who have already been evacuated from Kabul airport will be counted in the 20,000 quota for the Afghanistan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Claudia Webbe:

[49304]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Afghan nationals who have already been evacuated from Kabul airport but are in third countries will be counted in the 20,000 quota for the Afghanistan citizen's resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: The Government has worked at pace to develop a new and bespoke resettlement scheme, announced on 18 August, which will relocate 5,000 vulnerable people in its first year. The ACRS is one of the most generous schemes in our country's history, which will give up to 20,000 people at risk a new life in the UK over coming years.

We must ensure people can be properly supported when they get to the UK. A huge programme of work spanning different government departments, charities, NGOs, local authorities and communities is already underway to resettle people safely and provide support including with healthcare, education, jobs and housing. It is right that we support local authorities, and that we do not take more people than we can accommodate.

Some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – will be the first to be resettled under the ACRS.

The Government will work with international partners and NGOs in the region to implement a referral process for those inside Afghanistan, (where safe passage can be arranged) and for those who have recently fled to other countries in the region.

We will need some time to work through the details of this process, which depends in part on the situation in Afghanistan.

Caroline Lucas:[\[49987\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by what mechanism she estimates the number of people who have crossed borders to third countries from Afghanistan who will qualify for the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme; and on what basis the cap of 5,000 was decided for help under that scheme.

Caroline Lucas:[\[49988\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the resources needed to bring forward the Government's 20,000 resettlement commitment over 5 years under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme to 1 year; if she will make it her policy to increase the UK's current resettlement commitment; and if she will make a statement.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 24 September 2021]: The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and up to 20,000 in total. This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history. Dedicated officials have worked day and night to support this unprecedented response.

It is important that we resettle people safely and provide appropriate support including with healthcare, education, jobs and housing. When considering the number of people we resettle, it is right that we take into account the capacity of local

communities to provide this support, and that we do not take more people than we can accommodate.

On 13 September, I made a statement to the House of Commons providing details of the scheme. A policy statement is now published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement>.

I would urge all Rt Honourable and Honourable Members to encourage their Local Authorities to come forward and support the efforts to resettle Afghans.

Rachael Maskell:

[51752]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will seek to resettle people arriving under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy close to those they served with from the armed forces in Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

We have warmly welcomed thousands of Afghan nationals to this country who have worked alongside our Armed Forces and diplomats in Afghanistan.

On 1 September, we announced 'Operation Warm Welcome' to ensure Afghans arriving in the UK receive the vital support they need to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education and integrate into their local communities. This includes the allocation of local authority sourced accommodation across the UK as well as Ministry of Defence accommodation. Homes will be matched carefully to families.

Afzal Khan:

[51826]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people evacuated from Afghanistan as part of Operation Pitting were (a) British nationals, (b) Afghan nationals evacuated as part of the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy and (c) Afghan nationals now subject to the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Afzal Khan:

[51828]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when Afghan nationals and their family members who arrived in the UK as part of Operation Pitting will receive notification of their indefinite leave to remain.

Afzal Khan:

[51830]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of the Afghan nationals evacuated as part of Operation Pitting will be settled under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Afzal Khan:

[51831]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan nationals who were called forward or authorised for evacuation from Afghanistan but who were unable to board flights will be offered a place under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is not yet open. We are working through how many of those who were unable to board flights will be offered a place under the ACRS. More details, as soon as they are available, will be published on the GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>

Between 15 and 29 August, the Department evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. That includes over 8,000 British nationals, along with their dependants; and 5,000 Afghans who loyally served the UK, along with their dependants; 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.

As the Government has announced, Afghans who have arrived under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme will be given indefinite leave to remain and others who arrived and are moving onto the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will also be given ILR; we are working through individuals on a case by case basis.

Afzal Khan:**[51832]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to begin consultations with the UNHCR in order to facilitate the resettlement of Afghan refugees as part of the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

Ministers and officials have met regularly with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in recent weeks to discuss the international response to the situation in Afghanistan, including the establishment of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

The Government will continue to work closely with the UNHCR in the development of the ACRS and in the operation of our other resettlement schemes.

Afzal Khan:**[51833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Afghan nationals who were called forward or authorised for evacuation under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme who made their own way to the UK after being unable to board airlift flights will be permitted to stay in the UK under that scheme and granted indefinite leave to remain.

Victoria Atkins:

Those notified by the UK that they had been called forward, but were unable to board evacuation flights, will be offered a place on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). Efforts are ongoing to facilitate travel to the UK from the region for this group. Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-

[immigration-policy-statement](#). Those who are eligible under ACRS will be granted ILR in the UK.

Those who arrive in the UK via irregular routes are able to claim asylum. The Government is clear that people should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach and not risk their lives making dangerous journeys.

Owen Thompson:

[52551]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to simplify the process of family reunion across national boundaries for Afghan refugees.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government's family reunion policy allows a partner and children under 18 of those granted protection in the UK to join them here if they formed part of the family unit before the sponsor fled their country. For Afghan refugees in the UK, we already have rules in place for their close family members to apply to join them in the UK and these can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion>

The UK is working with international partners to secure safe routes out of Afghanistan as soon as they become available. However, while the security situation remains extremely volatile, we recommend people still in Afghanistan do not make applications and pay application fees at this time as they will not be considered until biometrics are provided. The British Embassy in Kabul has currently suspended in-country operations and all UK diplomatic and consular staff have been temporarily withdrawn.

Those Afghans who are outside of Afghanistan and able to get to a Visa Application Centre to provide their biometrics can make an application in the usual way.

A policy statement on Afghanistan resettlement has been published on gov.uk www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

■ Road Traffic Offences

Stuart Anderson:

[51026]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to local authorities on tackling (a) speeding and (b) other traffic issues.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office is responsible for policy on enforcement of road traffic legislation and for ensuring the availability of appropriate enforcement powers to the police. We do not issue guidance to local authorities on speeding and other road traffic issues.

However, the Home Office has contributed to guidance published by the Department for Transport in 2007 on the deployment, visibility and signing of speed cameras which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-speed-and-red-light-cameras-for-traffic-enforcement-guidance-on-deployment-visibility-and-signing>.

The Department for Transport also issues guidance on speed limits to local traffic authorities, to ensure limits are appropriately and consistently set whilst allowing for flexibility to deal with local circumstances.

■ Supermarkets: Slavery

Mark Pritchard:

[\[51658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure supermarket supply chains do not support modern slavery through third party suppliers.

Rachel Maclean:

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires businesses, including supermarkets, with a turnover of £36m or more to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

The prevalence of modern slavery and complexity of global supply chains means that it is highly unlikely that any sector or company is immune from the risks of modern slavery. The Home Office's statutory guidance on producing modern slavery statements suggests that statements should include the risk assessment and due diligence organisations undertook to prevent and tackle modern slavery. The Government encourages companies to report transparently about how they are identifying and mitigating modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains, and to use their modern slavery statements to demonstrate year on year progress.

To enhance the impact of transparency and accelerate action to prevent modern slavery, the Government announced an ambitious package of changes to strengthen the reporting requirements on businesses and has committed to introduce financial penalties for those that fail to meet their obligations to publish statements under section 54. To further enhance transparency, in March 2021, the Government launched a digital registry for modern slavery statements to make statements available in one place. The registry will make it easier for investors, consumers and civil society to scrutinise the action being taken by different organisations and monitor progress.

The Government is currently reviewing its Modern Slavery Strategy and will consider whether there are further opportunities to enhance our approach to transparency in supply chains.

■ Visas: British Students Abroad

Stephen Morgan:

[\[52589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what financial and practical support her Department is putting in place to support students applying for visas to study abroad.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office only has responsibility for UK visa policy in relation to those who wish to study in the UK.

The matter of financial and practical support available for outgoing UK students is for the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

■ **Youth Mobility Scheme: EU Countries**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the Youth Mobility Visa to the EU to help tackle skills shortages in certain industries in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Our Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) agreements provide a valuable route for mutual cultural exchange and are not simply a one-way route for recruiting cheaper labour from overseas. We will therefore not add nations to the YMS route unilaterally.

We are open to negotiating YMS arrangements with other countries and territories, including the EU or nations within it. However, as each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK Nationals, with the detail negotiated and agreed between the relevant parties, we are unable to disclose the status of ongoing negotiations with partner countries as they occur.

Further details of additional YMS agreements will be announced once they are concluded.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[51762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the potential merits of extending the Youth Mobility Visa to the EU to help tackle skills shortages.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy are in regular contact regarding a wide array of issues, including the skills shortages in the UK.

Our Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) agreements provide a valuable route for mutual cultural exchange and are not simply a one-way route for recruiting labour from overseas. We will therefore not add nations to the YMS route unilaterally.

We are open to negotiating YMS arrangements with other countries and territories, including the EU or nations within it. However, as each YMS is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK Nationals, with the detail negotiated and agreed between the relevant parties, we are unable to disclose the status of ongoing negotiations with partner countries as they occur.

Further details of additional YMS agreements will be announced once they are concluded.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Ceramics: Exports**

Jonathan Gullis: [51038]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to help increase global export opportunities for British ceramics.

Mike Freer:

The British ceramics industry is world-renowned and can access new markets more easily through our future Free Trade Agreements. For example, in June, we reached Agreement in Principle with Australia. This fundamentally liberalising agreement removes tariffs on all UK exports, including ceramics.

Alongside our trade deals, we provide a range of exporting support to help businesses grow internationally, including trade advisers locally and overseas; financial exporting support from UK Export Finance's specialists; access to the UK Export Academy and the Digital Exporting Programme. This includes access to one-to-one guidance on digital sales and marketing.

Businesses interested in more information on export opportunities for British ceramics can visit <https://www.gov.uk/ask-export-support-team>.

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Dispute Resolution

Emily Thornberry: [51633]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has commissioned legal advice under her Department's contracts with (a) TLT LLP, (b) McDermott Will & Emery LLP or (c) Borden Ladner Gervais LLP on the potential effect of the Government's proposals to ban online adverts for foods high in fat, sugar and salt on the UK's exposure to Investor State Dispute Settlement claims under the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, including the currently suspended provisions of that chapter.

Emily Thornberry: [51634]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has commissioned legal advice under her Department's contracts with (a) TLT LLP, (b) McDermott Will & Emery LLP or (c) Borden Ladner Gervais LLP on the potential effect of the Government's review of football governance, ownership and financial sustainability and any policies that may arise from that review on the UK's exposure to Investor State Dispute Settlement claims under the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, including the currently suspended provisions of that chapter.

Emily Thornberry: [51635]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has commissioned legal advice under her Department's contracts with (a) TLT LLP, (b) McDermott Will &

Emery LLP or (c) Borden Ladner Gervais LLP on the potential effect of (i) the review of the Gambling Act 2005 and (ii) any changes to gambling legislation that may arise from that review on the UK's exposure to Investor State Dispute Settlement claims under the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, including the currently suspended provisions of that chapter.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[51636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether she has commissioned legal advice under her Department's contracts with (a) TLT LLP, (b) McDermott Will & Emery LLP or (c) Borden Ladner Gervais LLP on the potential effect of the (i) health and social care levy and (ii) increase in dividend tax rates announced on the 7 September 2021 on the UK's exposure to Investor State Dispute Settlement claims under the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, including the currently suspended provisions of that chapter.

Penny Mordaunt:

Acceding to the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) will not prevent the UK regulating in the public interest. CPTPP explicitly reaffirms states' right to regulate under international law. It also protects this right through numerous safeguards, including procedural provisions to minimise the impacts of frivolous and unsuccessful Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) claims faced by states.

■ Department for International Trade: Written Questions

Emily Thornberry:

[\[51646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to respond to Question 44264 on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Pitcairn Islands, tabled on 7 September 2021 by the Rt. hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury.

Penny Mordaunt:

Question 44264 was answered on 22nd September.

■ Trade Agreements: Australia

Adam Holloway:

[\[52437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, when she plans to publish the impact assessments of the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement in Principle.

Penny Mordaunt:

A full impact assessment will be published following the conclusion of negotiations, prior to scrutiny by Parliament.

JUSTICE**■ Care Proceedings**

Steve Reed: [51715]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what figures his Department holds on the number of care orders issued by local authorities in England in each of the last 10 years.

James Cartlidge:

Local Authorities do not issue care orders in England. They apply to the court for care orders to be made. In England and Wales, care orders are made by the Family Court or the Family Division of the High Court.

The latest information was released as part of the Family Court Statistics Quarterly release, on 30th September 2021 and will include this data for England and Wales combined up to 30 June 2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-court-statistics-quarterly>

■ Community Orders and Suspended Sentences: Coronavirus

Philip Davies: [51652]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to ensure that people who were given requirements as part of a community order or suspended sentence order but were unable to undertake them as a result of covid-19 restrictions complete those requirements.

Kit Malthouse:

Throughout the pandemic, the Probation Service has worked hard to minimise the disruption caused by COVID-19. It has been keeping the public safe by prioritising accredited programmes for offenders who pose the highest risk of harm and developing alternatives where formal in-person programmes have not been possible. Group work resumed in April.

The Government is also clear that people whose unpaid work requirements have been impacted by the pandemic should work their hours and the Probation Service is working closely with the judiciary and HM Courts and Tribunal Service to extend community orders, where necessary, so hours can be worked.

■ Courts: Coronavirus

Stuart Anderson: [52600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of resources available to effectively tackle court backlogs in the recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

James Cartlidge:

We have taken decisive action to ensure the courts have sufficient resources to tackle our outstanding caseloads in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

We spent over a quarter of a billion pounds on recovery last financial year, making court buildings safe, rolling out new technology for remote hearings and recruiting an additional 1,600 HMCTS staff. We will run each Crown Court site to its fullest, with no limit on sitting days this financial year, so more cases can be heard and waiting times can come down. Following the lifting of social distancing restrictions, we are in the process of fully reopening our existing physical estate. We have also extended 32 of our Nightingale courtrooms until March 2022 to maximise our sitting capacity this year.

■ **Immigration and Employment Tribunals Service: Administrative Delays**

Feryal Clark:

[\[51886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps his Department has taken to tackle the backlog of cases before the immigration and employment tribunals in (a) Enfield North constituency, (b) Greater London and (c) England.

James Cartlidge:

Despite the enormous challenges they have faced during the last 18 months, both the Employment Tribunals and Immigration and Asylum Chamber (IAC) remained open throughout the pandemic. Both the employment tribunals and the IAC have adapted to remote ways of working and running hearings virtually, to ensure ongoing access to justice where cases cannot be heard in person. The IAC has also expanded the online Reform service (MyHMCTS) to enable most appellants to engage with the tribunal digitally. We have run ambitious recruitment campaigns across both jurisdictions, to expand our judicial capacity and boost caseworker numbers. This has been bolstered in the employment tribunal by a significant increase in our sitting day allocation for FY21/22, from 30k (FY20/21) to 37.5k (FY21/22).

■ **Ministry of Justice: Flags**

Justin Madders:

[\[50692\]](#)

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

Justin Madders:

[\[50693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, 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.

James Cartlidge:

We have purchased two Union flags for our headquarters building since 2019. These have been provided by our Facilities Management provider (Amey) and were both manufactured in the United Kingdom

Information for our HM Prison and Probation and HM Courts and Tribunals Service properties can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Mother and Baby Units: Prisons

Mr David Lammy: [\[51584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many mothers assessed as suitable to keep their baby with them on the prison estate were not able to due to a lack of mother and baby placements in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Victoria Atkins:

No mother has been denied a place on a Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) in the Women's Custodial Estate due to lack of capacity since 2017, when current data collection commenced.

■ Prisoners: Females

Mr David Lammy: [\[51585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average distance is for a woman placed in the prison system to their home.

Victoria Atkins:

As of 17 September 2021, a woman in prison was on average 46 miles from their origin address.

There are complex and wide-ranging issues involved in transferring and locating prisoners, and allocation decisions must reflect both the specific needs and circumstances of the prisoner, including their security assessment, as well as the operating environment and range of services at the receiving prison.

HMPPS is committed to ensuring, where practicable, that prisoners are accommodated as close as possible to their resettlement communities and families. Whilst this is a priority, it is not always possible due to a variety of factors including wider population pressures, or where women have specific sentence planning needs which can only be met at certain establishments.

Around 97% of prisoners have an origin location; i.e. addresses that are recorded in our central IT system. If no address is given, an offender's committal court address is used as a proxy for the area in which they are resident. This information is included in the data provided above. Those with no recorded origin are typically foreign nationals or those recently received into custody.

The numerical information provided has been drawn from administrative IT systems, which as with any large scale recording system are subject to possible error with data entry and processing.

■ Prisons: Mother and Baby Units

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[52445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework, published on 20 September

2021, if he will make an assessment of potential risks of the policy changes made in that framework to the distinction between prison officers and healthcare staff in prisons.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[52446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework, published on 20 September 2021, what (a) medical professional organisations and (b) criminal justice non-governmental organisations were consulted during the development of that framework.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[52447\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework, published on 20 September 2021, what steps he plans to take to help ensure compliance with that policy framework in contracted out prisons.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[52448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework, published on 20 September 2021, what estimate he has made of the additional annual resource impact of implementing that framework across all public sector prisons in England and Wales.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[52449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework, published on 20 September 2021, for what reason no additional resources have been identified as being required for the implementation of that framework in contracted out prisons, while additional resources have been identified as being required for implementation in public sector prisons.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[52450\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Pregnancy, MBUs and Maternal Separation in Women's Prisons Policy Framework, published on 20 September 2021, when and in what form he plans to publish statistics on the (a) numbers and (b) outcomes for (i) individuals who have experienced pregnancy, the post-natal period, and/or pregnancy outcomes within 12 months of entering prison or during a sentence, (ii) mothers and child-rearing individuals applying for and spending time on MBUs with their children and (iii) mothers, child-rearing individuals and adoptive parents separated from children up to the age of two years old in the 12 months prior to entering prison, as a result of imprisonment, or following time on an MBU.

Victoria Atkins:

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) new policy was developed following a fundamental review that involved extensive stakeholder consultation, including with Health partners; a resource impact assessment and a data protection impact assessment.

1) As per 2.1-2.8 of the policy, healthcare is commissioned through the health sector. The role of HMPPS is to ensure appropriate access to healthcare – including information sharing and physical access.

2) a) Medical professional organisations consulted include:

i) NHS England and NHS Improvement (including the central Health and Justice Team, Clinical Reference Groups and regional commissioners)

ii) Local prison healthcare providers commissioned by NHSE/I

iii) Public Health England (PHE)

iv) Public Health Wales (PHW)

v) The Royal College of Midwives

b) Criminal justice non-governmental organisations consulted include:

i) Voluntary sector organisations including Birth Companions, Born Inside, Hibiscus, Barnardo's and Family Action

ii) Academics including Dr Shona Minson, Dr Lucy Baldwin and Dr Laura Abbott

iii) Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and Probation (HMIP)

iv) The Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO)

3) Where a contractor fails to implement the policy, contractual action will be taken as necessary. Policy implementation in both public and contracted prisons will be supported by a variety of assurance structures and processes, to monitor compliance. This includes external and independent assurance by HMIP, PPO and OFSTED.

4) A resource impact assessment has been undertaken for public prisons as part of the development of the new Policy Framework. This assessment identified a need for additional funding to support implementation in public prisons, which has been provided.

5) Resource impact assessments were also undertaken for contracted prisons as part of the development of the new Policy Framework requirements. These identified that no additional funding was required to fulfil new policy requirements.

6) National data on pregnancy and births and Mother and Baby Units is published annually as part of the HMPPS Annual Digest:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hmppps-annual-digest-april-2020-to-march-2021>. Data on abortions and pregnancy outcomes such as miscarriage and stillbirth are recorded on healthcare systems as they are medical in confidence.

Information on a prisoner's caring responsibilities and children living in the community is monitored locally by prison Governors/Directors to ensure appropriate support can be provided to offenders and their families. We are developing changes to the initial reception questionnaire to enable national data collection that can be published.

■ Probation: Greater London

Feryal Clark:

[51887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of recruitment and retention of probation officers in (a) Enfield and (b) Greater London.

Kit Malthouse:

The Probation Service is committed to increasing recruitment to fill Probation Officer vacancies, particularly in areas with significant local employment market challenges. The Probation Service recruited a total of 1,007 trainee probation officers in 2020/2021 and are committed to recruiting 1,500 trainee probation officers in 2021/2022.

Following the transfer of over 7,000 staff from private sector Community Rehabilitation Companies into the Probation Service at the end of June 2021, there were 4,456 full time equivalent (FTE) Band 4 probation officers in post nationally as at 30 June 2021. This figure is an increase of 844 (23.4%) since 30 June 2020 and an increase of 919 FTE (26%) probation officers compared to 31 March 2021.

In June 2021, there were 637 probation officers and 225 trainee probation officers in post in the London Probation Service. One probation officer joined the Local Delivery Unit cluster Barnet, Brent and Enfield between June 2014 to June 2021. Overall, 50 probation officers joined the London Probation Service between 2014/2015 to June 2021/2022.

The leaving rate for probation officers at the London Probation Service was 7.5% for 12 months to 30 June 2021. Over the past seven years, the leaving rate has varied between 6.1% and 10.9%.

The leaving rate for probation officers at the LDU cluster Barnet, Brent and Enfield was 8.7% for 12 months to 30 June 2021. Over the past seven years the leaving rate has varied between 4.1% and 11.8%.

The first National Probation Service Recruitment & Retention Strategy was published internally to all Probation Service staff in April following extensive engagement with colleagues and stakeholders across Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. At the centre of this strategy is our commitment to make sure we have great people, in the right roles, with the resources they need to do their jobs in the probation service.

■ Probation: Staff

Mr David Lammy:

[51583]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) probation officers and (b) Probation Service officers have left the service every year since Transforming Rehabilitation was announced.

Kit Malthouse:

The information requested, from 1st June 2014, can be found at: [Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service workforce statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service-workforce-statistics)

'Transforming rehabilitation: a strategy for reform' was published on 9th May 2013. The National Probation Service (NPS) came into existence on 1st June 2014. The Ministry of Justice do not hold Probation Officer or Probation Service Officers leavers data from the previous Probation Trusts' for the period between the announcement on 9th May 2013 to the point the NPS was formed on 1st June 2014 or for Community Rehabilitation Companies from the 1st of June 2014 until the services unified in June 2021.

■ Slavery and Trafficking Reparation Orders

Brendan O'Hara:

[52514]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Slavery and Trafficking Reparation Orders under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 have been made for victims of the Daesh atrocities in each year since the passing of that Act.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice holds data on prosecutions and court outcomes for modern slavery offences; however, centrally held information in the courts proceedings database cannot identify the exact circumstances of the offence that led to a slavery or trafficking reparation order, for example, to identify that it was issued under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 as a result of a Daesh atrocity. This information may be held on court record but can only be obtained by manually searching court records at disproportionate cost.

■ Styal Prison: Repairs and Maintenance

Ms Lyn Brown:

[48174]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Styal 2021, published on 8 September 2021, what steps he is taking to ensure that maintenance and refurbishment works at HMP/YOI Styal are (a) completed in a timely manner and (b) value for money.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[48175]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Styal 2021, published on 8 September 2021, over what timescale works to ensure (a) fire safety, (b) other health and safety and (c) decency is restored to all accommodation at HMP/YOI Styal will be completed.

Victoria Atkins:

We are working closely with the facilities management provider Amey to manage any maintenance and refurbishment projects.

We are currently producing a report which covers fire risks, decency and structural integrity of the prison and an outline business case for a fire safety improvement project.

Initially the contractor's supply chain had a limited number of suppliers, which resulted in cost estimates for work submitted being excessive and these were

rejected by the MoJ team. The MoJ has instructed that the supply chain is broadened to include more SME companies to tender for these works. This determination to use SME companies has led to some delays but it means that there are much better procurement options that will provide more effective and value for money solutions.

The local Service Delivery Manager will continue to challenge all costs which they feel are excessive and escalate them to the Regional Estates Manager, who has regular commercial and project meetings with the contractor's management. The Service Delivery Manager also monitors the on-site performance and will check repairs and any projects to ensure they have been completed and are to the required standard.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Buildings: Insulation

Sir Robert Neill:

[52451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent estimate he has made of the average time between an offer of funding to remediate dangerous cladding being made by his Department and a Grant Funding Agreement being signed by the applicant.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government acknowledges that remediation of unsafe cladding is complex and each individual project will vary in their journey through the funding application process. Detailed information on the Building Safety Fund application process and estimated timelines can be found in the Building Safety Fund application guidance available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-application-process

Sir Robert Neill:

[52452]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the average amount spent by owners of buildings is on legal advice on their Grant Funding Agreement between the agreement being offered by his Department and the owner signing that agreement.

Christopher Pincher:

This information is not held by the Department.

The Government's funding covers all reasonable costs directly related to the remediation of unsafe cladding systems which may include legal fees involved with managing an application and a remediation project. This would be paid out together with other costs associated with the remediation project.

As a condition of funding, we require that all Government funding received, including for legal costs, are to be paid into an account which is for the benefit of leaseholders. This means that the funding can only be used for the remediation project, with no eligible project costs being passed onto leaseholders.

■ Coal: Cumbria**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[51726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he plans to make of the environmental impact of the proposed Whitehaven Coal Mine in Cumbria, in response to the publication of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Christopher Pincher:

In March of this year, the then Secretary of State called in the planning application for the proposed Whitehaven Coal Mine. A public inquiry is currently sitting, overseen by an independent planning Inspector. That inquiry will consider all relevant planning considerations, including the environmental effect of the proposal. Following the close of the inquiry, a report and recommendation will be prepared for Ministers to consider.

■ Empty Property: Repairs and Maintenance**Stuart Anderson:**[\[51845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to support the (a) public and (b) private sector to renovate derelict buildings into community hubs.

Eddie Hughes:

In July, my department launched a 4-year UK-wide £150 million Community Ownership Fund to support voluntary and community organisations to bring buildings such as community hubs at risk of loss into community ownership. The fund enables groups to bid for up to £250,000 of match funding. These buildings can be publicly or privately owned, and funding can be used to support renovation as part of an asset purchase. The second round of the Community Ownership Fund will be launched in December and third round in May 2021.

■ Housing: Older People**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[52411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to take steps to increase (a) consumer protection in respect of and (b) information on older people's housing; and whether the Government plans to implement the recommendations made by the Law Commission in its report, Event fees in retirement properties, published in March 2017.

Eddie Hughes:

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill currently in Parliament will put an end to ground rents for new residential leasehold properties as part of the most significant changes to property law in a generation. The Bill's provisions will lead to fairer, more transparent homeownership for thousands of future leaseholders.

This includes retirement properties, where purchasers of new leases will not be faced with financial demands for ground rent.

In 2017, the Law Commission published a report of their review of event fees on behalf of this Department. This followed concerns raised by the Competition and Markets Authority about the fairness of some retirement property leases that have resulted in leaseholders paying an event fee of between 0.25% and 30% of the sale price of the property when selling or sub-letting. Concerns were also raised about the lack of transparency of event fees for older people and their families when purchasing a leasehold retirement property. The Law Commission made a number of recommendations in its report, which can be downloaded at <http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/event-fees-in-retirement-properties>.

The Government responded to the Law Commission, thanking them for the report and agreeing to implement the majority of the recommendations.

The Government is considering two further recommendations, on succession rights and a database of leasehold retirement properties with event fees, and will respond in due course.

■ Licensed Premises: Land Use

Navendu Mishra:

[52615]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the impact on neighbouring properties of temporary arrangements to allow pubs, restaurants and other venues to have tents, canopies and marquees for longer than the 28 days previously allowed without planning permission.

Christopher Pincher:

The Permitted development right has supported the recovery of the hospitality industry by allowing venues to create additional covered space in outside areas.

We are currently consulting on the future of some of the time-limited permitted development rights introduced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the right which allows the provision of moveable structures within the curtilage of a pub, café, restaurant, or historic visitor attraction.

We will consider the responses to the consultation in respect of this right and further announcement will be made. The consultation is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/supporting-defence-infrastructure-and-the-future-of-time-limited-permitted-development-rights/supporting-defence-infrastructure-and-the-future-of-time-limited-permitted-development-rights>

■ Local Government Finance: Universal Credit

Owen Thompson:

[51009]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what impact assessment has been undertaken of the potential effect of the end of the £20 universal credit standard allowance uplift on local government budgets throughout the country.

Kemi Badenoch:

Since the start of the pandemic, the Government's priority has been to protect lives and people's livelihoods. This includes continually supporting individuals and businesses.

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. Now the economy is reopening and as we continue to progress with our recovery our focus is on helping people back into work.

Any extension to the uplift or further Covid support is a matter for HMT.

■ Planning: Public Consultation**Ruth Cadbury:**[\[49165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to publish its response to the Planning for the Future Consultation before the House of Commons rises on the 23 September 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government seeks to unite and level up the country, ensuring opportunity is available for all, and our plans to modernise the planning system are an important part of this.

We are continuing to reflect on the 43,000 consultation responses and engage with stakeholders across the system.

■ Property Development**Daisy Cooper:**[\[51858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what powers local planning authorities have to censure a developer that submits multiple applications for a site that seeks to extend the limits to development which are already settled through restrictive covenants.

Daisy Cooper:[\[51859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether financial resources are available for residents who need to repeatedly respond to multiple applications from a developer for a site that repeatedly seeks to extend the limits to development which are already settled through restrictive covenants.

Christopher Pincher:

Local planning authorities have powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to decline to determine multiple applications for a site if they have previously refused permission for substantially similar applications within the past two years. Restrictive covenants are separate to planning laws and ones that exist may generally not be taken into account by a local planning authority when determining a planning application.

Sheltered Housing: Planning Permission**Mr Clive Betts:**[\[52412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of a C2R planning classification for housing-with-care, recommended by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee in its report *The future of the planning system in England*, published on 10 June 2021.

Christopher Pincher:

National planning policy is clear that plan making authorities are expected to have clear policies for addressing the housing needs of older and disabled people

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories known as 'Use Classes'. In planning terms, homes for older people or those with a disability etc, may be C2 residential institutions or C3(b) dwellinghouse for up to six people living together as a single household, including cases where there is an element of care, or they may not be in a use class.

Sheltered Housing: Standards**Rosie Cooper:**[\[51650\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking with the Department for Health and Social Care to improve housing-with-care provision for older people.

Christopher Pincher:

Offering vulnerable people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently and feel more connected to their communities. This Government is committed to the provision of suitable homes for older people, including extra care housing, which contributes to levelling up across communities. Housing-with-care allows individuals to choose where they want to live, with whom, how they can best be supported, and what happens in their home. Both the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department of Health and Social Care provide capital funding to incentivise their supply. Our planning rules already mean councils must consider the needs of older people when planning for new homes. In 2019, we published guidance to help councils implement the National Planning Policy Framework policies. We are investing over £12 billion in

affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, where 10 per cent of delivery over the course of the programme will be used to increase the supply of much needed specialist or supported housing, including retirement housing. The Department of Health and Social Care are also continuing to subsidise new supply of specialist housing for older and disabled people through the Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) Fund. The Government's plan for health and social care, announced on Tuesday 7 September, also recognised the important role of housing, and supported housing in particular, in providing care and support to people in the community. We continue to work closely with the older people's housing sector and across Government to look at how we can further support its growth. I look forward to engaging with representatives in the sector further and value their insight.

■ Voting Methods: Disability Aids

Wendy Chamberlain:

[52603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the effect of provisions in the Elections Bill on supporting (a) blind and partially sighted people and (b) people with other disabilities.

Kemi Badenoch:

It is integral to our democracy that everybody is able to make their voice heard and that elections are accessible for all those eligible to vote.

This is why, for the first time in electoral law, through the Elections Bill, we are putting in place a requirement for Returning Officers to consider the needs of all disabled voters when providing equipment for polling stations.

This will allow Returning Officers to tailor the package of equipment they offer to their voters to take into account developments in equipment and technology, in order to best meet the needs of people with disabilities including those who have sight loss.

Clear guidance will be issued to Returning Officers by the Electoral Commission, which will be produced in partnership with the Government's expert Accessibility of Elections Working Group, which includes a wide range of stakeholders such as the Royal National Institute of Blind People.

This change has arisen following the Government's Call for Evidence on the Access to Elections. Responses from disabled people and organisations that represent their interests made clear that the current approach of requiring Returning Officers to solely provide at the polling station, a prescribed device for voters with sight loss, was not the best approach to meet the varied needs of disabled electors. Our new proposals will seek to meet those needs.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ Northern Ireland Office: Flags**

Justin Madders: [\[50695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 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.

Conor Burns:

My Department has not purchased any Union Jack Flags in each of the last two years.

■ Northern Ireland Office: Police Service of Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart: [\[50177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many meetings he or his predecessors have had with the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in each of the last three years.

Conor Burns:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland engages regularly with the Chief Constable of the Police Service for Northern Ireland to discuss a range of issues including National Security matters.

■ Platinum Jubilee 2022: Northern Ireland

Carla Lockhart: [\[50176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what plans his Department has to celebrate the Queens' Platinum Jubilee in Northern Ireland.

Conor Burns:

My officials are working closely with officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport who are the lead Government department for Jubilee celebrations, in support of Buckingham Palace. You may be aware that a number of UK-wide projects are already in development such as the lighting of Jubilee Beacons. The public are also being encouraged to participate in Big Jubilee Lunches, in order to bring the Jubilee celebrations into the heart of communities.

■ Stormont House Agreement

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[51676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the United Nations press release entitled UK: UN experts voice concern at proposed blanket impunity to address legacy of 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland on the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement.

Conor Burns:

The UK Government welcomes the UN Special Rapporteurs' ongoing interest in Northern Ireland legacy issues, and acknowledges the importance and value of their mission and objectives.

While we respectfully disagree with some of the Special Rapporteurs' assessments regarding the legacy proposals outlined in the Command Paper published in July, we continue to engage with the Special Rapporteurs through established channels.

The Government is committed to dealing with legacy issues in a way that supports information recovery and reconciliation, complies with international human rights obligations, and responds to the needs of individual victims and survivors, as well as society as a whole.

The Government welcomes comments as it continues to engage in its proposals, and will reflect carefully on what we have heard as we consider our next steps.

TRANSPORT**■ A96: Dual Carriageways****Andrew Bowie:**[\[52569\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he work with (a) Moray and (b) Aberdeenshire Councils to help ensure that the dualling of the A96 between Inverurie and Inverness goes ahead.

Trudy Harrison:

Roads within Scotland are the responsibility of the Scottish Government. However, the Department is willing to collaborate, where appropriate, on matters benefitting people across the United Kingdom.

■ Bicycles: Parking**Catherine West:**[\[52567\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will commit to allocating more funding to local authorities to build secure (a) cycle hangars and (b) on-street cycle parking spaces.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

£239 million of capital funding is being made available to local authorities outside London this financial year for active travel measures, including cycle parking infrastructure. Local transport authorities have been invited to bid for this funding and allocations will be announced in the autumn.

In London, Transport for London (TfL) and the London Boroughs are responsible for the provision of public cycle parking. The Government announced a third funding and financing package for TfL in June this year, which includes £100 million to continue the delivery of healthy streets and active travel programmes.

■ Driving Instruction: Recruitment

Daisy Cooper:

[51863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress has been made on the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's plan to recruit 300 new driving examiners; and how many and what proportion of the examiners recruited as at July 2021 are actively conducting practical driving tests on a full-time basis as at 20 September 2021.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has an ongoing campaign to increase the number of examiners by recruiting around 300 driving examiners between 1 April 2021 and June 2022. As at 21 September 2021, 74 examiners have been recruited.

97% of examiners, that were recruited as at July 2021, were actively conducting practical driving tests on a full-time basis as at 20 September 2021.

As a result of the DVSA's first recruitment campaign, there are 107 people either attending, or booked to attend, their training between now and January 2022. As a result of the second recruitment campaign, there are 62 people who have passed the selection process; these candidates will be notified week commencing 27 September 2021.

To support the recruitment campaign, the agency is also exploring options to temporarily contract in experienced driving assessors from other road safety organisations to become driving examiners.

The DVSA has put a number of measures in place to increase practical driving tests and reduce waiting times. These include offering a national recovery allowance 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 and weekends).

■ Driving Licences: Italy

Christine Jardine:

[52586]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress he has made on reaching a reciprocal arrangement for the recognition of driving licences with Italy.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport has successfully agreed arrangements with Italy for the mutual recognition of photocard licences. As such, visitors with UK photocard licences will not need to carry an additional International Driving Permit when driving in Italy.

We have also secured interim arrangements with the Italian authorities which will allow UK licence holders resident in Italy to continue to use their valid UK licence until

the end of this year. We are working with the Italian Government to finalise a permanent licence exchange agreement as soon as possible.

■ **Heathrow Airport: Security**

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the efficiency is of the Smiths Detection security screening system at Heathrow Terminal 2; and what proportion of bags are rejected by that system.

Robert Courts:

For national and aviation security reasons we do not comment on the detail of specific security arrangements, or on the details of the equipment in use.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what training staff at Heathrow Terminal 2 have to work on the Smith detection security screening system.

Robert Courts:

The responsibility for ensuring that personnel are trained to operate any security equipment to a standard sufficient to ensure that no prohibited articles are taken beyond the search point falls to the airport.

Staff must have received appropriate training in the use of equipment before they can operate in a live environment. Staff will have to complete relevant training as outlined in the training syllabi that can be found on the CAA website at <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Security/Training/Syllabuses/>. We do not provide details of the specific training for security reasons.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51601]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the three-year project to incorporate the Smiths Detection system into the security screening process at Heathrow Terminal 2.

Robert Courts:

All security equipment and associated processes are required to meet security standards sufficient to ensure that prohibited articles are not taken beyond the airport search point. For security reasons we do not provide details of such arrangements.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51602]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the cost is of a Smiths Detection security screening system in Heathrow Terminal 2; and how many of those systems there are across all terminals at Heathrow.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Transport does not hold this information.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[51603]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the (a) projected and (b) actual efficiency is of the Smiths Detection security screening system in Heathrow Terminal 2.

Robert Courts:

Any equipment in use must meet the security standards set by the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and be approved for use by the Department for Transport. Approved equipment can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aviation-security-screening-approved-equipment-list>. We do not provide specific details of the security equipment in use for security reasons.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[51604]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the Government's expected go through time is for security at Heathrow Terminal 2.

Robert Courts:

To incentivise good service quality performance for consumers, the CAA sets the following security queue standards that it expects Heathrow airport to meet under its economic licence:

- Central search security queue standards
 - o 95% of queue times measured once every 15 minutes that are less than 5 minutes
 - o 99% of queue times measured once every 15 minutes that are less than 10 minutes
 - Transfer search security queue standard
 - o 95% of queue times measured once every 15 minutes that are less than 10 minutes
 - Staff search security queue standard
 - o 95% of queue times measured once every 15 minutes that are less than 10 minutes
- Queue times which do not meet these standards can trigger a rebate payable by Heathrow airport.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[51605]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many people are required to man the Smiths Detection security screening system in Heathrow Terminal 2; and how many were required to man the previous system.

Robert Courts:

This will be a matter for the airport depending on the configuration of the security checkpoint.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[51606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, who is responsible for decisions to incorporate a security screening machines in UK airports; and who is responsible for the effectiveness of those machines.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for setting the security measures that should be applied in the UK. The Department for Transport advises the industry on equipment that may be used for screening at an airport. This is set out in the DfT Approved Equipment List <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aviation-security-screening-approved-equipment-list> . All such equipment meets the standards set by the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) of which the UK is a member.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how long do passengers wait on average in security screening at Heathrow Airport; and what the average time is for a passenger to have a bag checked.

Robert Courts:

Heathrow airport has met the monthly security queue standards set under its economic licence between January – August 2021, as demonstrated in its [latest](#) performance reports except for one day in July at Terminal 5 central search.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51608]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how long the training is to work with the Smiths Detection security screening system at Heathrow Terminal 2.

Robert Courts:

Staff must have received appropriate training in the use of equipment before they can operate in a live environment. Staff will have to complete relevant training as outlined in the training syllabi that can be found on the CAA website at <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Security/Training/Syllabuses/>. We do not provide details of the specific training for security reasons.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51609]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if she make an assessment of the effectiveness of the Smiths Detection security screening system at Heathrow Airport.

Robert Courts:

The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for setting the security measures that should be applied in the UK. The Department for Transport advises the industry on equipment that may be used for screening at an airport. This is set out in the DfT Approved Equipment List <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aviation-security-screening-approved-equipment-list> . All such equipment meets the standards set by the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) of which the UK is a member.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger: [51610]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what training is given to supervisors at Heathrow Airport on using the Smiths Detection security screening system.

Robert Courts:

Supervisors must have received appropriate training in the use of security equipment. Supervisors have to complete relevant training as outlined in the training syllabi that

can be found on the CAA website at <https://www.caa.co.uk/Commercial-industry/Security/Training/Syllabuses/>. We do not provide details of the specific training for security reasons.

Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger:

[51611]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Government will review all new security systems at airports in response to the three year trial of the Smiths Detection system at Heathrow Airport.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Transport keeps security at airports under constant review and is in regular contact with airports and manufacturers. Purchasing equipment however remains the decision of airports.

Any equipment in use must meet the security standards set by the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) and be approved for use by the Department for Transport. Approved equipment can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/aviation-security-screening-approved-equipment-list>.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences

Caroline Lucas:

[52456]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how long the backlog is at the DVLA for HGV licence applications; how many staff currently process HGV licence applications; what assessment he has made of the adequacy of staff resources available to tackle application delays; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

On 22 September, there were 56,144 applications for vocational driving licences awaiting processing. These are a mix of first applications for a provisional vocational licence and renewals and include those applying for entitlement to drive both HGVs and buses. It is not possible to separate them out.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is prioritising applications for provisional vocational licences so these drivers can take their training quickly. Applications for provisional vocational licences are currently being processed within around 10 days of receipt.

It is important to note that the majority of those applying to renew their vocational licence will be able to continue to drive while their application is being processed.

It is not possible to specify how many staff are working on applications for HGV licences as most Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) operational roles require employees to carry out a range of tasks.

The DVLA continues to explore opportunities to reduce turnaround times for paper applications. Extra staff have been recruited and the DVLA is seeking extra office space to house more staff to help reduce backlogs and provide future resilience and business continuity.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Tests

Paul Howell:

[\[52623\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department have taken to help ensure a sufficient level of fully qualified HGV drivers to carry out the additional 50,000 HGV driving tests being made available each year.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has increased the number of vocational driving tests available per week to 3,000. This is a 50% increase from before the pandemic, achieved through the use of overtime and moving additional staff into testing.

DVSA has recruited 300 new car examiners to ease demand on vocational examiners, who conduct HGV driving tests, and is also recruiting 40 more vocational examiners. In addition, the delegation of the reversing manoeuvres in the HGV driving test to approved trainers, announced on 10 September 2021, will allow vocational examiners to complete more driving tests per day.

The forthcoming regulatory change to remove the requirement to take a test to tow a trailer with a car, also announced on 10 September, will result in around an additional 30,000 vocational tests a year being made available, as most of the examiners who conducted car and trailer tests are also qualified to conduct HGV and HGV and trailer tests. A further 20,000 vocational tests will be made available through removing the requirement to take a rigid lorry (Cat C) test before an articulated vehicle (Cat C+E) test.

■ Parking: Pedestrian Areas

Daisy Cooper:

[\[51857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 170743 on Parking: Pedestrian Areas, what recent progress he has made on plans to reform the management of pavement parking.

Trudy Harrison:

We are giving careful consideration to the large volume of responses to our consultation to help inform our policy decision and will publish the outcome as soon as possible.

■ St Pancras Station: Immigration Controls

Stephen Crabb:

[\[52441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the impact on operations at St Pancras Station of the introduction of the entry-exist system for the Schengen border in 2022.

Stephen Crabb:

[\[52442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that smooth flows of passengers are maintained at St Pancras after the introduction of the new entry-exist system for the Schengen border in 2022.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government is engaging closely with industry, including Eurostar, to consider the operational challenges and impacts as a result of border operations, including the introduction of the EU's 'Entry-Exit system'.

I recently met with Eurostar representatives at St Pancras to discuss this issue and understand the operational challenges. My officials have facilitated similar discussions on this issue with industry and other government departments. The Government expects to see workable, pragmatic solutions, which take account of the unique operational considerations of juxtaposed border controls and supports efficient passenger flows.

TREASURY

■ Beer: Excise Duties

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[50988\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of responses received to the technical consultation on Small Brewers Relief were from (a) breweries producing less than 5,000 hectolitres a year, (b) breweries producing more than 5,000 hectolitres a year and (c) breweries producing more than 60,000 hectolitres a year.

Helen Whately:

We will publish our response to the technical consultation in due course. This will contain information on those who responded to the consultation.

■ Consumers: Protection

Martyn Day:

[\[51780\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the description of the legal meaning of a duty of care set out in the FCA consultation proposing a new consumer duty, published on 14 May 2021.

Martyn Day:

[\[51781\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effectiveness of the consumer duty proposed by the Financial Conduct Authority in their 14 May 2021 consultation on meeting the objective of consumers being owed a duty of care by authorised persons as required by section 29 of the Financial Services Act 2021.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to ensuring financial services consumers are appropriately protected.

In accordance with the requirements set out in the Financial Services Act 2021, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published a consultation on 14 May 2021 proposing a new 'Consumer Duty'. The Consumer Duty seeks to clarify and raise expectations for the standard of care that should be provided by financial services firms to consumers. This aims to ensure consumers benefit from a higher level of care from financial services firms.

As set out in paragraph 2.31 of the FCA's consultation paper, the consultation's proposals have been specifically designed to meet the requirements of the Financial Services Act 2021. The FCA, as an operationally independent regulator, is responsible for carrying out the consultation and for making any new rules which it considers appropriate following the consultation. It would therefore be inappropriate for the Government to comment further on the specifics of the consultation's proposals.

■ Mortgages: Interest Rates

Emma Hardy:

[51819]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he plans to provide to people who are trapped on high standard variable rates.

John Glen:

Following the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) Mortgage Market Study, an industry voluntary agreement was enacted to help borrowers on reversion rates who are up to date with payments but don't meet the affordability criteria required to switch to a new deal. This means that participating lenders will offer eligible borrowers the ability to switch to an alternative product.

The Government has also undertaken significant work to understand the circumstances of borrowers whose mortgages are held by inactive firms (which are not able to offer alternative products) and don't meet the affordability requirements or risk appetite to switch to a new lender. The Government has worked with the FCA to create additional options for these borrowers, including through the introduction of a Modified Affordability Assessment which allows mortgage lenders to waive the normal affordability checks for borrowers with inactive firms who meet certain criteria, such as not wishing to borrow more.

The FCA is reviewing its data to provide further detail on the characteristics of borrowers who have mortgages with inactive firms and are unable to switch, despite being up to date with payments. The FCA is also reviewing the effect of its interventions to remove regulatory barriers to switching and will report on this by the end of November. The Treasury will use the results of this review to establish whether there are any further practical and proportionate solutions that can be found for affected borrowers.

■ Probate

Jane Hunt:

[52624]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of further increasing the probate limit.

John Glen:

The Government has made no recent assessment in relation to the effect of increasing the probate limit. In most circumstances the provision of a bank's services, including the administration around bereavement, are a commercial decision for the bank. The Government does not intervene in these decisions.

The treatment of customers by UK banks and building societies which are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is governed by its Principles of Business. This includes a general requirement for firms to provide a prompt, efficient and fair service to all their customers, including those who have recently suffered a bereavement. The FCA does not have specific rules or guidance regarding probate in its rules. However, all firms regulated by the FCA are bound by its Principles which apply to the way banks and building societies conduct themselves. This includes how they handle probate.

The main current account providers also publish information about the additional services they offer consumers, including information on the bereavement services they offer. More information can be found on the FCA website:

<https://www.fca.org.uk/data/mandated-voluntary-information-current-account-services/providers-links#voluntary>

The Government remains supportive of previous industry efforts to improve handling of these sensitive cases, including the implementation of the British Bankers' Association's (now known as UK Finance) Bereavement Principles. These Principles include a commitment from firms to provide support to meet individuals' needs throughout the bereavement process and to work to resolve everything as quickly and simply as possible.

■ Wholesale Trade: Alcoholic Drinks

Kirsten Oswald:

[50989]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many and what proportion of applications under the Alcohol Warehouse Registration Scheme since that scheme's introduction have been (a) approved and (b) revoked in (i) Scotland and (ii) the UK.

Helen Whately:

This information is not held in the form requested as HM Revenue and Customs does not record Alcohol Warehouse Registration Scheme (AWRS) data by 'nation'.

AWRS Data showing the number of applications received and numbers approved up to April 2019 was published on 10th June 2021 and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-alcohol-smuggling-outputs/tackling-alcohol-smuggling-outputs-april-2016-to-april-2019>.

Data up to April 2021 will be published in the normal way in October 2021.

Please note the numbers for approved and revoked applications do not total the number of applications received. The reason for this is because withdrawals, deregistrations and stock on hand have not been included.

For Scotland:

Applications received 1343

Applications approved 980 (73%)

Applications revoked 24 (2%)

For the UK:

Applications received 15410

Applications approved 10880 (71%)

Applications revoked 546 (4%)

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Government Equalities Office: Departmental Responsibilities

Kim Johnson:

[\[52618\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what assessment she has made of the impact of her role as Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on her ability to deliver her Department's Equalities agenda.

Elizabeth Truss:

The priorities of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Equality Hub are closely aligned: both are working to promote the safety and empowerment of women and girls; share a commitment to advance LGBT equality through the Global LGBT Conference; are supporting our global leadership on disability rights; and collaborate across many other areas of work as we advance core freedoms and liberties across the world.

Whether it be banning the abhorrent practice of conversion therapy, ending violence against women and girls, or improving equality of opportunity in education here in the UK and internationally, joint working towards common goals strengthens our ability to deliver equality for all.

More broadly, having Ministers based across Government in the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for International Trade, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will support our ambitions to build back fairer from COVID-19 and level up across the country.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Asylum: Afghanistan

Afzal Khan:

[51840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that people who arrived in the UK under the Afghan (a) Relocation and Assistance Policy and (b) Citizens Resettlement Scheme are not required to meet the habitual residence test.

David Rutley:

All those brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and recourse to public funds including benefit support.

The Department for Work and Pensions has legislated to exempt those arriving in the UK under the ARAP and ACRS from the habitual residence test for income-related benefits, and the past presence test and the habitual residence test for disability and carer benefits.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2021/1034/made>

Further information can be viewed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-those-arriving-from-afghanistan>

■ Carer's Allowance

Ben Lake:

[50750]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a phased approach for the reduction of carers allowance payments to claimants who permanently stop their caring duties, as a means of reducing the potential for financial hardship.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: Entitlement to Carer's Allowance can continue for up to eight weeks following the death of the disabled person who was being cared for. This eight-week run-on helps carers who have recently been bereaved by giving them some time to adapt to their new circumstances.

When caring ceases for any reason, carers may have access to means-tested and other benefits depending upon their circumstances.

■ Disability: Finance

David Linden:

[51815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department has made on its plans to set up an Extra Costs Taskforce.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the honourable member to the response to PQ UIN 42013 [<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-03/42013>].

■ **Employment: Disability**

David Linden:

[51812]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the National Disability Strategy published in July 2021, what recent assessment she has made of the progress of the pilots for the Access to Work Adjustments Passport.

Chloe Smith:

The Adjustment Passport pilots have recently commenced with Contractors and Freelancers and are due to go live with young disabled people leaving University and Veterans leaving the Armed Forces at the end of October 2021. The pilots will enable us to gain an understanding of whether the passport reduces the need for assessments where the customer's needs remain the same, and if it empowers the passport holder to have conversations with future employers about adjustments. Following an evaluation, if the pilots prove successful, the passport will be made available to support all people with disabilities and health conditions providing a transferable record of adjustments and reduce the need for unnecessary assessments.

David Linden:

[51813]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the National Disability Strategy published in July 2021, what steps she is taking to increase the awareness of Access to Work among disabled employees.

Chloe Smith:

We are taking a range of steps to continue to raise awareness of Access to Work among people with a disability or long-term health condition.

We regularly promote the scheme through the Department's social media channels, signposting people to the Access to Work pages on the JobHelp website and on gov.uk.

We are also ensuring advisers who work with potential customers, including Jobcentre Plus, health professionals and advisory groups, have the information and tools to act as advocates for the scheme.

In addition, we are continuing to work with stakeholders, partners and employer associations to raise awareness of Access to Work through communications to their customers, and we have produced a communications toolkit to help them raise awareness.

We are continuing to promote Access to Work to employers as part of the Disability Confident scheme.

David Linden:

[51814]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to launch a consultation on workforce reporting on disability for large employers.

Chloe Smith:

I refer the honourable member to the response to PQ UIN 43124 [<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-09-06/43124>].

■ **Energy: Prices**

Helen Hayes:

[51788]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in the context of the potential increase in energy bills in the coming months, what assessment she has made of the planned end of the £20 uplift in universal credit on claimants' ability to heat their homes.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: No assessment has been made. The Cold Weather Payment (CWP) scheme helps vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet the additional costs of heating during periods of severe cold weather. Cold Weather Payments are targeted at those in receipt of eligible benefits with a pension element or disability component or where there is a child under five in the household.

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.

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; we have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job; and introduced Restart which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year. Our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

■ **Food Poverty: Pupils**

Stephen Timms:

[51579]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of trends in the level of food insecurity amongst school children since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: We have not made an assessment of this kind. Issues of food insecurity amongst school children fall within the remit of the Department for Education so assessments such as this would be their responsibility.

■ Government Departments: Disability**Jonathan Reynolds:**[\[50979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to update the list of Departmental Ministerial Disability Champions as announced in the National Disability Strategy after the Government reshuffle on 15 September 2021.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 22 September 2021]: The updated list of Departmental Ministerial Disability Champions will be announced shortly, and published on GOV.UK.

Ministerial Disability Champions drive the delivery of the National Disability Strategy in their respective departments.

Jonathan Reynolds:[\[51687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will outline the responsibilities of Disability Ministerial Champions set out in the National Disability Strategy.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The first Ministerial Disability Champions were appointed in summer 2020, at the request of the Prime Minister, to drive the development and delivery of the National Disability Strategy.

Their role includes championing disabled people and driving the delivery of the National Disability Strategy in their respective departments.

An updated list of Departmental Ministerial Disability Champions will be announced shortly, and published on GOV.UK.

■ Health and Social Care Levy**Rachael Maskell:**[\[50088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the Health and Social Care Levy on working people claiming (a) universal credit, (b) working tax credit or (c) other benefits.

David Rutley:

From April 2022 a National Insurance increase of 1.25 percentage points would only impact on earnings above around £800 a month. The lowest earners would not be affected.

Universal Credit and, where appropriate other benefits, normally take account of net earnings in determining the amount of benefit. A change in National Insurance contributions paid will impact net earnings and therefore the calculation of benefit

entitlement. Tax Credits entitlement is calculated using gross earnings, the Health and Social Care Levy will not therefore affect the level of support paid to Working Tax Credit customers.

■ Job Centres: Hearing Impairment

Damien Moore:

[\[49265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department plans to take to help ensure that all Job Centre Plus sites are accessible to people with hearing loss.

Chloe Smith:

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to making its services accessible for all its customers together with those who may have additional communication needs including hearing loss.

Deaf and hard of hearing customers visiting Jobcentres are able to access different support based on how hearing loss affects their communication needs. Job Centres are equipped and currently provide mainly portable, but also some fixed hearing loops across the network, for those customers with hearing loss. There is a new initiative to improve our environments for disabled customers and those with health conditions which will include people with hearing loss. This work is due to start in October.

For those customers who are deaf or hard of hearing and attending a prearranged appointment with DWP, staff will already be aware of the customer's communication needs from DWP's computer systems and have access to a language services contract to pre-book an interpreter to support face to face contact. The interpreter will be skilled in providing non-spoken language support including British Sign Language (BSL).

Furthermore, a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) is assigned to each Jobcentre site. The DEA is skilled in understanding the needs of disabled customers, including those who with hearing loss. The DEA provides support to Work Coaches to ensure that Work Coaches are able to increase their awareness and empathy when dealing with customers who have hearing loss.

The Employer and Partnerships role within DWP forms effective networks with a variety of local stakeholders, including organisations and charities that support customers with hearing loss. These relationships are vital to ensure that DWP is able to provide consistent and effective support to its customers.

On a national level, DWP has established a range of networks with its stakeholders to provide a voice for the customer. The Taskforce for Accessible Information, the Reasonable Adjustments Forum and the Operational Stakeholder Engagement Forum all regularly meet with a cross section of groups representing disabilities including those with hearing loss. The purpose of these forums are to ensure that DWP elicits feedback and insight into how its services are being used by those with additional communication needs and to seek continuous improvement.

Following the expansion of Video Relay Service last year, whereby deaf customers are now able to make an inbound telephone call to DWP via a British Sign Language interpreter using a video connection, DWP is currently exploring how this technology can be adapted to support video remote interpreting. This will increase the flexibility for DWP to conduct face to face and telephony based contact with deaf and hard of hearing customers.

■ Long Covid: Government Assistance

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[51732\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of financial support requirements of people with long covid.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: This government has a strong safety net that helps people who are facing hardship and are unable to support themselves financially, and we have taken steps to strengthen that safety net as part of the government's response to the pandemic.

Disability benefits do not include or exclude by condition, instead they look at the needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability. People living with a condition arising from exposure to the Covid-19 virus can access the financial support that is available through Statutory Sick Pay, Universal Credit, New Style ESA or Pension Credit depending on individual circumstances. They are also able to access Personal Independence Payment in the same way as other people with long-term conditions or disabilities.

As research into the long-term health symptoms and impacts of Covid-19 is ongoing, we are collaborating across Government to monitor emerging evidence and consider our response.

■ Personal Care Services: Industrial Diseases

Paul Maynard:

[\[49983\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council has made on its review of lung cancer and COPD in former employees of the health and beauty industry.

Chloe Smith:

The Industrial Injuries Advisory Council have recently commissioned a comprehensive review and evaluation of the literature, including epidemiology, on work-related malignant and non-malignant respiratory diseases, primarily focussing on lung cancer and COPD. The broad remit of the review will cover former employees of the health and beauty industry and associated exposures. The review, which is about to commence, will inform the prescriptions for the purposes of Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefits. The review is expected to take up to two years to complete, after which time the Council will report on its findings.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Ian Lavery:

[50029]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to reduce the backlog of people waiting for personal independence payment claims to be processed.

Chloe Smith:

We are committed to ensuring that people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in a timely manner and reducing customer journey times for PIP claimants is a priority for the Department. We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to review all available evidence.

The time it takes to clear a claim and the number of people awaiting a decision can vary reflecting factors including customer demand, operational resource and timescales for different parts of the process. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused distortion and work is ongoing to manage the recovery.

The time it takes clear new PIP claims in July 2021 (most recent data available) are similar to levels a year ago.

We are always looking at ways to improve the assessment process. In addition to face-to-face, we will continue to conduct paper-based, telephone and video assessments where appropriate.

David Linden:

[51809]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Written Statement of 20 September 2021, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update, HCWS294, what additional support her Department plans to provide to those who request it and whose PIP claim is awaiting review as part of the Administrative Exercise.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: We are committed to ensuring that claimants receive the PIP support they are entitled to. The Department is contacting claimants who may be affected and we may ask for further information about the help they needed. We want to ensure we have all the relevant evidence when making a decision and get the right outcome for claimants when reviewing their claim, as part of the administrative exercise.

We recognise that the Department comes into contact with some claimants who are potentially very vulnerable. That is why claimants with a severe mental health or behavioural condition, learning disability, developmental disorder or cognitive problems, who may have difficulty engaging with the process, and with no support network in place, can be provided with additional support during the process if they need it.

This support can include arranging to speak to a representative, carer or other support worker at a convenient time and allowing additional time to provide further

information. Where we identify there may be an impact on health, safety and wellbeing of an individual when they receive an arrears payment as part of the exercise, we will work with claimants to understand their needs and seek to help them in identifying and accessing the help that they require.

David Linden:

[\[51810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Written Statement of 20 September 2021, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update, HCWS294, how her Department plans to prioritise PIP claims for review as part of the Administrative Exercise.

David Linden:

[\[51811\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Written Statement of 20 September 2021, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Update, HCWS294, whether her Department plans to review the PIP claims of deceased claimants as part of the Administrative Exercise; and whether posthumous backdated payments will be made to the family of claimants where it has been found that more support should have been given.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: As part of this exercise we are prioritising cases of terminally ill claimants. The remainder of cases will be reviewed in chronological order, starting with the earliest cases first. I can also confirm it is the Department's policy to review cases where the claimant is now deceased to ensure that their next of kin receive payments.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations

Sam Tarry:

[\[50782\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, by which date recording equipment will be in place at all personal independent payment assessment centres to support disabled claimants.

Sam Tarry:

[\[50783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of (a) suspending personal independent payment assessments (PIP) until recording equipment is provided and (b) allowing disabled claimants to be granted the right to refuse a PIP assessment without punitive action until a recording provision is in place.

Chloe Smith:

The department continues to work closely with both Independent Assessment Services (IAS) and Capita to deliver an audio recording service for Personal Independent Payment (PIP) face to face assessments that removes the requirement for the claimant to provide the equipment. Arrangements are being finalised and we hope to have this in place as soon as practicably possible.

At present, claimants may use their own equipment to record their face to face assessment, should they wish to, as stated in the PIP Assessment Guide (PIPAG).

The option for a claimant to request an audio recording of their Personal Independent Payment (PIP) telephone assessment is available with both assessment providers.

PIP assessments will not be suspended whilst we are working to deliver an audio recording service for face to face assessments that removes the requirement for the claimant to provide the equipment.

Claimants are not penalised if they are unwilling to attend an assessment until their request for audio recording can be fulfilled. Any claimants who request an audio recording of their face to face assessment will be given the option of waiting for this to be implemented before their assessment takes place. In the meantime, claimants may use their own equipment to record their face to face assessment, should they wish to, as stated in the PIP Assessment Guide (PIPAG).

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Multiple Sclerosis**

Marion Fellows:

[\[50700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with multiple sclerosis applying for benefits have been unable to have a phone assessment and have had to wait for a face-to-face assessment since March 2020.

Marion Fellows:

[\[50701\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with multiple sclerosis have had their award changed at the mandatory reconsideration stage after being assessed by phone for personal independence payment since March 2020.

Marion Fellows:

[\[50702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with multiple sclerosis have submitted a mandatory reconsideration after being assessed by phone for personal independence payment since March 2020.

Marion Fellows:

[\[50703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people with multiple sclerosis have been assessed by phone for personal independence payment since March 2020.

Chloe Smith:

The specific information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost. Telephone assessments only commenced for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in late March 2020 and were then used as one of the alternatives to face to face assessments. For the two providers of medical assessments this was on 23rd March 2020 (Capita) and 6th April 2020 (IAS) respectively.

Therefore, the majority of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessments after March 2020 would have been by telephone, with some paper-based and video call

assessments. Where it was not possible to carry out a PIP telephone assessment decisions were made on paper using all the available evidence to ensure any payment was not delayed. We do not readily hold the information on how assessments were carried out for specific conditions.

Face to face assessments for Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit (UC) were re-introduced in May. They have initially focused on claimants who we have been unable to assess fully by other means. Paper-based assessments, as before the COVID-19 pandemic, are considered in the first instance, and telephone assessments and video assessments introduced in response to the pandemic continue to take place where appropriate.

■ Poverty

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[51688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to develop a new measure of poverty in line with the recommendations of the Social Metrics Commission.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: Our current priority is to improve the quality of our statutory measures before considering any further work on the Social Metric Commission's measure specifically.

However, we are making changes to the Family Resource Survey which will benefit the Social Metrics Commission, including improved measurement of assets, adding in new questions on debt, doubling the sample size and further linking with administrative data.

■ Poverty: Children

Rachael Maskell:

[\[50085\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish a strategy on lifting children out of all forms of poverty.

David Rutley:

This Government is wholly committed to supporting low-income families through range of measures including by increasing the national living wage and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22. With record numbers of vacancies, our focus is on helping people back into work as quickly as possible. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of parental employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of child poverty.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes at 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; we have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job; and

introduced Restart which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year. Our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

To provide additional support for children in low income households, we have increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25, helping eligible households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins. And we are investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children are benefitting from a range of support, including healthy and nutritious meals as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

■ **Poverty: Education**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[50086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on the impact of poverty on educational outcomes; and what fiscal steps the Government is taking to tackle that matter.

David Rutley:

Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions engage regularly with their counterparts in other Departments, taking a collective approach to the policies and interventions that can make a difference to children's outcomes.

■ **Refugees: Afghanistan**

Andrew Bowie:

[\[52570\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assistance the Government is providing to newly arrived Afghan nationals seeking to enter employment.

David Rutley:

Those coming from Afghanistan to the UK on the resettlement programmes will have the right to work here from day one, as well as immediate access to the benefit system and our existing employment offer, including our £30 billion Plan for Jobs.

Direct, personalised support is available from experienced work coaches in the temporary hotel accommodation where Afghans are staying across the country. Work coaches are there to help with any claims or queries and to provide tailored employment support. Resettling Afghans will also have access to our Refugee Leads Network, which links Jobcentres and organisations working with refugees and those on resettlement programmes, to help them integrate and find employment in local areas. We will also work to ensure that English as a Second or Other Language provision, and other support, is available to those that need it.

■ Rented Housing: York**Rachael Maskell:** [\[50097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the Broad Market Rental Area for York for people renting in areas (a) inside and (b) outside the city centre.

Rachael Maskell: [\[50098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the Broad Rental Market Area for York.

Rachael Maskell: [\[50099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of the increase in the rental cost of the private rented sector on people in receipt of Local Housing Allowance.

David Rutley:

Broad Rental Market Areas, of which there are 192 in Great Britain, are determined in accordance with requirements laid down in legislation. Each Broad Market Rental Area must contain a variety of property types and tenures, sufficient privately rented accommodation and access to facilities for health, education, recreation, banking and shopping. The boundaries of Broad Rental Market Areas are set by rent officers based on these factors. If at any time, rent officers decide that a boundary should be moved they must carry out a review, consulting with affected local authorities among others, and then submit a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions to decide.

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance rates were increased to the 30th percentile of local rents. This investment of nearly £1 billion provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received.

We have maintained Local Housing Allowance rates at the same cash level for 2021/22, rather than reverting back to previous rates.

Local Housing Allowance rates are reviewed each year, taking account of local rental data collected by rent officers.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability**Navendu Mishra:** [\[52613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the impact on disabled people of (a) income-related employment support allowance, (b) universal credit and (c) other means-tested benefits, which are based on joint-income.

Chloe Smith:

No assessment has been made.

Income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit are means-tested welfare support. It is longstanding policy that income-related benefits treat all couples as a single household unit when assessing benefit entitlement. Where claimants have income available to meet their household's everyday living costs, such as through a partner's earnings or savings, their entitlement to benefit is adjusted accordingly.

These benefits are not paid to claimants who have sufficient income available from other sources to support themselves. The general principle is that income, other than earnings, which is provided to meet everyday living costs, is fully taken into account in the calculation. The Government understands disabled people may face additional cost, which is why income provided to meet additional costs through benefits such as Personal Independence Payments and Disability Living Allowance are not taken into account when determining entitlement to benefits.

The Department has brought forward a Green Paper on health and disability support, focusing on the welfare system. The Green Paper will explore how the welfare system can better meet the needs of disabled people and people with health conditions now and in the future, to build a system that enables people to live independently and move into work where possible.

■ Social Security Benefits: EU Nationals

Kate Osamor:

[\[47029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to stop the universal credit and legacy benefit claims of individuals who qualify for EU Settled Status but have not yet applied for that scheme.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has made clear its commitment to safeguard the rights of EEA nationals, and their family members, living in the UK prior to the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. They have done this through the introduction of the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS).

The scheme opened to the public on 30 March 2019 and the deadline for the scheme for those resident in the UK by the end of the transition period was 30 June 2021. Every day thousands of people are being given status through the EUSS and to date the Home Office have received more than 6 million applications.

There is scope to make a late application based on reasonable grounds for missing the deadline. The Home Office have also released guidance for late applications and reiterated their general approach under the EUSS which is to look to grant status, rather than looking for reasons to refuse. Those covered by the Withdrawal Agreement who submit a late application to the EUSS will also be able to access benefits and services, if they are eligible, from the point their application is validated, and identity has been verified.

From 1 July 2021, the Department has continued to work in collaboration with the HO and HMRC to undertake further engagement activities and give those without status

further opportunity to apply to the EUSS. Claimants that fail to make a late application will not have entitlement to benefits unless, and until, they apply. The Department is however taking all reasonable steps to engage claimants and provide them with multiple opportunities to apply before taking compliance action. This includes engaging with relevant customers through scheduled face to face and telephony contact, and Universal Credit (UC) journal prompts. The Department's visiting service is also available for those customers who are identified as the most vulnerable.

■ Social Security Benefits: Standard of Living

Rachael Maskell:

[50087]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of (a) trends in the cost of living and (b) the impact that those trends are having on standards of living of people claiming social security support.

David Rutley:

No assessment has been made.

The Secretary of State completes an annual review of most benefit rates for people below State Pension age to determine whether they have retained their value in relation to the general level of prices. Where prices have increased relative to the value of those benefits, the Secretary of State will increase certain disability and carers' benefits – such as Personal Independence Payments and Carer's Allowance – at least in line with that increase. She may also decide to increase other benefits, such as Universal Credit. That decision is discretionary, but it is conventional that these rates are also increased in line with the increase in prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The up-rating review is conducted in the Autumn of each year, with the outcome announced in November and the new rates implemented the following April.

The Universal Credit £20 uplift was a temporary measure set out in legislation separate to up-rating. The temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

■ Universal Credit

Jonathan Reynolds:

[49119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what forecasts her Department has made on the potential impact of the end of support under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on claimant rates for universal credit.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Department works with the Office for Budget Responsibility to produce Universal Credit forecasts, including ahead of the Autumn Budget. The next forecast is due to be published on 27th October.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[49959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total amount of money being recovered by her Department through universal credit claims is as at 15 September 2021; and what the comparable figures are for the last three years.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[49960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average amount being recovered in a monthly repayment through universal credit is; and what proportion of those monies are owed as a result of (a) universal credit debts and (b) universal credit advance loans.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: Deductions from Universal Credit awards are requested by creditors who ensure they have followed regulations. Universal Credit informs the claimant of all deduction requests.

Universal Credit deduction regulations protect claimants from excessive deductions, which could lead to financial difficulty. There is a 25% cap on deductions to ensure that priority debts and other debts are repaid, whilst supporting claimants with significant debts to retain more of their monthly award for their day-to-day needs. The cap was reduced in April 2021 from 30% to 25% to help support claimants to manage financial difficulties.

Advances are designed to ensure that the most vulnerable claimants receive the money they need to live on during their transition to Universal Credit. Claimants now have the option to spread twenty-five Universal Credit payments over twenty-four months, giving them more flexibility over the payments of their Universal Credit award. This will also allow claimants to retain more of their award, giving additional financial security

Customers can contact the Department if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, depending on their financial circumstances, whilst work coaches can also signpost claimants to other financial support.

The information requested is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. Spreadsheet 1 [Spreadsheet 1.xlsx]

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[51630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2021 to Question 48169, what percentage of universal credit claimants who are in work make the National Living Wage.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The requested information is not held as the level of detail to determine the percentage of Universal Credit claimants in work and on the National Living Wage is not available.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[51631\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2021 to Question 48169 on universal credit, if she will revise the calculations for the National Living Wage to include the taper rate.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage are set annually on the basis of recommendations from the independent Low Pay Commission, an independent body of employers, unions and experts.

On 1 April 2021, following the recommendations of the Low Pay Commission, workers on the National Living Wage saw a 2.2% pay increase to £8.91 an hour. The April 2021 increase in the National Living Wage represents an increase of over £345 to the annual gross earnings of a full-time worker on the National Living Wage, equivalent to a total increase in annual gross earnings of around £4,030 since the introduction of the National Living Wage in April 2016.

The Government is committed to raising the National Living Wage through its long term target to reach two-thirds of median earnings, and extending to those aged 21 and over by 2024.

Universal Credit promotes work as an effective route out of poverty. The single universal credit taper means that as earnings increase, above any applicable work allowance, Universal Credit payments reduce by less than the earnings, meaning claimants can clearly understand the advantages of work.

Owen Thompson:

[\[51772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the impact of the 3.2 per cent rise in inflation on the financial wellbeing of recipients of universal credit.

Owen Thompson:

[\[51775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to review the planned removal of the uplift to universal credit in response to the increase in inflation to 3.2 per cent.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to Universal Credit 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.

Separately to the Universal Credit Uplift, the Secretary of State completes an annual review of most benefit rates for people below State Pension age to determine whether they have retained their value in relation to the general level of prices. Where

prices have increased relative to the value of those benefits, the Secretary of State will increase certain disability and carers' benefits – such as Personal Independence Payments and Carer's Allowance – at least in line with that increase. She may also decide to increase other benefits, such as the Universal Credit Standard Allowance. That decision is discretionary, but it is conventional that these rates are also increased in line with the increase in prices as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The up-rating review is conducted in the Autumn of each year, with the outcome announced in November and the new rates implemented the following April.

Stephen Crabb:

[52440]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average universal credit award is in (a) Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency and (b) the UK.

David Rutley:

The mean amount of Universal Credit awarded for households in Great Britain is published and can be found in Table 2 of the Households on Universal Credit dataset at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

This table can be filtered by Westminster Parliamentary Constituency.

Guidance on how to extract information from Stat-Xplore can be found at:

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

The statistics for Northern Ireland are published by the Department for Communities and can be found at:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/universal-credit-statistics>

Rachael Maskell:

[52544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what representations she has made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing the amount of money local authorities pay out in financial assistance schemes to people who will stop receiving the £20 a week uplift to universal credit.

David Rutley:

Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions engage regularly with their Ministerial counterparts in other Departments, taking a collective approach to the policies and interventions that can make a difference.

Responsibility for Local Welfare Assistance was delegated to Local Authorities in England in 2013/2014 and councils have powers to determine the right Local Welfare Assistance schemes for their area. The funding councils receive from Government recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures.

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.

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; we have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job; and introduced Restart which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year. Our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

■ Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit

Rachael Maskell:

[\[52545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she plans to take to help ensure that people who will stop receiving the £20 uplift to universal credit and working tax credits are able to access sufficient food sources.

David Rutley:

We take the issue of food insecurity seriously, which is why we added internationally used food security questions to the Family Resources Survey in 2019/20 and published the data in March this year. These questions remain in the survey and will allow us to track food security over time.

In April this year we increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25, helping eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins. We are investing up to £220m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children are benefitting from a range of support, including healthy and nutritious meals as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced, including the success of the vaccine rollout. With record vacancies, our focus is on helping people back into work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

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.

■ Universal Credit: Digital Technology

Hywel Williams:

[\[51613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of levels compliance of digital universal credit systems with operation requirements set out in social security regulations.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The Department, like other government departments, is obliged to comply with legal, security and regulatory requirements, including published minimum government security standards. This is regularly reviewed for Universal Credit, and the system complies with all relevant standards.

■ Universal Credit: Learning Disability

Helen Hayes:

[\[50107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that people with a learning disability moving from legacy benefits to universal credit do not receive a reduction in their benefits.

David Rutley:

Many individuals moving to Universal Credit will find themselves better off. Universal Credit will provide an extra £2.1bn a year once fully rolled out, compared to the system it replaces. Universal Credit is fundamentally different to existing benefits and tax credits and claims cannot be compared like for like.

For claimants previously entitled to Severe Disability Premium, we have introduced the Universal Credit Transitional Provisions Amendment Regulations 2021 and these came into force on 27 January 2021. The Regulations ensure that a transitional Severe Disability Element remains available for new claims to Universal Credit following a change of circumstances made on or after 27 January 2021.

In addition, all eligible legacy claimants who will be required to claim Universal Credit as part of the managed migration process will be awarded, where necessary, Transitional Protection to ensure that their initial entitlement to Universal Credit is not less than their final entitlement to legacy benefits. The Government encourages anybody to go on GOV.UK and use one of the independent benefit calculators to check carefully their eligibility, because on applying for UC their entitlement to legacy benefits will cease and they will not be able to return to them in the future. Neither DWP nor HMRC can advise individual claimants whether they would be better off moving to UC or remaining on legacy benefits. They can get help through the government funded Help to Claim scheme as well as the Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland

■ Universal Credit: Leeds Central

Hilary Benn:

[51596]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people in Leeds Central who will be affected by the proposed cut of the universal credit uplift.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of exactly how many people will be affected by the removal of the £20 uplift during October due to uncertainty around the speed of the economic recovery and the resulting effect on the caseload.

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. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

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.

■ Universal Credit: Lone Parents

Peter Gibson:

[49281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support single parents in receipt of universal credit with young children to find work that fits around their childcare needs.

David Rutley:

Under Universal Credit, working families can claim back up to 85% of their registered childcare costs each month

The UC childcare aligns with the wider government childcare offer. This includes the free childcare offer which provides 15 hours a week of free childcare in England for all 3 and 4 year olds and disadvantaged 2 year olds, doubling for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds to 30 hours a week. The UC childcare cost element can be used to top up a claimant's eligible free childcare hours if more hours are worked and childcare is required. This means that reasonable childcare costs should not form a barrier to work.

Additional safeguards apply during this period and any work-related expectations will be limited to a maximum of 16 hours per week whilst they are caring for a pre-school age child.

To assist single parents with making necessary childcare arrangements, work coaches can reduce the maximum time the claimant is expected to spend travelling to and from work. All Work-related requirements will be tailored according to the claimant's capability and personal circumstances, to ensure they are realistic and achievable.

■ Work Capability Assessments

Ian Lavery:

[50028]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to address the backlog of people waiting for work capability assessments.

Chloe Smith:

We are currently delivering health assessments through a variety of channels. We have reintroduced face-to-face assessments, alongside the telephone and video assessments introduced in response to the pandemic. Whenever possible we will conduct a paper based assessment.

We are always looking at ways to improve the assessment process and continue to work with the assessment provider to maximise the number of WCAs completed.

■ Workplace Pensions

Owen Thompson:

[52550]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of people who are automatically enrolled that are likely to reach a moderate lifestyle in retirement as defined by the PLSA's Retirement Living Standards.

Guy Opperman:

This Government is focussed on its goal of expanding the benefits of automatic enrolment in the mid-2020s, increasing the overall amounts being saved by working people, and extending the benefits of workplace pensions to younger workers. I welcome the PLSA standards as a contribution to the debate.

■ Workplace Pensions: Young People**Owen Thompson:****[52549]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress his Department has made on (a) extending Automatic Enrolment to workers under 22 and (b) removing the automatic enrolment lower earnings threshold by the mid-2020s.

Guy Opperman:

We are committed to implementing the 2017 Automatic Enrolment Review ambitions in the mid-2020s, lowering the age for being automatically enrolled from 22 to 18 and abolishing the automatic enrolment lower earnings limit, so that contributions are payable from the first pound of earnings.

In this way we will expand coverage of the successful workplace pension reforms and increase the amounts being put into retirement savings by millions of workers, particularly younger people and lower earners.

The 2017 Review report was clear that implementation will be subject to learning from previous workplace pension contribution increases, discussions with employers and others on the right approach, and finding ways to make these changes affordable. We will do this in light of the impact of the pandemic and our overall support for economic recovery, while continuing to support long-term saving, balancing the needs of savers, employers and tax-payers.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Channel Four: Privatisation

John Nicolson:

[\[45155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the effect of privatising Channel 4 on (a) businesses and jobs in the UK production sector; (b) the balance in the creative economy between London and the rest of the UK and (c) UK viewers' access to original and distinctive UK content.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 16 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Nigel Huddleston:

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. Linear TV viewing is down almost 60% amongst 16-25 year olds since 2010, whilst 16-34 year olds now spend almost twice as much time on YouTube and subscription VoD services than they do with broadcast content. There are now 315 channels, compared to 5 in 1982 when Channel 4 was established. Linear TV advertising revenues - which constituted ~~over 90~~ **74** % of Channel 4's revenue in 2020 - have declined across the sector at a compound annual rate of 2.5% since 2015.

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 is therefore 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 channel's wider economic and social contributions, its role in the creative economies of the nations and regions, and its remit are among the issues we have consulted on.

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.

Dawn Butler:

[48162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will publish an impact assessment ahead of the consultation on the privatisation of Channel 4; and what the evidential basis is that the privatisation will lead to more content investment and more jobs.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

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 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. Linear TV viewing is down almost 60% amongst 16-25 year olds since 2010, whilst 16-34 year olds now spend almost twice as much time on YouTube and subscription VoD services than they do with broadcast content. There are now 315 channels, compared to 5 in 1982 when Channel 4 was established. Linear TV advertising revenues - which constituted over 90 74 % of Channel 4's revenue in 2020 - have declined across the sector at a compound annual rate of 2.5% since 2015.

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. A thriving, sustainable Channel 4 could offer the best prospects for long-term job creation and support to the wider creative economy.

Consulting on the broadcaster's future is therefore 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.

■ Television: Standards

Mrs Helen Grant:

[\[41839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the Department's news story, It's time to level up Britain's screens, published on 23 June 2021, what evidence his Department used to inform the assessment that choice is no longer an issue for UK viewers.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Mr John Whittingdale

Julia Lopez:

There is a wealth of evidence set out in our consultation document that supports the case we have made about the evolving media landscape and the challenges this presents for linear TV broadcasters. Linear TV viewing is down almost 60% amongst 16-25 year olds since 2010, whilst 16-34 year olds now spend almost twice as much time on YouTube and subscription VoD services than they do with broadcast content. There are now 315 channels, compared to 5 in 1982 when Channel 4 was established. Linear TV advertising revenues - which constituted ~~over 90%~~ **74%** of Channel 4's revenue in 2020 - have declined across the sector at a compound annual rate of 2.5% since 2015.

Moreover, Ofcom, in their latest recommendations to Government on the future of public service media, outlined what it called the 'rapid change in the industry – driven by global commercial trends and a transformation in viewing habits - [which] is making it harder for public service broadcasters to compete for audiences and maintain their current offer'.

It is against this backdrop that the Government is taking action through a strategic review of the UK's public service broadcasting system, with plans to bring forward a White Paper in the Autumn, to ensure that our traditional public service broadcasters are equipped to retain their place at the centre of the UK's media ecosystem.

EDUCATION

■ Children's Centres: Closures

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[45140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of Sure Start centres that have (a) closed and (b) reduced the services they provide in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England since 2010.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 13 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Vicky Ford **Will Quince:**

Based on the information supplied by local authorities as of 31 August 2021, the ~~attached table~~^{linked database} sets out the number of Sure Start children's centres sites that have closed in Coventry North East constituency, Coventry, the West Midlands and England since 2010: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/> [1]. The Department does not routinely collect data on the services provided by children's centres. This data is held at a local level.

[1] Source: This is based on information supplied by local authorities on the number of children's centres in their area to Get Information about Schools (GIAS) database about the location of <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/> and internal management information held by the department as of 31 August 2021. These figures may be different to previous answers and could change again in future since local authorities may update their data at any time. The GIAS collects data on children's centres that local authorities have closed on a permanent basis. It does not collect data on children's centres that local authorities may have closed temporarily in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Attachments:

1. **PQ 45140 table.xlsx**

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Western Sahara: Armed Forces

Alex Sobel: **[50133]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the Answer of 21 January 2021 to Question 142052; Western Sahara: armed forces how many Moroccan soldiers are based (a) along the berm and (b) elsewhere in Western Sahara.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Amanda Milling **James Cleverly:**

~~Since 15 August, the UK has evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan including 30 charter flights. 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, academics, researchers, journalists, human rights defenders, campaigners for women's rights, judges and many others.~~

~~Rapid Deployment Teams have been sent to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to reinforce our Embassy staff to process arrivals from Afghanistan. Teams have also deployed to Qatar and UAE to assist our operations there and we are providing consular support to British nationals who were evacuated by other allies, including via US airbases in Europe.~~

According to the UN, Morocco maintains a significant security presence in Western Sahara, primarily in fortified positions along a berm running the entire length of the territory.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Ceramics: Exports

Jonathan Gullis:

[51038]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to help increase global export opportunities for British ceramics.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 27 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Mike Freer:

The British ceramics industry is world-renowned and can access new markets more easily through our future Free Trade Agreements. For example, in June, we reached Agreement in Principle with Australia. This fundamentally liberalising agreement removes tariffs on all UK exports, including ceramics.

Alongside our trade deals, we provide a range of exporting support to help businesses grow internationally, including trade advisers locally and overseas; financial exporting support from UK Export Finance's specialists; access to the UK Export Academy and the Digital Exporting Programme. This includes access to one-to-one guidance on digital sales and marketing.

Businesses interested in more information on export opportunities for British ceramics can visit <https://www.great.gov.uk/> <https://www.gov.uk/ask-export-support-team>.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Universal Credit: Deductions

Peter Aldous:

[40869]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of universal credit claimants had deductions made to their monthly payment (a) in March 2020 and (b) in the most recent month for which figures are available, by (i) categories of third party debt deductions, (ii) advance payments and (iii) benefit overpayments and (iv) other types of deductions.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 10 September 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Will Quince:

We carefully balance our duty to the taxpayer to recover overpayments, with support for claimants. Safeguards are in place to ensure deductions are manageable. From 12 April 2021, we further reduced the cap on deductions from Universal Credit

awards to 25 per cent and lengthened the period from 12 to 24 months, meaning in effect someone can receive 25 payments over 24 months, giving them more flexibility over the payments of their Universal Credit award. This will also allow claimants to retain more of their award, giving additional financial security, and follows a previous change in October 2019 that reduced the cap from 40% to 30%.

Customers can contact the Department if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, depending on their financial circumstances, whilst work coaches can also signpost claimants to other financial support.

The information requested is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

Attachments:

1. **Spreadsheet 40869.xlsx**