

Daily Report

Tuesday, 13 April 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 13 April 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:31 P.M., 13 April 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS**BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**■ **Additional Restrictions Grant****Robert Halfon:****[174087]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) Harlow Council and (b) other local authorities allocate funding from the Additional Restriction Grant to local businesses (i) quickly and (ii) in line with the needs of those businesses.

Paul Scully:

Throughout the pandemic, BEIS officials have worked closely with Local Authorities to ensure that grants are delivered as quickly as possible, while safeguarding public funds. As the range of grants available has increased, officials have continued regular briefings with all 314 Local Authorities. Ministers have also held regular conversations with leaders and chief executives.

We have published data that shows as of 17 January, £143 million has been paid out by Local Authorities to businesses in England through the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme, and that figure increases every day. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced a £425 million top-up to the ARG, to be allocated to Local Authorities which have spent their existing allocations by 30 June 2021.

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme: Fraud**Dame Angela Eagle:**[\[174729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of fraudulent applications under the (a) Bounce Back Loan Scheme and (b) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme to date.

Paul Scully:

As part of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS) application process lenders are required to undertake fraud, Know Your Customer and Anti Money Laundering checks. In addition, the application form makes clear that any individual who knowingly provides false information is at risk of criminal prosecution.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loans Scheme is operated on the same basis as fully commercial loans, with lenders conducting the full range of checks they would usually make, subject to the specific eligibility requirements of the scheme. The Department continues to work with other Government Departments, lenders, and law enforcement agencies to tackle fraudulent abuse of the schemes.

Further details of how we expect the schemes to perform, including an estimate of fraud losses, will be set out in the BEIS Annual Report for 2020-21 published later this year.

Dame Angela Eagle:[\[174730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department received advice from (a) banks and (b) specialist advisors on identifying fraudulent applications for (i) bounce back loans and (ii) coronavirus business interruption loans.

Paul Scully:

The Department continues to work with other Government Departments, lenders, and law enforcement agencies to tackle fraudulent abuse of the schemes.

■ Business: Government Assistance

Chi Onwurah:

[\[175845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2021 to Question 168909, on Business: Government Assistance, what the definition of business used for grant allocation is; and whether that definition includes businesses without rateable premises.

Paul Scully:

Valuation Office Agency data identified the number of rate-paying businesses in scope for LRSG (Open) in the sectors and local authority areas where this scheme was applicable. This was done on the basis of Special Category (SCAT) code data which classifies properties by use.

In recognition that there are businesses, such as market traders, that aren't on the business rates register, the Additional Restrictions Grant has been made available to Local Authorities to provide discretionary support to businesses including those not on the business rates register.

■ Business: Investment

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[175894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to boost business investment in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Paul Scully:

We aim to make the UK the best place in the world to start, run and grow a business. The Government provides a wide range of support and information for small businesses including on the GOV.UK website. Free and impartial advice is also available via the Business Support Helpline on FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098 and via the network of 38 local Growth Hubs in England.

The Start Up Loans Programme, part of the Government-backed British Business Bank, offers loans up to £25,000, repayable at 6% per annum across 1-5 years. Across the UK, 81,608 loans have been made, worth over £707.6m from the programme's launch in 2012 to the end of February 2021.

Over the same period, in the Coventry North East constituency, 136 loans have been made worth £1,120,379. In the Coventry City Council area, 377 loans have been made to a value of £3,436,907. In England, 71,207 loans have been made worth £617,745,993. ^[1]

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that a further £5bn is being made available through Restart Grants to help businesses as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. This means a total of £25bn has been allocated to direct business grants during the course of the pandemic.

The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) self-reported that in 2019-20, its Growth Hub engaged with 66,452 businesses/individuals (including via

digital channels); directly supported 1,798 businesses, of which 77 received over 12 hours of high-level support; and helped 648 individuals start a business.

Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have benefitted from £131.84m in Local Growth Fund, over 3 Growth Deals, and the investments have secured over £28m in private sector investment. The LEP are also working with local partners to develop and implement a newly focused, partnership-led Strategic Framework to reset the local economy for a successful, inclusive, and resilient future. The LEP are committed to driving activities to minimise the negative economic impacts of Covid-19 in Coventry and Warwickshire. This includes the Growth Hub, which offers one-to-one advice and ongoing support to local businesses.

Coventry has also received over £8m funding to support it as the City of Culture 2021. The City of Culture events in Coventry are due to start in May of this year, which will benefit the city in many ways. In previous years this has included increases in investors opening new businesses and more opportunities to support the local community.

The Government's new 'Help to Grow' scheme will help small businesses across the UK learn new skills, reach new customers, and boost profits. Help to Grow: Management will provide intensive management skills support to 30,000 small businesses whilst Help to Grow: Digital could support 100,000 small businesses with online advice and a voucher for software costs. BEIS will be engaging with stakeholders shortly but businesses can register their interest now at <https://helptogrow.campaign.gov.uk/>.

[1] Figures do not include regions not able to be specified. For these regions, 113 loans were made worth 1,205,641 since 2012 to end February 2021.

■ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Dame Angela Eagle:

[174731]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many lenders have had their Government guarantee on loans made under the (a) Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme and (b) Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme removed; and what the reasons are for that removal.

Paul Scully:

All accredited lenders are subject to audit by the British Business Bank to ensure their compliance with scheme rules. If serious non-compliance is identified, the Bank is entitled to take remedial action. Such action might include termination of the Guarantee Agreement, or withdrawal of the Guarantee.

It would not be appropriate to comment on individual cases given commercial sensitivities.

■ Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus

Alex Sobel:

[\[176024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on allowing heritage sites to offer socially distanced showgrounds to couples looking to book a wedding venue, ahead of Step 3 of the Roadmap.

Paul Scully:

BEIS Ministers are in regular contact with Cabinet colleagues on matters related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including issues relating to reopening.

Venues will only be able to open for viewings, including show rounds for wedding couples, where the venue is permitted to open, or where a relevant exemption applies. Where a venue is required to close for the purposes of a viewing people could have a virtual tour.

■ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Cities and Local Growth Unit

Steve Reed:

[\[175858\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many full-time equivalent staff from his Department are employed in the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

Paul Scully:

The Cities and Local Growth Unit is the Government's local growth team, working across two Departments and reporting jointly into my Rt. Hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. As of 28 February 2021, the most recent date for which data is available, the Unit employed 153.4 FTE BEIS staff.

■ Disclosure of Information

Gill Furniss:

[\[175968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to improve guidance on (a) knowledge of and (b) training on whistleblowing for employees.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises how valuable it is that whistleblowers are prepared to shine a light on wrongdoing and believes that they should be able to do so without fear of recrimination.

BEIS has provided guidance for whistleblowers and employers (including a non-statutory code of practice). This aims to ensure that more employers follow good practice when responding to disclosures relating to whistleblowing. The Department will review the effectiveness of guidance in due course.

■ Energy: Prices

Carol Monaghan:

[\[174889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to carry out an impact assessment on low income households on the increase of the OFGEM price cap.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The price cap is revised every 6 months so that it is consistent with the underlying costs of supplying energy to households. Determining efficient costs is inherently challenging, but this is the product of Ofgem's wide-ranging and in-depth benchmarking exercise. The Government has complete confidence in Ofgem, as the independent regulator of the GB gas and electricity markets, to appropriately execute its expert judgement in this regard. Ofgem estimate that the average household is £75-£100 better off each year than if the price cap was not in place. Consumers on capped tariffs can save even more by shopping around for a cheaper tariff. In addition, the Government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and expanded Warm Home Discount (WHD) schemes will provide at least £4.7 billion of extra support to low-income and vulnerable households between 2022 and 2026.

■ GFG Alliance: Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

Dame Angela Eagle:

[\[174728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of whether Coronavirus Business Interruption loans (CBILS) had been extended to companies that are part of or associated with the GFG Alliance; and whether those loans complied with the eligibility criteria set by the CBILS scheme.

Paul Scully:

We are unable to provide information relating to individual borrowers as it is commercially sensitive.

Details of facilities made available under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme will be published where required by the European Commission's Transparency Aid Module in due course.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[173992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 22 February 2021 to Question 152400, on Green Homes Grant Scheme, if he will publish the (a) contract and (b) top three performance indicators in the contract to ICF for administering the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme before the end of the financial year 2020-21.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In line with government best practice, BEIS published the contract and legally required information on 17 March. The top three performance indicators have been redacted as they are commercially sensitive, and their publication would be inappropriate at this time.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[173993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the £320 million for the Green Homes Grant scheme announced by the Chancellor of Exchequer in the Spending Review 2020 will be allocated to the Local Authority Delivery element of that scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In his Spending Review 2020, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced £320 million of funding for the Green Homes Grant Voucher scheme for use in financial year 21/22. Following a review, the voucher scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2021. All valid applications made to the scheme up to 31st March 2021 will be processed, and all vouchers issued will be honoured – currently estimated as £220 million of expenditure.

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment for both the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund with £300 million of new funding and up to £100 million of recycled funding from the Green Homes Grant Vouchers, depending on take up. The funding will be granted in financial year 21/22, with delivery continuing through financial year 22/23.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[173994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much and what proportion of the funding allocated to the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme has been paid to contractors for completed work.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme will deliver energy efficiency upgrades to low-income households via Local Authorities, using existing, or newly procured services from certified installers. All procurement or contracts to supply services under the GHG LAD scheme will be carried out at Local Authority level.

The full £500m has now been granted to Local Authorities in Phase 1 and Local Energy Hubs for Phase 2 and delivery has begun. We will be receiving further information on overall spend as the scheme progresses, however at this time the specific breakdown of payment to contractors is not available.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[173995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether ICF will be responsible for the administration of the Green Homes Grant scheme in the financial year 2021-2022.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Following a review, the Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2021. BEIS expects ICF to honour their contractual commitments. All compliant applications made to the scheme up to 31st March 2021 will be processed, and all vouchers issued will be honoured.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: West Midlands**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[174231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many green homes grants have been awarded in (a) Edgbaston, (b) Birmingham and (c) the West Midlands.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[Official statistics](#) for the Green Homes Grant (Voucher) Scheme were released on 18 March. The data published in this release is for all applications received to the end of February 2021.

From this release, the number of vouchers issued are as follows:

- (a) Edgbaston Parliamentary Constituency - 17
- (b) Birmingham Local Authority - 923
- (c) the West Midlands Region – 3,522

The figures above represent the number of measures approved for installation under the scheme, with a voucher for each measure awarded to the customer.

Further scheme statistics will be published in due course.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[174232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in (a) Edgbaston, (b) Birmingham and (c) the West Midlands have applied to the Green Homes Grant scheme to date.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[Official statistics](#) for the Green Homes Grant (Voucher) Scheme were released on 18 March. The data published in this release is for all applications received to the end of February 2021.

From this release, the number of household applications received are as follows:

- (a) Edgbaston Parliamentary Constituency - 82
- (b) Birmingham Local Authority - 2,443
- (c) the West Midlands Region - 9,106

A 'household application' refers to a grant application submitted to request Voucher scheme funding for all measures to be fitted in a single household.

Further scheme statistics will be published in due course.

■ Horizon Europe: Finance

Chris Grayling:

[\[175731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether it is his policy to finance participation in Horizon Europe from the existing budgets for the UK Research and Innovation Fund.

Amanda Solloway:

I am pleased that the UK reached an agreement to take part in the Horizon Europe programme. Association to Horizon has been welcomed by businesses and the research community and will bring huge benefits to the UK.

The Government will be making available an additional £250m in 2021/22 for Horizon association. Also, £400m of funding announced at SR20 to support government priorities has been made available to help pay for our association to Horizon Europe. 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. It will mean UK Government R&D spending is now at its highest level in four decades.

■ Housing: Heating

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[175721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to increase the uptake of heat pumps in domestic premises; when he plans to publish details of the new heat and buildings strategy; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In the Ten-Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced our ambition to grow the heat pump market to 600,000 installations per year by 2028 to put us on track for net zero by 2050.

The Government is developing a comprehensive package of policies to help meet this ambition. We have set out proposals for some parts of this package and will consult on others alongside the Heat and Buildings Strategy, which we will publish in due course.

The Future Homes Standard, for instance, will ensure that from 2025 new homes are built zero carbon-ready, with low-carbon heating systems such as heat pumps. We will also set out plans to improve the incentives for industry to invest in developing the UK heat pump market and we will consult on regulations to meet our commitment to phase out the installation of fossil fuel heating in homes off the gas grid this decade, in favour primarily of heat pumps.

We also currently provide financial support to consumers to install heat pumps through schemes such as the Renewable Heat Incentive, and we will continue to do so through the investments we are making in the Clean Heat Grant from next year, the Home Upgrade Grant and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

■ Hydrogen: Finance**Dr Alan Whitehead:****[173996]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much of the £171 million announced by Government for hydrogen projects in the Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy is allocated for blue hydrogen projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government announced £171m of funding to support nine projects looking to decarbonise activity across five industrial clusters through the Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge. Projects in Scotland, South Wales, Humberside, Teesside and the North West will all receive government support to deploy a range of low-carbon infrastructure and technologies, including but not limited to, hydrogen.

Specific projects that will be supporting and exploring the use of blue hydrogen include:

- The Northern Endurance Partnership (£24m of IDC funding). Creation of an offshore CO₂ transport and storage system connecting two innovative onshore capture projects into one initial geological store, enabling blue hydrogen production.
- Scotland Net Zero (£33.3m for onshore and offshore elements). Blue hydrogen is one element of carbon capture and storage plans, to help provide a tangible path to the decarbonisation of the Scottish industrial cluster.
- Net Zero Teesside (£28m). Project includes exploring ways to produce large scale blue hydrogen through the cluster plan project.
- Zero Carbon Humber Partnership (£21.5m). Delivering low-carbon infrastructure, comprising CO₂ and hydrogen transmission pipelines linking the region's major emitters, providing a pathway to deliver at-scale decarbonisation. Includes development of a blue hydrogen production facility to enable large industrial energy customers across the Cluster to switch from natural gas to hydrogen.
- South Wales (£20m). Blue hydrogen forms one part of their sustainable clean growth plan.

■ Liberty Steel: South Yorkshire**Dan Jarvis:****[R] [174130]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support jobs across Liberty Steel's UK operations in South Yorkshire.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We are closely monitoring developments around Liberty Steel, and my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has spoken with representatives from the company and unions many times in recent weeks. The Government is considering options, however it would be premature to act when the company is looking to find its own commercial solutions.

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Helen Hayes:

[\[174918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the role of local government in COP26, what plans the Government has to provide funding and resources to local government to support the development of a framework for local delivery of the national net zero target.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Over £20million has been invested in the Local Energy Programme to date, including £1.6m which has funded all 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships to develop local energy strategies.

■ Motor Vehicles: Manufacturing Industries

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[175895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the automotive sector; and what steps his Department is taking to (a) aid recovery, (b) protect and create jobs in and (c) boost the competitiveness of the UK's car manufacturers.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have provided comprehensive support during the pandemic, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the trade credit insurance guarantee, and tax deferrals. In total, we have provided £2.4 billion in COVID Corporate Financing Facility support to the automotive sector.

The Government has invested around £1.5 billion to support the research, development, and manufacture of zero and low-emission vehicles to date. This investment has created thousands of jobs in the sector and its supply chain, saved millions of tonnes of CO₂, and has helped the UK to lead the charge towards a low carbon automotive future.

In late 2020, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced in his 10 Point Plan nearly £500 million of funding for the Automotive Transformation Fund over the next four years to develop and embed the next generation of cutting-edge automotive technologies in the UK. This is part of a £2.8 billion package of measures to support industry and consumers to make the switch to cleaner vehicles. In addition, we are investing in schemes to support the delivery of chargepoint infrastructure to homes, workplaces, on residential streets, and across the wider roads network.

■ Retail Trade: Clothing

Catherine West:

[\[175965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to tackle abusive purchasing practices by UK garment retailers.

Paul Scully:

The Government expects businesses to be open and transparent in responding to consumers' interest in where and how the products they source have been manufactured, including the use of raw materials. Since the introduction of the Modern Slavery Act, we have seen more businesses open up about their supply chains, identify high-risk areas and introduce tailored steps to support vulnerable workers.

UK listed companies are required to report on social and environmental impacts material to their business, including information about supply chains, where this is necessary for an understanding of the business as part of annual reports.

The Government response to the Transparency in Supply Chains consultation, published on 22 September 2020, committed to taking forwards an ambitious package of changes to strengthen and future-proof the Modern Slavery Act's transparency legislation, including:

- Extending the reporting requirement to public bodies with a budget of £36 million or more.
- Mandating the specific reporting topics statements must cover.
- Requiring organisations to publish their statement on the new Government digital reporting service.
- Setting a single reporting deadline by which all modern slavery statements must be published.
- Considering enforcement options in line with the ongoing development of the Single Enforcement Body for Employment rights.

Under section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, the UK became the first country in the world to require businesses to report on how they prevent modern slavery in their operations. Following consultation, the Home Office has announced a series of measures to strengthen the Modern Slavery Act. Organisations will be required to include information about their organisation's structure and supply chains in their modern slavery statement or to explicitly state that their statement omits this information. These new measures will be introduced once parliamentary time allows.

The Government has been engaging with the British Retail Consortium on their proposals for a licensing scheme, and with Traidcraft on the Garment Trade Adjudicator to understand the impact that further regulation would have.

BEIS and the Home Office are also working in partnership with the industry through the Apparel and General Merchandise Public and Private Protocol, a partnership between enforcement bodies and industry partners, including, the British Retail Consortium, UK Fashion and the Textile Association. This is aimed at tackling all forms of labour exploitation in the garment industry.

■ Solar Power: VAT

Sarah Olney:

[\[175969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will hold discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the potential merits of reducing the VAT charge on solar panels.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Taxation is a matter for HM Treasury. However, BEIS Ministers are in regular contact with Treasury Ministers to discuss a wide range of issues of mutual interest, including options for facilitating deployment of the low- cost renewable technologies needed to help meet our 2050 net zero target.

■ UK Research and Innovation: Finance

Layla Moran:

[\[174253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance on UK Research and Innovation.

Amanda Solloway:

The Government recognises the importance of supporting international research partnerships, and supporting the UK research sector. 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 has been set out in our Integrated Review ambitions, international collaboration is central to a healthy and productive R&D sector.

We are working with UKRI and all our Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners to manage the impact of next year's ODA allocation.

Layla Moran:

[\[174957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to rectify the £120 million gap between the allocations and commitments of Official Development Assistance funding provided by his Department to UKRI.

Amanda Solloway:

The challenging financial situation we face due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary reduction in the UK's aid spending target from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. This means making difficult decisions when it comes to prioritising how we spend aid money to deliver the most impactful outcomes.

On 2nd December last year, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the Chair of the International Development Committee setting out the Strategic Framework for UK ODA, which details the UK's foreign aid spending priorities. In line with these priorities, he confirmed each Department's total ODA settlement on 26th January.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting international research partnerships and supporting the UK research sector. My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer committed to increasing UK investment in R&D to £14.6 billion in 2021/22 in this recent Budget.

We are currently working with UKRI, and all our Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners, to manage the Financial Year 2021/22 ODA allocations. UKRI have written to their award holders to set out the process for reviewing ODA funding next year, and to explore options for individual programmes. (Full details have been published on the UKRI website).

■ UK Research and Innovation: Overseas Aid

Layla Moran: [\[174954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the statement entitled Official Development Assistance: Foreign Secretary's statement on 26 November 2020, what assessment his Department has made of effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance funding allocated to UKRI on his Department's ability to its stated goals relating to science, research and technology.

Layla Moran: [\[174955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the statement entitled Official Development Assistance: Foreign Secretary's statement on 26 November 2020, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance funding allocated to UKRI on his Department's ability to meet the 7 global challenges outlined in his statement.

Layla Moran: [\[174956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance funding allocated to UKRI on ongoing coronavirus vaccine development.

Amanda Solloway:

The challenging financial situation we face due to the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a temporary reduction in the UK's aid spending target from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. This means making difficult decisions when it comes to prioritising how we spend aid money to deliver the most impactful outcomes.

The Government recognises the importance of supporting international research partnerships, and supporting the UK research sector. 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 has been set out in our Integrated Review ambitions, international collaboration is central to a healthy and productive R&D sector.

We are currently working with UKRI, and all our Global Challenges Research Fund and Newton Fund Delivery Partners, to manage the financial year 2021/22 ODA allocations. UKRI have written to many award holders setting out the next stage of the review of ODA funding next year, and to explore options for individual programmes. (Full details have been published on the UKRI website).

■ **Weddings: Coronavirus**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[174840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support the wedding industry through the covid-19 pandemic.

Paul Scully:

I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce, established to represent a wide range of interests in the weddings sector in England, to understand the impact of the pandemic on jobs and businesses.

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to business, including those in the wedding industry, which we keep under regular review.

■ **Weddings: Ethnic Groups and Females**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[175851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to support (a) women and (b) BAME communities working in the wedding industry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce, established to represent all parts of the UK Weddings sector, to understand the impact on jobs and businesses, including those with protected characteristics who work in the sector.

Over the course of the pandemic the Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to businesses, including those in the wedding industry, which we keep under regular review.

■ **Working Hours: Coronavirus**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[175888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on trends in the number of people moving from full-time to part-time working.

Paul Scully:

ONS data shows fewer people working part time (7.9 million, 24% of all in employment) in the three months to January 2021, than in the three months to February 2020 (8.6 million, 26% of all in employment), prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

Further information on full-time and part-time working can be found on the ONS website:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/march2021>.

ONS note: Rates published from the LFS remain robust; however, levels and changes in levels should be used with caution. This will particularly affect estimates for country of birth, nationality, ethnicity and disability.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Blood: Contamination

Laura Trott:

[\[176055\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress his Department is making on addressing disparities in support for victims of the Infected Blood Scandal across the four nations of the UK.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to my update to Parliament on 25 March in the form of a [Written Ministerial Statement](#).

■ Caravan Sites and Holiday Accommodation: Coronavirus

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[174724\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Government advice in relation to self-contained accommodation under Step 2 of the Covid-19 Response Spring 2021, whether (a) touring caravans and motor homes will be allowed to access supplies of fresh water and waste disposal facilities at camp sites and (b) self-contained holiday accommodation with more than one bedroom can be occupied by members of two households; and what assessment his Department has made of the relative risk to public health arising from the different options.

Penny Mordaunt:

Self contained accommodation is defined as accommodation in which facilities (kitchens, sleeping areas, and indoor lobbies, lifts, staircases, and internal corridors for entry and exit), are exclusive to a single household/support bubble.

Self-contained accommodation can open at Step 2, not before 12 April. Campsites and caravan parks may also open at Step 2 provided that the only shared facilities used by guests are washing facilities, toilets, water points and waste disposal points. Where it is reasonably possible to do so, access to bathing facilities and water points should be operated on a rota basis as was previously the case last summer.

The scientific evidence shows that opening too early or too quickly risks a further lockdown. Therefore, we committed to a phased reopening of accommodation prioritising settings that are self contained to allow individual households (including

support bubbles where eligible) to visit these settings at Step 2 whilst reducing the risk of household mixing.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Navendu Mishra:

[\[176093\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many covid-19 related deaths took place in care homes in (a) Stockport constituency and (b) the Borough of Stockport during (i) the first wave and (ii) second wave of the pandemic.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ176093 [UKSA's final response to PQ176093 (1).pdf]

■ Census: Fines

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[175971\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of (a) people and (b) households completed the Census 2021 on paper by the 21 March 2021 deadline; and what comparative assessment he has made of that number and ONS's projected number in that category.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[175972\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of (a) people and (b) households completed the Census 2021 online by the 21 March 2021 deadline; and what comparative assessment he has made of that number and ONS's projected number in that category.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[175973\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate the ONS has made of the number of fines it will issue for non-completion of the Census 2021.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[175974\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many fines were issued to people for (a) non-participation and (b) giving false information in the 2011 Census.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[175975\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many households were sent a letter with a unique code to access the 2021 online census; and how many people requested a code (a) online and (b) via a text message to be sent to their mobile phone.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[175976\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate the ONS has made of the number of fines that will be issued for giving false information in the Census 2021.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQs 175971-6 [UKSA's final response to PQs 175971-6.pdf]

■ **Civil Servants: Location**

Rachel Reeves:

[\[174815\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2021 to Question, what the specific boundaries are of central London where 22,000 civil servants will be relocated from; and which specific regions those civil servants will be relocated to.

Julia Lopez:

The Government is committed to relocating 22,000 civil service roles from central London to the regions and nations of the UK by the end of the decade. A number of announcements have been made on Places for Growth locations. This includes the Cabinet Office establishing a second headquarters in Glasgow, a joint headquarters for FCDO in East Kilbride, DfT building on its presence in Leeds and Birmingham, and a new economic campus in Darlington. Further announcements for other departments will be made in due course.

■ **Coronavirus: Anniversaries**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[174190\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of recognising 23 March as an annual day of memorial in response to the covid-19 outbreak.

Chloe Smith:

While the Government's immediate focus is on protecting the lives and livelihoods of the nation, the appropriate way to remember those who have lost their lives and to recognise those involved in the unprecedented response is something the Government is considering very carefully. We will set out the Government's proposed approach to this important matter in due course.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [\[174818\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's consultation, COVID-Status Certification Review - Call for

evidence, published on 15 March 2021, how that review is planned to assess the implications of the possible introduction of COVID-Status Certification on businesses, organisations and events requiring certification for other diseases and health conditions in the future; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [[174819](#)]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's consultation, COVID-Status Certification Review - Call for evidence, published on 15 March 2021, how that consultation is planned to assess the effect of COVID-Status Certification on business insurance policies; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Steve Baker:

[R] [[174820](#)]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to his Department's consultation, COVID-Status Certification Review - Call for evidence, published on 15 March 2021, how that consultation is planned to assess the cost to businesses of COVID-Status Certification and its implications; and if he will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

I refer the hon. Member to the previous response provided in [PQ171522](#).

■ **David Cameron**

Rachel Reeves:

[[174814](#)]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much David Cameron has received from the public purse since he resigned as Prime Minister and hon. Member in 2016; and what the purpose was of such payments.

Chloe Smith:

Former Prime Ministers are entitled to claim the Public Duty Cost Allowance, which is the reimbursement of incurred expenses for necessary office and secretarial costs arising from the fulfilment of public duties. Amounts claimed each year are set out in the Cabinet Office Annual Report and Accounts.

Ministers of the Crown are eligible to receive a severance payment of three months of their Ministerial salary, as outlined in the Ministerial and other Pensions and Salaries Act 1991 (as amended).

■ **Free Zones**

Bridget Phillipson:

[[172071](#)]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the eight successful Freeport bids, (a) how many and (b) which of those bids stated that they would benefit from the funding available through the Port Infrastructure Fund.

Julia Lopez:

All of the Freeport locations have received funding from the Port Infrastructure Fund. The Freeport process was designed to align with other government funding. One of the bidders out of the eight successful locations made specific reference to the Port Infrastructure Fund in its bid.

■ **G7: ICT****Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[174933\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government has budgeted for the G7 IT platform.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[174934\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what Government funding has been provided to support G7 engagement groups.

Penny Mordaunt:

Some G7 Engagement Groups have bid for, and been awarded, outreach funding to help increase the reach of their activity and develop the evidence base for their recommendations. This funding will help Groups raise awareness of the role, purpose and impact of the G7 across the regions and nations of the UK and beyond.

Each of the Engagement Groups has been offered use of a Government-funded virtual platform to host their Summits, which should enable them to reach out and connect to a larger and wider global audience.

The Government has recently appointed a production company, through a detailed tendering process, to support the physical and digital delivery of the G7 Summit. The costs related to this will be published through the usual transparency process in due course.

■ **Government Departments: Advertising****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[175962\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much has been spent by the Government on digital advertising to promote its work in Wales in each month between March 2020 and March 2021.

Julia Lopez:

The Government Communication Service is a cross-government function with teams embedded in departments. Departments are responsible for their own advertising spend across all communication channels.

Cabinet Office publishes expenditure on government communication spend, including our national campaigns, on a rolling monthly basis on gov.uk as part of routine government transparency arrangements at the link below:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/cabinet-office-spend-data.

We work closely across the United Kingdom to ensure that government communication activity reaches the intended audiences effectively.

■ **Government Departments: Information Officers**

Grahame Morris: [\[174082\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent estimate he has made of the range of savings from the centralisation of communication project.

Grahame Morris: [\[174083\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many and what proportion of staff are in scope of the centralisation of communication project, by (a) Department and (b) Arm's Length Body.

Grahame Morris: [\[174084\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the restructuring of Government communications, what criteria were used in setting the expected maximum figure of 30 communications staff per Department.

Grahame Morris: [\[174085\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the current spend on communications for those bodies within the scope of the centralisation of communication project.

Grahame Morris: [\[174086\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the current cost of all communication staff within the scope of the centralisation of communication project.

Julia Lopez:

The Reshaping Government Communication Service programme will further strengthen and unify the Government Communication Service (GCS), to be an even more effective and efficient service. Cabinet Office is leading the programme and working closely with ministerial departments and other public sector bodies. The programme has completed its discovery phase and is in its design phase, both of which will contribute to the outline business case and will help to identify the potential savings.

All communications staff are considered to be in scope for the RGCS programme. Last year, we received some initial data from departments and Arms Length Bodies, however more work will be done over the coming months to gather the necessary data to inform decision making.

The Cabinet Office has confirmed that its intention is for departments to have core teams for press, social media and rebuttal. We are working with departments to consider what a streamlined service could look like, in order to support statutory, operational or programme delivery.

Cabinet Office is continuously tracking and reviewing spending on cross-government campaigns, to ensure our communications are efficient. We will not spend more than is needed to be effective. Cabinet Office publishes expenditure on government communication spend, including our national campaigns, on a rolling monthly basis on gov.uk as part of routine government transparency arrangements at the link below:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/cabinet-office-spend-data.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Fleur Anderson: [174282]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether there are minimum capital requirements criteria under the Government's emergency procurement rules for the awarding of procurement contracts.

Fleur Anderson: [174284]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress the Government has made on implementing the recommendations of the Boardman Review on Cabinet Office procurement processes, published on 8 December 2020.

Fleur Anderson: [174285]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to prevent data breaches when awarding contracts for cloud services to multi-national corporations.

Julia Lopez:

Regulation 32 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 sets out the grounds in which contracting authorities can procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances. In our recently published Green Paper, we have set out our proposals to clarify these rules, learning from the experience in the pandemic.

The process of implementing the Boardman recommendations began immediately, and the programme is being assured by the Cabinet Office Audit and Risk Committee. We committed to provide an update on implementation six months after publication.

All G-Cloud suppliers must publicly show their security certifications, standards and approach to personnel security on the Digital Marketplace. Suppliers must also maintain physical and IT security that follows good industry practice to ensure there is no unauthorised access to any confidential information and data. Along with this, suppliers must inform Crown Commercial Service of any data breaches within 48 hours and Crown Commercial Service has the power to undertake security audits of suppliers.

Transforming Government Procurement will make it easier to take into account issues relating to workplace rights and protections through aligning the value for money definition with that of the Green Book, and removing in certain circumstances

the need for wider policy considerations to be linked to the subject matter of the contract.

■ Local Government: Elections

Marco Longhi:

[\[176066\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps his Department has taken to prevent voter fraud at the upcoming local elections in response to the increase in postal vote requests.

Chloe Smith:

Postal voting has a well-established place in our electoral system and many voters find it a convenient way to cast their vote. All existing security measures will remain in place to ensure the integrity of the postal vote process, including the requirement for postal voters to provide personal identifiers (their date of birth and signature) at application and again when they return their postal ballot at an election.

■ Ministers: Codes of Practice

Dan Carden:

[\[174953\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to make the Ministerial Code a statute.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has no plans for legislation on this matter.

The Ministerial Code is the responsibility of the Prime Minister of the day and customarily updated and issued upon their assuming or returning to office. The Code sets out the standards of conduct expected by the Prime Minister of all who serve in Her Majesty's Government. It provides guidance to Ministers on how they should act and arrange their affairs in order to uphold these standards and lists the principles which may apply in particular situations.

It is the Prime Minister's responsibility to set standards of behaviour for members of the Executive, and to account for the actions of the Government.

■ Office for Veterans' Affairs: Finance

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[\[174759\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the total reduction to the budget of the Office for Veterans' Affairs.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[174837\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to reduce the budget of the Office for Veterans' Affairs; and if he will make a statement.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[174838\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of reducing the Office for Veterans' Affairs budget on (a) veterans and (b) their dependants; and if he will make a statement.

Johnny Mercer:

The Office for Veterans' Affairs' budget has not been confirmed and the Cabinet Office budget for 2021/22 will be published in due course. Support for veterans is funded through a variety of Government channels, including the OVA and individual departments delivering veterans' services. This year, more funding than ever before has been made available to veterans' mental health services in NHS England, and unprecedented support has been offered to the service charity sector.

The OVA works to champion veterans across government, driving new approaches and policies in areas that will improve the support the nation offers veterans over the long term, in line with the commitments made by all four nations of the Union in the Strategy for our Veterans. Examples of this are through better use of data to drive change, improved digitisation to make services easier to access and navigate, developing a coherent research strategy to improve our understanding of issues affecting veterans and to improve collaboration across the veterans sector.

■ Public Sector: Procurement

Navendu Mishra:

[\[176087\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to (a) ensure and (b) oversee compliance in respect of the award by contracting authorities of commercial contracts to businesses that supply public bodies and that have been deemed to be at risk under the terms of procurement.

Julia Lopez:

The overarching principle in all public procurement is to secure the best value for money for the taxpayer. While individual departments are responsible for their own commercial decisions, including the award and monitoring of contracts, there are rigorous due diligence processes in place.

The Cabinet Office continuously reviews the performance of strategic suppliers and works closely with those suppliers and their customer Departments to improve performance, ensure value for money and deliver policy objectives while reducing risk across outsourced public services.

At the beginning of the covid-19 pandemic, we issued guidance (PPN 02/20) on 'supplier relief' measures ensuring service continuity during the pandemic. Further guidance, published in June, updated PPN 02/20 and set out how contracting authorities should put in place transition plans with their suppliers to exit any contractual relief and transition to a new, sustainable, operating model taking into account strategic and reprioritisation needs.

■ Rape

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[174708\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate she has made of the proportion of rapes in England and Wales which were unreported in each of the last five years.

Chloe Smith:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSAs response to PQ174708 [UKSA's final response to PQ174708.pdf]

■ Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[174868\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what plans the Government has to involve medical research charities with the Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform.

Dr Philippa Whitford:

[\[174869\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that the Taskforce on Innovation, Growth and Regulatory Reform promotes innovation in the development of cancer medicines.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Terms of Reference for the Taskforce have been published on GOV.UK. As set out there, the Taskforce has been commissioned by the Prime Minister to consider opportunities for regulatory reform across the economy independently, and to report to him in April. It is a matter for the Taskforce to decide its areas of focus within the Terms of Reference.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Duncan Baker:

[\[170749\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to Government Guidance: COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021, published on 22 February 2021, what the Government's definition is of minimising travel; what (a) distances and (b) frequencies are permitted in that travel guidance; how that guidance on minimising travel will be enforced given domestic overnight stays are permitted and self-contained accommodation re-opens; and whether the Government's stay local advice remains in place at that stage.

Penny Mordaunt:

From the 29th of March the legal order to 'Stay at home' ceased and the government is asking people to minimise travel. This means that people should avoid making unnecessary journeys and combine their trips where possible. People should

remember that other restrictions remain in place, for instance, if visiting friends and families they can only do so outside.

There are no permitted limits to the distance that may be travelled or frequency of journeys. People are permitted to stay away from their home overnight from 12th April, but only with members of their own household in self contained accommodation. People will not be allowed to enter another household to stay with friends and family until at least the 17th May. When travelling, people should remember to do so safely, planning ahead, travelling at quiet times, sanitise your hands, wear a face covering unless exempt and social distance.

■ UK Government Union Capability Independent Review

Louise Haigh:

[\[175936\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report of the Dunlop Review into UK Government Union capability published on 24 March 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the conclusion on page 29 of that report that it is not necessary or productive to bypass the devolved governments in funding arrangements.

Louise Haigh:

[\[175938\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the report of the Dunlop Review into UK Government Union capability published on 24 March 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendation of that report that in devolved areas there should be a second portion of the same fund which is open to bids from UK Government departments and devolved governments working in co-operation.

Chloe Smith:

UK Government funding to support citizens and businesses in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland goes beyond the specific Union Fund recommended by the Dunlop Review.

COVID-19 has shown the value of collective strength of all parts of the UK working together and the importance of the broad shoulders of the UK Government in supporting the whole country.

Our commitment to strengthening the Union is no more evident than in the recent Budget, a budget for the whole of the United Kingdom, in which most of the policies announced were UK-wide, for example, extensions to furlough and self-employed schemes, Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit extension, support for the armed forces, Recovery Loans Scheme, Mortgage Guarantee Scheme, Super Deduction capital investment, Help to Grow, visa reforms and the Community Ownership Fund.

We also continue to work closely and collaboratively with the devolved administrations to deliver various funding schemes, including City and Growth Deals. Through the 2021 Budget, the UK Government confirmed an acceleration of funding for 6 different Deals across Scotland and Wales and on 24 February, partners signed

the Heads of Terms for the Derry-Londonderry and Strabane Growth Deal in Northern Ireland.

The UK Internal Market Act allows the UK Government to complement and strengthen the support given to citizens, businesses and communities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, to ensure we make the most of the opportunities provided by our exit from the EU and build back better from Covid-19. Powers under the act will be used, for example, to deliver the Levelling Up Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund in 2021/22. The UK Government intends to work with the devolved administrations and local partners closest to the needs of communities to make sure that these UK-wide funds are used to best effect.

■ **Union Strategy Committee**

Louise Haigh:

[\[175935\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on what dates the Union Strategy Committee held its (a) first meeting and (b) subsequent meetings; and on how many occasions he has chaired those meetings.

Chloe Smith:

It is a long-established precedent that information about the discussions that have taken place in Cabinet and its Committees, and how often they have met, is not normally shared publicly.

■ **Voting Methods: Visual Impairment**

Cat Smith:

[\[174155\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 169884 on Voting Methods: Visual Impairment, for what reasons the answer to that Question did not specify how many local authorities are due to take part in his Department's pilot schemes of the audio voting device.

Chloe Smith:

The Government has been considering the most appropriate approach to further evidence gathering in this area. We are keen to understand how an accessible audio device would in principle operate in a 'live' poll when used in conjunction with the tactile voting device and are therefore working with the RNIB and one local authority to test that during the forthcoming polls. The decision to test with one local authority has been informed by the need to progress this work with the need to respect public health regulations, the significant workload that a difficult combination of polls has created in some areas and to ensure any testing does not create additional risk, particularly to a group of potentially vulnerable people.

This work will allow us to build on previous evidence gathering we have undertaken with both people with sight loss and electoral administrators. We are grateful to the RNIB and local authority for their hard work and commitment, noting the operational challenges more generally with these polls.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus**Alberto Costa:** [\[174888\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether wedding breakfasts will be able to proceed under Step 3 of the Government's roadmap out of covid-19 lockdown.

Royston Smith: [\[174907\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether wedding ceremonies can take place at private wedding venues with up to 30 guests, under Step 3 of the roadmap out of covid-19 restrictions.

Daisy Cooper: [\[176049\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether children who are five years old or under are included in guest limits given for wedding ceremonies and receptions during the period of covid-19 restrictions.

Daisy Cooper: [\[176050\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans publish a comprehensive covid-19 roadmap for (a) weddings, (b) civil partnership ceremonies and (c) receptions detailing permitted arrangements at each step including but not limited to (i) the bubbling of households for ceremonies and receptions, (ii) how food can be served and (iii) the use of private land and garden weddings.

Daisy Cooper: [\[176051\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether alternative wedding ceremonies as defined in COVID-19: Guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships are permitted from 12 April 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

In the [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021](#), the Government has set out the gradual and cautious approach to reopening different sectors in England, guided by science and the data.

We understand the unique significance that marriages and civil partnerships hold in people's lives, but we have to take necessary steps to limit transmission of COVID-19. This includes restrictions on wedding and civil partnership ceremonies, as well as other forms of social contact. By their very nature, weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are events that bring families and friends together, making them particularly vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19.

Alternative wedding ceremonies are permitted in line with the regular wedding or civil partnership rules, in the same locations, at each step.

From 29 March, wedding and civil partnership ceremonies have been able to take place indoors or outdoors in COVID-Secure venues that are not expressly closed by the Regulations, or where a broader exemption applies. From 12 April, 15 people are permitted to attend. This approach allows couples to marry in legally binding licensed

venues for wedding ceremonies (where outdoor options are limited) while remaining in line with the reopening of sectors and venues as set out in the roadmap. Wedding ceremonies should follow government guidance to reduce the risk of transmission.

Receptions (of up to 15 people) can resume from 12 April. The evidence shows that it is safer for people to meet outdoors rather than indoors. That is why receptions are only permitted outdoors at this Step and should be in a COVID-Secure venue.

From Step 3, no earlier than 17 May 2021, weddings and civil partnership ceremonies are permitted for up to 30 people in COVID-Secure venues that are not required to close, or where a broader exemption applies. Receptions can also proceed with up to 30 people in a COVID-Secure indoor venue, or outdoors, which includes private gardens.

Guidance for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-wedding-and-civil-partnership-receptions-and-celebrations>

At each step, the limits on the number of attendees includes children of all ages, but not workers.

For further information, please refer to the guidance for small marriages and civil partnerships - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

■ Written Questions: Government Responses

Barbara Keeley:

[175784]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that answers to Written Parliamentary Questions that are written or drafted by external contractors are drafted in accordance with the Civil Service Code.

Barbara Keeley:

[175785]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to answers to Written Parliamentary Questions that are written or drafted by external contractors, what steps his Department is taking to verify that the information in those answers is (a) complete and (b) accurate.

Chloe Smith:

Written Parliamentary Questions receive final sign off from Ministers.

The Cabinet Office has produced guidance for civil servants on drafting answers to parliamentary questions. This can be found on the gov.uk website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drafting-answers-to-parliamentary-questions-guidance>

Civil servants and Ministers conduct these duties in line with their respective Codes of Conduct.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ Church of England: Farms

Jim Shannon:

[\[174830\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, other than in cases where a tenancy is replacing a previous tenancy let under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 how many tenancies have been let (a) for an initial fixed term of five years or less (b) for an initial fixed term of five years or more in each of the last five years, ending with 2020.

Andrew Selous:

The Church Commissioners' and their managing agents review the term of each new farm letting and all tenancy renewals on a case by case basis. In the period 2016 to 2020, the number of holdings let by the Church Commissioners on a Farm Business Tenancy (on an area of more than 50 acres) for a term under five years is 64, with a further 30 new tenancies offered for a term of 5 years or more. Each holding is assessed at the time of letting, and other factors considered when determining term length.

Jim Shannon:

[\[174831\]](#)

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what the average level of compensation paid for tenants' improvements following the expiry of farm tenancies let by the Church Commissioners was in each of the last five years, ending with 2020.

Andrew Selous:

Compensation payments made by the Commissioners to their tenants are of a commercially sensitive nature. The Church Commissioners discuss land and environmental improvement works with their agricultural tenants on an ongoing basis with a view to supporting enhancements to holdings. End of tenancy payments are made as appropriate to the scale and value of such improvement made.

COP26

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Helen Hayes:

[\[174185\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the importance of promoting the role of local government in delivering the national net zero target at COP26.

Helen Hayes:

[\[174186\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he plans to take to engage with UK local government during preparations for COP26.

Helen Hayes:

[\[174187\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what recent meetings he has had with (a) councils and (b) local government organisations on the role of local government in meeting the national net zero target; and how that role is planned to be articulated at COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Local authorities and leaders have a key role to play in tackling climate change and meeting net zero targets. That is why I have set up the UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council with mayors and local authority leaders from across the UK to engage them in COP26. We met most recently on 15 March to discuss how mayors and local authorities could contribute to the Together for our Planet Campaign, and I look forward to engaging further with the group as part of our preparations for COP26.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021

Helen Hayes:

[\[174188\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what the Government's objectives are for the cities and built environment theme for the COP; and what steps the Government is taking to engage UK cities in delivering those objectives at COP26.

Alok Sharma:

The Government is in early stages of planning for the Cities and Built Environment theme day which will showcase the key role that cities and the built environment play in the pathway to net zero. We are engaging widely with stakeholders ahead of the day, as well as using forthcoming meetings of the UK Mayors and Regions Advisory Council to ensure their views are reflected in preparations for the day.

DEFENCE

■ Armed Forces: Coronavirus

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[174737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what measures he is taking to support serving personnel who receive their first covid-19 vaccination while on leave but are due to receive their second vaccination whilst in service.

James Heappey:

Service personnel will not be disadvantaged by their service in the UK or overseas. If they cannot safely be vaccinated in line with their age cohort whilst deployed, they will be vaccinated before leaving the UK.

■ Armed Forces: Recruitment

Derek Twigg: [\[175718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 170542, whether the Defence Recruiting System records the school or college of applicants; and if he will he publish the number of successful applicants by school or college for the last five years.

James Heappey:

As part of the application process to the Armed Forces, the Defence Recruiting System records the names of schools attended by applicants. However, the requested information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

■ Armed Forces: Sexual Harassment

Alex Davies-Jones: [\[175023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to tackle sexual harassment in the armed forces.

Alex Davies-Jones: [\[175024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many instances of sexual harassment in the armed forces have been reported in each year since 2015.

Alex Davies-Jones: [\[175025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what training his Department provides to junior officers to increase awareness of sexual harassment in the armed forces.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is absolutely clear there is no place for sexual offending in the Armed Forces. The Armed Forces are committed to addressing the issues of sexual harassment and sexual assault through a range of actions, including awareness campaigns and training presentations around sexual consent. Training is provided to all personnel, with junior officers benefitting from additional instruction to enable them to understand the standards expected of them, tackle unacceptable behaviours and support those under their command

The MOD recognises the great courage it takes to come forward and report a sexual offence and is committed to reducing the incidence of unacceptable behaviour and to holding perpetrators to account. All allegations are thoroughly investigated, and support provided to victims. Commanding Officers must always refer any allegation of rape and sexual assault, or any other offence which may have a sexual element, to the Service Police. Anyone found to fall short of the Services' high standards or to have committed an offence is dealt with appropriately, up to and including imprisonment and dismissal from Service. While much has been and continues to be done, including the implementation of the Wigston and Gray reports, Defence recognises the scale of the task we must address and remains committed to tackling this challenge.

Detailed statistics about sexual offending in the Service Justice System are published annually as part of our commitment to openness and transparency, and are available from the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sexual-offences-in-the-service-justice-system>

■ Armed Forces: Taxis

Mr Kevan Jones: **[174738]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much each of the armed services has spent on hired cars in each of the last five years.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) vehicle lease and hire in the UK, Germany and Northern Europe is primarily covered by the Phoenix II contract with Babcock Land Limited. The costs to the MOD of vehicle hire through the contract are recorded by Top Level Budget (TLB) area, rather than by armed service. The following table provides the costs for vehicle hires, including self-drive cars, those with drivers and specialist vehicles such as those modified to support people with disabilities:

TOP LEVEL BUDGET	FY2016/17	FY2017/18	FY2018/19	FY2019/20	FY2020/21
TLB	£million (ex VAT)	£million(ex VAT)	£million(ex VAT)	£million(ex VAT)	£million(ex VAT)
Air Command	0.470	0.532	0.764	1.914	0.524
Land Command	1.313	3.323	3.778	4.551	1.874
Navy Command	1.184	0.719	0.876	1.122	0.615
Other TLBs	2.772	4.966	5.095	6.600	7.317
Total:	5.739	9.540	10.513	14.187	10.330

This does not include any local unit level arrangements that might also be in place outside of this contract, for which data could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ AWACS: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: **[175732]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the cost of the purchase of three E-7 Wedgetail is.

Jeremy Quin:

Ministry of Defence officials will be negotiating with Boeing to agree the cost of the revised E-7 Wedgetail programme, based around the acquisition of three aircraft. Therefore, to protect the Department's commercial interests, I am withholding details of the cost at this time.

■ Fleet Solid Support Ships: Procurement**Luke Pollard:**[\[174264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the new Fleet Solid Support Ship tender will be restricted to UK bidders.

Jeremy Quin:

The detailed contract requirements are yet to be published but we would expect substantial UK involvement in any successful bid.

As referenced in the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence in response to question 906278 we would encourage interested international partners to work with UK firms to bid, building on the success of T31.

■ HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark**Luke Pollard:**[\[174263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the out of service dates for HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark have changed as a result of the Integrated Review.

Jeremy Quin:

The out of service dates for HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark have not changed as a result of the Integrated Review. Both ships remain on their current schedule to be removed from service in the early 2030s.

■ International Military Services**Tulip Siddiq:**[\[174196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the corrected Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 161825, what new business International Military Services Ltd undertook between 1989 and 1991.

Mr Ben Wallace:

At present, we are not aware of any new contracts signed by IMS Ltd between 1989-91. Once COVID19 guidelines allow, it would be possible to conduct a review of IMS Ltd records to determine whether there is any record of new contracts in that period.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[174197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the corrected Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 161825, on what date (a) International Military Services Ltd (IMS) or (b) his Department took the decision that IMS should stop taking on new business.

Mr Ben Wallace:

In 1989, Ministers directed IMS Ltd to cease taking on new business by 1991.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[175952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 161824, whether his Department (a) retained and (b) continues to retain its own records of IMS Ltd's outstanding supply commitments at July 1991; whether those records have been placed in the National Archives; and whether any of those records have been destroyed.

Mr Ben Wallace:

A recent search for such material in Ministry of Defence files in support of a Freedom of Information request found no such records. Any records which do survive will be considered for release to the National Archives in line with standard practice.

Tulip Siddiq:[\[175953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 161824, to what extent IMS Ltd has (a) retained and (b) destroyed records of its commercial activities beyond the legally required seven years; on what date records were retained and destroyed; whether destruction of records included IMS Ltd records relating to contracts with foreign states, or contracts backed by UK state export credit guarantees; and whether IMS Ltd received authorisation from his Department for destruction of records.

Mr Ben Wallace:

Prior to its designation as an Arms-Length Body of Government in 2019, IMS Ltd was not required to seek authorisation for the destruction or retention of such records, beyond the requirements observed by all commercial entities of records, nor to record.

■ Marines: Plymouth**Luke Pollard:**[\[174265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has for basing the Royal Marines in Plymouth after the closure of Stonehouse Barracks in 2028 in light of the Integrated Review.

James Heappey:

The Royal Navy is developing new basing options for Royal Marines based at Stonehouse Barracks. Any implications from the Integrated Review will be included in the final analysis and details will be published once a decision is made.

■ Nuclear Weapons**Caroline Lucas:**[\[174805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2021 to Question 170597, whether any of the new warheads part of the planned increase to the UK's nuclear weapons stockpile ceiling will be capable of tactical use.

Jeremy Quin:

It will remain the case that none of the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons are designed for tactical use during conflict. The nuclear deterrent exists to deter the most extreme threats to our national security and way of life, which cannot be deterred by other means.

Caroline Lucas:[\[174806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Government's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, published in March 2021, what estimate he has made of the cost of the additional nuclear warheads; and if he will make a statement.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:[\[175921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what costings have been made for the acquisition of new nuclear weapons up to a total of 260 as announced in the Integrated Review.

Jeremy Quin:

The Integrated Review announced the UK will move to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 warheads. This is a stockpile ceiling and we will remain deliberately ambiguous about the exact number of warheads to avoid simplifying the calculations of potential adversaries. The cost estimates for the wider warhead programme are undergoing consideration as part of Departmental budgeting.

Royal Regiment of Scotland**Dave Doogan:**[\[176038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many personnel there were in the Royal Regiment of Scotland on 1 January 2020.

James Heappey:

As at 1 January 2020, there were 1,970 Army personnel in the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

Notes/Caveats:

1. Figures provided by Defence Statistics (Army).
2. Figures are for Trade Trained Regulars only.
3. The above figures are for Infantry only.
4. The above figures include all members within the Regiment regardless of whether they are serving at Regimental Duty.
5. All Officers of Paid Rank Colonel and above are included in Staff regardless of late Arm/Corps and therefore have been excluded from the figures.
6. Figures have been rounded to 10 for presentational purposes.

■ Submarines: Coronavirus

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[175010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to his Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169082, whether staff in the Royal Submarine Service who are deployed on submarines for a period of longer than three months are entitled to both doses of a covid-19 vaccine prior to deployment, regardless of which JCVI cohort they fall into.

James Heappey:

Defence will ensure all Service Personnel are not disadvantaged in their access to the COVID-19 vaccine, both in the UK and overseas. If they cannot safely be vaccinated with both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in line with their age cohort whilst deployed, they will be vaccinated before leaving the UK.

■ Telecommunications Cables: Seas and Oceans

Luke Pollard:

[\[174262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the new Royal Navy vessel announced in the Defence Review to protect undersea cables will be based in Devonport.

James Heappey:

The new Royal Navy Multi Role Ocean Surveillance vessel announced in the Defence Review is in its pre-concept phase, therefore, no decisions have yet been taken on base porting arrangements.

■ Type 32 Frigates: Procurement

Luke Pollard:

[\[174268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to publish plans for procurement of Type 32 frigates.

Jeremy Quin:

The programme and procurement strategy for the Type 32 frigate will be decided following the concept phase, which has not yet been launched. As set out in the Defence Command Paper, our shipbuilding investment will double over the life of this Parliament to more than £1.7 billion a year.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ 5G

Steve Reed:

[\[175865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of new sites required for the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in order for the UK to meet government targets for the rollout of 5G.

Matt Warman:

The government's ambition is for the majority of the population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027. This will be achieved by a combination of upgrading existing sites and acquiring new sites.

Network deployment plans are a matter for the mobile network operators, but the government is undertaking a number of actions to support this. We have consulted on whether further changes to the Electronic Communications Code are needed to tackle barriers to network deployment, upgrading and sharing. Our consultation closed on 24 March 2021, and we are currently analysing responses. The government is also working to ensure that the planning system continues to support the deployment of mobile infrastructure, and we plan to publish our technical consultation very shortly.

We are confident that through these actions we will achieve our 5G rollout ambitions.

■ Broadband: Dwyfor Meirionnydd**Liz Saville Roberts:****[175963]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department made of the affordability of quoted excess costs for consumers who have requested a universal service connection in Dwyfor Merionnydd since January 2020.

Matt Warman:

The Department is aware that some BT quotations for connection under the Universal Service Obligation (USO) are significantly above the Reasonable Cost Threshold of £3,400 per premise. In September 2020, I wrote to Ofcom's Chief Executive, Dame Melanie Dawes to outline my concerns with some of the quotes and how BT was aggregating demand from USO eligible premises.

In October 2020, Ofcom opened an investigation into BT's compliance with its obligations as a Universal Service Provider. In January 2021, Ofcom issued a statement, stating that they had completed their initial information gathering, would be gathering additional evidence and expected to provide an update by the end of March.

Alongside the USO, the government is investing £5 billion to deliver gigabit-capable broadband to the hardest to reach 20% of premises in the UK. The government recognises that the UK has some very remote places - around 0.3% of the country or less than 100,000 premises - that may be too expensive to build a gigabit-capable broadband network to, even with substantial public subsidy. These premises are also likely to be significantly above the USO's Reasonable Cost Threshold. On 19 March, the government launched a call for evidence to explore the barriers to improving the broadband of these premises and how innovative new technologies could help.

■ Broadband: Rural Areas

Rosie Cooper:

[174048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) stakeholders on investment in fibre broadband in (a) West Lancashire constituency and (b) rural areas in the UK.

Matt Warman:

The government is committed to gigabit capable broadband to everyone in the UK by stimulating investment, busting barriers and driving competition. The UK is on track for one of the fastest rollouts in Europe and for half of all households to have access to gigabit speeds by the end of the year. It is a huge leap forward from 2019, when it was just one in ten.

The government is investing £5 billion in Project Gigabit to ensure that gigabit capable broadband reaches all communities across the UK. Further detail on our approach is set out in our Project Gigabit - [Phase One Delivery Plan](#) published on 19 March 2021, including using subsidised procurements to extend gigabit broadband coverage and providing up to £210m to fund a new voucher from the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme and up to £110m to connect rural GP surgeries, libraries and schools.

West Lancashire is in Phase 2 of the delivery plan. We will begin a national Open Market Review by July 2021 for telecoms providers to give us a picture of where the market plans to invest in gigabit networks over the next three years and to confirm where we need to intervene so places are not left out. Officials from Building Digital UK (BDUK) in DCMS are in regular contact with Lancashire County Council and other partners about the delivery plans for Lancashire.

Alongside the delivery plan, the government also launched a Call For Evidence for the [Very Hard To Reach](#) premises in the UK. The [Barrier Busting Task Force](#) also published an update of their work in a range of measures to support gigabit rollout.

■ Broadband: Rural Areas and Small Businesses

Fiona Bruce:

[175811]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to improve broadband provision for (a) isolated rural areas and (b) small business owners operating from their homes in (i) Congleton constituency and (ii) England.

Matt Warman:

The government is committed to gigabit capable broadband to everyone in the UK by stimulating investment, busting barriers and driving competition. The UK is on track for one of the fastest rollouts in Europe and for half of all households to have access to gigabit speeds by the end of the year. It is a huge leap forward from 2019, when it was just one in ten.

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We will begin a national Open Market Review by July 2021 for telecoms providers to give us a picture of where the market plans to invest in gigabit networks over the next three years and to confirm where we need to intervene so places are not left out.

4,000 premises in Cheshire will also benefit from access to gigabit capable broadband as a result of a £4.5million investment under the Superfast Broadband programme that was agreed in December 2020.

For those in the most isolated areas, where the costs of delivering broadband rise exponentially, the government has issued a [Call for Evidence](#) for users and suppliers to share their current experiences, needs and views. We are also asking suppliers to provide further information on technologies coming to market that may support delivery of improved broadband to these locations.

■ **Broadband: Voucher Schemes**

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[175961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions his Department has had with the Welsh Government on the continuation of the top-up to the gigabit broadband voucher scheme in Wales for 2021-22.

Matt Warman:

Building Digital UK has regular discussions with all Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme Top-Up partners, including the Welsh Government, and during the development of the UK Gigabit Voucher these discussions have included options for topping up the new voucher.

■ **Broadband: Wales**

Beth Winter:

[\[174292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of connectivity and broadband speeds in (a) Cynon Valley constituency, (b) Rhondda Cynon Taf and (c) Wales.

Matt Warman:

Current superfast broadband coverage in Cynon Valley constituency is 98% of premises and in Rhondda Cynon Taf it is 98.5%. Coverage in Wales is 95.2%. Further detail on broadband availability is set out in the table below.

The government is now working with the Welsh Government on ensuring progress as quickly as possible to provide access to gigabit-capable connectivity. The government expects that the private sector will provide gigabit connectivity to 80% of the country by 2025 and to support this, the government will continue to work to

remove barriers to deployment. The government will also undertake procurement projects under Project Gigabit with public funding to add to this coverage. We are targeting a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025 but will seek to accelerate rollout further to get as close to 100% as possible.

■ **Broadcasting: Political Activities**

Marco Longhi:

[176062]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking with broadcasters to ensure the (a) political impartiality of news commentators and (b) live disclosure of affiliations where impartiality is not possible.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Trusted news is vital to a strong and fully functioning democracy. It has an essential role in holding power to account and keeping the public informed of local, national and international issues. We expect news broadcasters and their journalists and commentators to adhere to the highest standards of accuracy, whilst respecting their right to freedom of expression.

Decisions on broadcasting regulation, including impartiality in broadcast news, are a matter for Ofcom. Ofcom's Broadcasting Code contains rules to ensure that broadcast news is reported with due accuracy and impartiality. The Broadcasting Code clarifies that any personal interest of a reporter or presenter, which would call into question the due impartiality of the programme, must be made clear to the audience.

■ **Broadcasting: Wales**

Ben Lake:

[175983]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the recommendations of the Senedd's Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report, Exploring the devolution of broadcasting.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government responded to the recommendations made by the Senedd Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee report on 6 April.

In the response, the government reaffirmed its manifesto commitments to continue to support S4C and support the Welsh Government's ambition for one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

However, the response made clear that broadcasting policy will remain a reserved matter and that there are no plans to establish an independent funding commission for the TV licence.

In addition, the government continues to consider carefully the future of the public service broadcasting landscape, including the regional Channel 3 licences, and the appropriate regulatory structure for commercial radio.

■ Charities: Lobbying

Scott Benton: [\[176077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to restrict charities who receive public money from engaging in lobbying activities.

Matt Warman:

The Government Grants Functional Standard already includes a requirement for departments to ensure grant agreements provide a clear description of how funding should be spent which precludes the use of public money in paid for lobbying. This is to ensure that public money is used for its intended purpose.

Funded charities can use other funding sources to undertake non-party political activities and campaigning that supports their charitable purpose.

■ Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Stephen Farry: [\[176119\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans the Government has to ratify the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Stephen Farry: [\[176120\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason the Government has not ratified the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government values the profound contribution of the UK's craft workers, artisans and artists to the preservation of our unique intangible heritage. We are exploring the merits of ratifying the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, as a potential addition to the broad range of support measures which already exist for this vital aspect of our nation's life.

■ Coronavirus: Firing Ranges

Theresa Villiers: [\[174752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, from 12 April 2021 whether indoor shooting ranges are permitted to have people attend their site from separate households providing they are adequately distanced and following covid-secure guidelines.

Theresa Villiers: [\[174753\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether people visiting indoor shooting ranges from separate households may participate at the same time when the relevant covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus. On Monday 22 February, my Rt

Hon Friend, the Prime Minister announced a roadmap out of the current lockdown in England.

Step 2 of the roadmap will take place no earlier than 12 April, and will allow indoor leisure facilities - including shooting ranges - to reopen for individual use only except in certain circumstances. These include supervised activities for children which can take place in groups of up to 15.

Shooting ranges are permitted to have people attend their site from separate households providing they are adequately distanced, following covid-secure guidelines including ventilation limits and do not mix with other households. The relevant National Governing Body will be able to provide further guidance on how to undertake these activities in a covid secure manner.

■ Cricket

Navendu Mishra:

[\[176089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to diversify participation in cricket and to promote the sport among underrepresented groups.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in sport and physical activity, including cricket. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase levels of physical activity amongst under-represented groups, working closely with national bodies to achieve this. Sport England's recently launched new ten year strategy, "Uniting the Movement", reinforces their commitment to increasing diversifying participation in grassroots sport and physical activity.

Sport England funding has directly contributed to a number of cricket participation projects with an equality, diversity and inclusion focus run by the English and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). This includes a recent £2 million investment into the South Asian Action Plan, focused on opening up access to cricket, and the development of a new disability strategy, delivered by the ECB.

■ Cultural Heritage

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[174882\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he publish the minutes from his meeting held on 23 February 2021 with 25 heritage organisations in the UK.

Caroline Dinéage:

There are currently no plans to publish minutes of this invitation only meeting of sector stakeholders. The meeting was held for the purpose of discussing policy development.

■ Cultural Heritage: Coronavirus**Alex Sobel:****[176027]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that heritage sites will be able to open in line with the timeframe outlined in the roadmap out of covid-19 restrictions.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government has been running four policy reviews to inform the roadmap. The following are supporting the safe reopening of indoor attractions:

- Social Distancing Review to understand when and under what circumstances social distancing guidance can be lifted or amended
- COVID Certification Review to understand the case for introducing certification and the mechanics of a certification programme.
- Events Research Programme, led by DCMS, aims to build evidence on the risks associated with transmission and the extent that mitigation measures could address risk of transmission at events. The programme aims to start in April, with pilot events carried out across a range of settings, sectors, venue types, and activity types; many of which are applicable to Heritage sites. The shortlist of pilot events will take into account a range of requirements needed to test different science-led criteria, including but not limited to - indoor and outdoor settings, small and large venues, seated and standing events, different forms of audience participation, transport to events, duration, and ventilation.

In addition, the online Heritage Working Safely Guidance has been updated following each adjustment to COVID regulation, including the recent Roadmap steps. This guidance is for people who work or volunteer in Heritage locations, and aims to help the sector understand how to make their workplaces COVID secure for employees and visitors. This has been produced by DCMS and Historic England.

Alex Sobel:**[176028]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the relative safety of heritage sites for visitors compared to other outdoor and indoor venues during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dinenage:

Scientific research has proven that the transmission of COVID-19 is lower outdoors than in indoor environments. Outdoor heritage sites, such as the grounds of castles, historic houses and monuments open to the elements have been open since June 2020. However, sites have been provided guidance by DCMS on how to open sites safely. This includes using pre-booking systems and limiting numbers of visitors and employees on site.

Indoor attractions at heritage sites will be able to re open in Step 3 (no earlier than May 17).

There are some indoor settings which are considered lower risk where household mixing is less likely, for example in shops, barbers and exercise facilities. These will be opening in Step 2 (no earlier than April 12).

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[175950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) a Seat Out to Help Out scheme to support live entertainment and (b) providing individual funding for musicians and other freelancers in England via the Cultural Recovery Fund on a similar basis to the support available in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Caroline Dinenage:

The 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' announced by the Prime Minister on the 22 February provides a roadmap out of the current lockdown in England, including for live events. Once theatres and live entertainment venues are able to reopen, we want the public to show their support by attending events, and we will continue to review all viable options to ensure the successful reopening of the live entertainment sector.

DCMS continues to engage with HM Treasury to ensure the needs of our sectors are factored into the developing economic response, and that DCMS sectors, including the music sector, are supported throughout this time. The Government recognises the significant challenge the current pandemic poses to many individuals and freelancers working in the music industry, and we are working very hard to help freelancers in this sectors access support, including through Arts Council England and the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) which will continue until September with a fourth and fifth grant. Individuals will be able to qualify for the new grants based on their 2019-20 tax returns. This means that over 600,000 self-employed individuals may be newly eligible for the SEISS, including many new to self-employment in 2019-20.

Alex Sobel:

[\[176026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how funding from the second round of the Culture Recovery Fund will be distributed between the arts, culture, museums and heritage sectors.

Caroline Dinenage:

Last year the government announced the unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the culture sector. The successful applications from the first round were announced late last year, with almost 3,800 organisations receiving over £1 billion in funding, saving at least 75,000 jobs.

The successful applications from the second round were announced on Friday 2 April 2021. From this latest round of funding, over 2,700 organisations across arts, culture, museums and heritage have been offered an additional nearly £400 million in grants and loans to help the sector reopen and recover.

Funding from this second round will support organisations to transition from the challenging months of lockdowns and social distancing to welcoming audiences and visitors back to the country's theatres, museums, cinemas, music venues and heritage sites.

Additionally, the Chancellor announced in the 2021 Budget an additional £300 million to support theatres, museums and other cultural organisations in England through the Culture Recovery Fund. This extra funding, together with other cultural support such as funding for our national museums, means that our total support package for culture during the pandemic is now approaching £2bn.

■ Culture Recovery Fund: Barnsley

Dan Jarvis:

[R] [\[174839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress his Department has made on delivering support through the Culture Recovery Fund to the culture and heritage sector in Barnsley.

Caroline Dinenage:

In round one of the Culture Recovery Fund, 6 awards in total were made in the constituencies of Barnsley Central, totalling £609k.

In round two of the Culture Recovery Fund, 6 awards in total were made totalling £419k.

■ English Language: Education

Alan Brown:

[\[175929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the financial effect of covid-19 travel restrictions on the operation of English Language Teaching Centres.

Alan Brown:

[\[175930\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what sectoral support has recently been provided to the operators of English Language Teaching Centres.

Nigel Huddleston:

We recognise that COVID-19 restrictions are significantly impacting tourism across the country, and that these remain extremely challenging conditions for businesses such as English Language Teaching Centres, which are important to the supply chain.

English Language Schools have been, and are, able to benefit from a wide variety of Government support, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended until September, a variety of generous Government backed loan schemes and grants through the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme, although this is for England only.

The guidance for the Additional Restrictions Grant funding was updated on 22 March to include the £425m top-up from 1 April 2021. This states that Local Authorities are encouraged to support businesses from all sectors that may have been severely impacted by restrictions, but are not eligible for the Restart Grant scheme. The document states that this may include English Language Schools, alongside a number of other businesses.

Although funding issued under the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme is ultimately issued at the discretion of Local Authorities, we encourage and expect them to be sympathetic to applications from English Language Schools, as well as other businesses in the tourism supply chain which have been affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

■ Food: Advertising

Jason McCartney:

[\[175808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to plans to restrict online advertising of products High in Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS), whether online platforms are planned to be held legally responsible under statutory rules for making sure that HFSS food and drink advertising does not appear.

Caroline Dinenage:

The government will shortly publish its response to consultations held in 2019 and 2020 which set out proposals to ban HFSS advertisements being shown on TV before 9pm, and for further statutory measures to restrict HFSS advertising online.

The response will set out the Government's approach to online liability and enforcement.

Jason McCartney:

[\[175809\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what specific steps his Department will take to enforce restrictions on online advertising of products high in fat, sugar and salt.

Caroline Dinenage:

In 2019 and 2020, the Government consulted on proposals to further restrict HFSS advertising on TV and online. We will be publishing the government response to the consultation shortly, which will set out the future policy direction for both TV and online HFSS advertising.

In the 2020 consultation we proposed that the day-to-day responsibility for applying HFSS advertising restrictions be given to the Advertising Standards Authority, recognising their expertise and experience in regulating advertising. Following the current regulatory regime, we propose that breaches would be resolved in line with current ASA policy of responding to individual complaints and promoting voluntary cooperation with the restriction.

If this approach failed or advertisers were committing repeated or severe breaches relating to HFSS marketing material, they would face stronger penalties through a

statutory backstop. We would envisage that the backstop regulator would have powers to issue civil sanctions, including the ability to issue fines.

We want to ensure that the enforcement powers of the statutory regulator are designed and used in a way that incentivises compliance and allows for rapid remedial action. The Government will implement any new HFSS advertising restrictions across both online and TV simultaneously by the end of 2022, as outlined in the Tackling Obesity policy published on 27 July 2020.

■ **Football: Coronavirus**

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[175742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will meet with (a) the Football Association and (b) Wembley Stadium to discuss the potential of rescheduling the 2019-20 Non-league Finals Day.

Nigel Huddleston:

The department continues to meet with the football authorities, including The Football Association (FA), on a range of matters including the return of spectators.

Coronavirus has presented many challenges for sport, and the sector's success thus far at maintaining their competitive programmes should be commended. The FA is responsible for the scheduling of its competitions, including Non-league Finals Day, as well as preparations for the return of spectators.

Football is clearly not the same without fans, which is why we will look to get spectators back to outdoor stadiums in a safe and manageable way. We will continue to engage with the sector as we progress along the Roadmap, and look forward to welcoming spectators back to stadia across the country from step 3 of the Roadmap.

■ **Greyhound Racing: Coronavirus**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[174747\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the reopening of greyhound tracks across the UK as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government recognises that the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be extremely challenging for businesses, including greyhound stadia. Greyhound racing has continued behind closed doors since 1 June.

The Events Research Programme (ERP), working closely with local authorities and organisers will undertake studies to get fans and audiences back safely as restrictions are gradually eased. The pilots programme will be used to provide key scientific data and research into how small and large-scale events could be permitted to safely reopen in line with the Roadmap out of lockdown as part of Step 4, commencing no earlier than 21 June.

On 19 November 2020 the Government announced a rescue package worth £300 million to help major spectator sports which have been affected by the pandemic, including a preliminary allocation of £1 million in loans for greyhound racing. In the recent budget a further £300m was announced for the recovery package across all sports.

Greyhound racing has also been eligible to access pan-economy support provided by the government including the business rates holiday for leisure industry businesses, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

■ Historic Buildings: Repairs and Maintenance

Alex Sobel:

[\[176029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reforming VAT on repair and maintenance of historic buildings.

Caroline Dinenage:

The current VAT system could be regarded as an incentive to demolish existing buildings entirely and start again. As people take ownership of a property - new build or listed - a standard rate is applied to its maintenance and upkeep; in this respect, there is parity of treatment. However, owners of historic properties, particularly listed buildings, are likely to incur higher costs to maintain their homes. The upkeep of buildings, especially those of heritage significance, is in the wider public interest.

As with all tax matters, this is something which HMT keeps under regular review.

My Officials are engaged with the sector to build a robust evidence base and develop targeted interventions that might benefit listed buildings in this space.

■ Holiday Accommodation: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[174896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether holiday apartments that are accessed via a publicly shared hallway within a residential block of flats are permitted to reopen as covid-19 restrictions are lifted on businesses on 12 April 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

From Step 2, no earlier than 12 April, self-contained holiday accommodation will be open for leisure stays. This is defined as accommodation in which facilities (kitchens, sleeping areas, bathrooms and indoor communal areas such as: lifts, staircases, lounges, sitting areas and internal corridors for entry and exit) are restricted to exclusive use of a single household/support bubble. A reception area is not to be treated as a shared facility or indoor communal area if they are required in order to be open for check-in purposes, but should only be used for the purposes of check-in.

The Government's phased approach to reopening means that any holiday accommodation that relies on sharing the facilities listed above must remain closed until Step 3, no earlier than 17 May. This will require the continued closure of any holiday lets or serviced accommodation within apartment buildings that share any of the facilities listed above.

From Step 3, no earlier than 17 May, all remaining accommodation will be permitted to reopen for leisure stays.

The Government's COVID-19 Secure guidance for hotels and guest accommodation and the visitor economy will be kept up to date over the coming months, in line with the reopening process for the sector.

■ Learning Disability: Technology

Ellie Reeves:

[174941]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to ensure that people with learning disabilities have access to the internet and are supported with using technology during the covid-19 outbreak.

Caroline Dineneage:

To tackle the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on disabled people DCMS launched the £2.5m digital inclusion Digital Lifeline fund on 25 February. The fund will provide 5000 devices, data and support for disabled people to use the devices safely and confidently.

The government is working on the project with leading digital inclusion charities Good Things Foundation and AbilityNet, both highly experienced in helping disabled people boost their mental health and achieve their goals through digital technology.

The Government has worked closely with industry throughout the pandemic and has agreed a set of commitments with the UK's major broadband and mobile operators to support vulnerable consumers during the Covid-19 period. Providers committed to working with customers who are finding it difficult to pay their bill as a result of Covid-19 to ensure that they are treated fairly and appropriately supported. Supplementary to this work, Ofcom published a [Vulnerability Guide](#) for providers, setting out its expectations and good practice on how vulnerable telecoms consumers should be supported.

■ Musicians: EU Countries

Catherine West:

[174926]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what correspondence the Government has had with the customs authorities of each EU Member State to ensure that border officials understand and uphold the exemption for musicians and accompanied instruments.

Caroline Dinenage:

The EU's customs legislation, the Union Customs Code, provides that relief from import duty can be given for portable musical instruments temporarily imported by travellers in order to be used as professional equipment, without the need to submit a formal customs declaration. The UK has an equivalent provision for similar movements into the UK. The management of EU import and export procedures are the responsibility of the customs authorities of the Member States. It is therefore important that individuals or businesses confirm the processes at their port of arrival and any conditions or procedures that may apply.

Officials in the Border and Protocol Delivery Group (BPDG) engage on a regular basis with the EU custom authorities. DCMS will continue to work with BPDG and the sector to engage with relevant customs authorities to address any issues facing musicians.

■ National Leisure Recovery Fund**Alison McGovern:**[\[174112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Government announces allocation of £100 million to support recovery of leisure centres, published on 20 March 2021, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of that funding on trends in the level of leisure centre closures; and if he will make a statement.

Alison McGovern:[\[174113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his Department's press release entitled Government announces allocation of £100 million to support recovery of leisure centres, published on 20 March 2021, what steps he has taken to ensure that the process of allocating recovery funding is (a) equitable and (b) transparent.

Nigel Huddleston:

The National Leisure Recovery Fund sought to support eligible public sector leisure centres to reopen to the public, giving the sport and physical activity sector the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term.

A total of £100 million was available as a biddable fund to eligible local authorities in England, which was allocated in a single funding round. Eligible local authorities include: those in England who hold responsibility for the provision of leisure services, those who have outsourced their leisure provision to an external body to and those whose outsourced leisure arrangements have ended since 20 March 2020 and services are now delivered as an in-house function. This is in addition to the wider financial support provided to councils throughout the pandemic.

To help ensure an equitable distribution of the National Leisure Recovery Fund, a Notional Funding Allocation was calculated for each eligible local authority and funding awards were only made in excess of the Notional Funding Allocation in the most exceptional circumstances. The basis of the Notional Funding Allocation is a per

capita allocation. This has then been adjusted to take into consideration physical activity levels, number of facilities and health outcome indicators.

Government has worked closely with the Local Government Association (LGA), ukactive, the District Councils' Network, Community Leisure UK, Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association and others to make sure the application and funding process is as fast and simple as possible.

■ **Pets: Travel**

Navendu Mishra:

[176091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of the potential effect of the EU Pet Travel Regulations on levels of tourism to (a) the UK and (b) Northern Ireland.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is engaging with stakeholders in the tourism sector to hear their priorities for the UK's future relationship with the EU, and continues to assess issues raised by stakeholders.

The UK has been formally listed as a Part 2 third country for the purposes of the EU Pet Travel Regulations, which means that new rules now apply to pet movements from Great Britain to the EU and Northern Ireland. These rules are set out under the EU Pet Travel Regulations. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol, EU rules also apply to the non-commercial movements of pets into Northern Ireland from Great Britain. There have been no changes to the current pet travel health requirements for entry into Great Britain and we will continue to accept EU pet passports.

We will continue to press the European Commission in relation to securing Part 1 listed status, recognising that achieving this would alleviate some of the new requirements for pet owners and assistance dog users travelling to the EU and to Northern Ireland. We are clear that we meet all the animal health requirements for this, and we have one of the most rigorous pet checking regimes in Europe to protect our biosecurity.

The Government is engaging with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to explore means to streamline pet travel between Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognising the high standards of animal health that we share. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has also written to the European Vice-President seeking to ensure that an agreement can be made to address the barriers imposed on pet travel between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland.

■ **Tourism: Climate Change**

Sarah Olney:

[174930]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to support the tourism sector in line with climate objectives.

Nigel Huddleston:

The tourism sector has an important role to play in reducing the UK's emissions and therefore ensuring the UK reaches its net zero emissions target.

My officials and I regularly engage with tourism stakeholders about environmental sustainability, which has been discussed at the Tourism Industry Council and at meetings between the G20 Tourism Ministers.

The £45m Discover England Fund has supported the development of a number of sustainable tourism products, including the The National Park Experience Collection.

DCMS continues to prioritise policies aimed at encouraging sustainable development to the benefit of local communities across the country. The Tourism Recovery Plan, which will be published in Spring, will set out how the Government will support the sector's short and long term recovery from COVID-19.

■ Video on Demand**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[174035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will consult representatives of the British Board of Film Classification on best practice on age labelling for online streaming sites; and if he will urge all platforms operating in the UK to display ratings that accord with that organisation's guidelines.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[174036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a single, unified system of age labelling across all online streaming sites in line with the age labelling system used for cinema.

Caroline Dinéage:

The British Board of Film Classification's (BBFC) age ratings are currently used by a number of video on demand providers and, although adoption is voluntary, we welcome their use. Over the past year, we have been working with the BBFC and industry to drive the voluntary adoption of the BBFC's age rating symbols to video on demand services. We were particularly pleased to see Netflix announce on 1 December 2020 that they have become the first video on demand service to achieve complete coverage of their content under the BBFC's ratings.

The UK's Audiovisual Media Services Regulations 2020, which transposed the revised EU Audiovisual Media Services Directive, were made and laid in Parliament on 30 September 2020. Following Parliament's approval, the video sharing platform regime, for which Ofcom is the regulator, came into force on 1 November 2020. UK-established video sharing platforms must now take appropriate measures to protect the public, including minors, from illegal and harmful material.

Video sharing platforms are not currently mandated to adopt BBFC ratings, nor is it expected that they will be mandated to do so under Ofcom's regulatory regime for video sharing platforms. In order to comply with the video sharing platform regime, age assurance measures may be adopted by video sharing platforms along with

other measures such as age ratings and parental controls. Age assurance measures comprise a broad range of technical measures which can be used by a service to establish the age of their users. Under the video sharing platform regime, services must take into account freedom of expression and should consider what measures are most appropriate and proportionate prior to introducing them.

Ofcom and the BBFC have a strong collaborative relationship when working on audience protection issues. The BBFC is engaging actively with both Ofcom and video sharing platforms to share their expertise on emerging technologies and the applicability of content ratings on those platforms.

Protecting children is at the heart of our online harms agenda and of wider government priorities. Where sites host user-generated content or facilitate online user interaction such as video and image sharing, commenting and live streaming, then that content will be subject to the new duty of care to be introduced under the Online Safety Bill. The government is working at pace to prepare the Bill, which will be ready this year.

We will continue to engage with industry to encourage platforms to use BBFC ratings to keep children safe online. We will keep the evidence for legislation in this area under review.

■ Youth Services: Finance

Steve Reed:

[\[174135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much of the £500 million pledged in the 2019 Conservative Party Manifesto has been allocated for youth services.

Matt Warman:

The Youth Investment Fund remains a manifesto commitment for transformative levelling up across the country over the course of the parliament and in the recently completed Spending Review, £30m was committed from the fund as capital investment for 2021-22. This will provide investment in new and refurbished safe spaces for young people, so that they can access youth support workers, and beneficial activities outside of school, including sport and culture. Further details of the timetable for allocation and eligibility criteria will be announced in due course.

DCMS is currently undertaking a review of all its spending on services for young people, including future plans for the Youth Investment Fund, which will support 2021 Spending Review proposals.

Government recognises the significant impact of Covid-19 on young people, and on the youth services that support them. The 2020-21 £16.5m Youth Covid-19 Support Fund was announced to protect the immediate future of grassroots and national youth organisations. The funding is allocated from the government's unprecedented £750 million package of support, which is already benefiting tens of thousands of frontline charities. More than £88 million of this package has already been provided to organisations working with vulnerable children and young people.

■ Zoos: Coronavirus

Marco Longhi:

[176057]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department plans to take to encourage visits to zoos as soon as relevant covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department plans to take a number of steps to encourage a range of tourism activities following the easing of restrictions.

The Global Travel Taskforce last year committed the Government to publish a Tourism Recovery Plan in support of the sector. The Government intends to set out proposals in the Spring, including plans for a marketing campaign to welcome visitors back to the UK as soon as it is safe to do so.

When holidays are permitted again, we will work with VisitBritain, VisitEngland and local partners to champion the UK's diverse tourism offer once again - just as we did with last year's Enjoy Summer Safely and Escape The Everyday campaigns.

We will continue to work with industry to provide assurance regarding when people can safely visit attractions - as demonstrated through the We're Good to Go industry standard, which has been used by over 45,000 businesses, including several zoos.

EDUCATION

■ Assessments: Coronavirus

Sarah Owen:

[176054]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to support private candidates for examinations during the summer 2021 examination season.

Nick Gibb:

Given the ongoing disruption to education caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, we announced in January that GCSE, AS and A level exams will not go ahead as planned this summer.

The Department and Ofqual have ensured that there is a clear and accessible route for private candidates to receive a grade this year at the same time as other candidates. Private candidates can work with a centre to be assessed on a range of evidence, which could include evidence from an established educational provider and the board-provided assessment materials. These candidates should have the same opportunity as other students to be assessed on what they were taught. Centres can conduct assessments remotely if needed. This guidance includes information for centres about assessing private candidates, taking into account their different circumstances: <https://www.icq.org.uk/summer-2021-arrangements/>.

The Department is working with the sector to ensure there are enough centres available to support private candidates. The Joint Council for Qualifications have published a list of available centres: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/private-candidates-summer-2021/>, giving private candidates the opportunity to find a centre at a similar cost to a normal year. The exam boards have committed that private candidates will not be charged late fees if entries are received by 26 April.

To support centres with the additional requirements of assessing private candidates this year, and avoid the cost being passed on to candidates, we are providing a grant for centres to claim £200 per private candidate entry. Guidance on the grant is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/private-candidate-support-grant-information-for-exam-centres/private-candidate-support-grant>. The Government is encouraging all available exams centres to sign up to help these candidates achieve their qualifications in this exceptional year.

■ Dedicated Schools Grant

Tulip Siddiq:

[174924]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the criteria his Department used to determine (a) which councils would receive funding from the Dedicated schools grant: very high deficit intervention, announced on 19 March 2021 and (b) the level of (i) funding each would receive and (ii) spending reductions those councils would have to make as part of this.

Vicky Ford:

We recognise that some local authorities have faced particular challenges in recent years in managing spending on pupils with high needs and will not be able to resolve their accumulated Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits over a reasonable period without more targeted intervention. We have therefore developed a programme for those authorities with the greatest need for intervention to rapidly secure sustainable management of their high needs systems and spending, through a rigorous process of reform, with a firm focus on maintaining and improving the quality of support for children with special educational needs and disability.

In order to make this process manageable, it was necessary to limit discussions during the 2020-21 financial year to a fairly small number of local authorities. The first local authorities we have worked with on this intervention programme were those with the highest percentage DSG deficits at the end of the 2019-20 financial year. We expect to expand the programme to other local authorities during 2021-22 and as necessary in subsequent years, continuing to target those with the most substantial deficits.

The department did not set criteria in advance for the content of the agreements with local authorities. Following detailed discussions with the department, the local authorities wrote proposals aimed at securing the sustainability of their high needs systems and spending, and controlling their deficits, through rigorous reform. Those proposals included requests of the department for financial support to eliminate their

historic deficits over time. The proposals formed the basis of the agreements with each local authority and are therefore specific to their individual circumstances. As set out in the agreements, funding will be paid over several financial years, and will be subject to delivery of the reforms and deficit reduction targets proposed by the local authorities involved.

■ Financial Services: Education

Robert Halfon:

[175815]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the provision of financial education in primary education; and whether his Department supports the aims of Global Money Week.

Robert Halfon:

[175816]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how his Department plans to promote discussions on money in primary schools during Global Money Week to build financial resilience to future economic shocks; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

It is important that pupils are well prepared to manage their money, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information, if required.

Financial education forms part of the citizenship curriculum which can be taught at all keys stages: <https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>. The curriculum aligns well with the aims of Global Money Week, in that it seeks to develop young people's financial awareness and skills by helping them to look after their money and realise that future wants and needs may be met through saving. This is built on at secondary school to cover income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

Citizenship is not a compulsory subject at primary school. Primary schools are free to include additional content on financial management, including working with external experts. The Department does not monitor this and trusts schools to use their professional judgement and understanding of their pupils to develop the right teaching approach for their particular context.

The Department will continue to work closely with the Money and Pensions Service and other stakeholders such as Her Majesty's Treasury, to consider what can be discovered from such initiatives and whether there is scope to provide further support for the teaching of financial education in schools.

The Department did not promote discussions on money during Global Money Week in March as our focus was on the successful and safe re-opening of schools.

■ National Tutoring Programme

Chi Onwurah:

[174120]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many National Tutoring Programme organisations are based in the North East; and what the minimum qualification required is for offering and delivering the National Tutoring Programme.

Nick Gibb:

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is a key part of the Government's COVID-19 catch up response and provides additional, targeted tuition support to disadvantaged children and young people who have been hardest hit from disruption to their education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Since its launch, over 155,000 pupils and more than 4,000 schools have enrolled for tuition support with the NTP Tuition Partners.

The programme ensures that additional support has been allocated to regions with the largest numbers of disadvantaged pupils and in regions where access to tutoring has historically been lower. The Tuition Partners offer a good blend of national and regional providers that can offer support to schools across all regions in England.

Included in the 33 approved Tuition Partners, there are 6 regional providers that deliver tuition in the north east of England, there are a further 16 which are delivering nationally. More information on our approved tuition partners can be found here: https://d3vgwsfdkj1ams.cloudfront.net/documents/NTP-Guide-to-approved-Tuition-Partners-2020-21_2020-11-27-162657_1.pdf?mtime=20201207170317&focal=none.

High quality tuition is one of the fundamental principles of the NTP, and the Department has worked closely with our delivery partners to ensure that this can be delivered across both pillars of the NTP.

The Department recognises that the education and experience of tutors is key to the delivery of quality tuition. Whilst each Tuition Partner is responsible for setting their own criteria for tutor qualifications, there is an expectation that a high minimum standard for qualifications is in place and tutors will be at least highly qualified graduates.

All tutors will still require training to ensure that tuition is delivered in line with the model offered by the Tuition Partner. That is why when selecting tutoring organisations, our delivery partner, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) took into consideration the training offer available for tutors, and funding was allocated to those organisations with robust training programmes in place for all tutors to undertake.

The EEF continue to monitor all organisations involved in the programme to ensure tutoring is of a high quality and that schools are satisfied with the tuition being provided.

■ Performing Arts: Education

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[174296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what effect the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 will have on performing arts courses.

Gillian Keegan:

The department is reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below, to ensure that every qualification approved for public funding has a distinct purpose, is high quality and supports progression to positive outcomes.

Our second stage consultation of the review proposed a number of groups of qualifications for funding alongside A levels and T Levels in the future. These include qualifications, such as performing arts, that have a strong practical focus and support progression to specialist higher education courses not accessible through A levels. We recognise concerns about the potential removal of well-established qualifications, which is why we have consulted extensively.

The consultation closed on 31 January 2021 and we will publish a full response later this year.

■ Post-16 Qualifications at Level 3 and Below in England Review

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[174295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish a response to the consultation on the review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 that closed on 31 January 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

The second stage consultation for the post-16 qualifications review at level 3 closed on 31 January 2021. The department is currently considering the consultation responses received and will publish a final policy response later this year.

■ Pupil Exclusions: Ethnic Groups

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[176032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to tackle unequal exclusions for (a) Black and (b) Roma children.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has made a public commitment to work in partnership with my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister's Independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities to understand disparities in expulsion rates.

It is clear in guidance on suspension and expulsion that all schools should consider what extra support might be needed to identify and address the needs of children from groups with disproportionately high rates of expulsion.

The Department is pursuing an ambitious programme of work on school behaviour across the school system, including through our £10 million behaviour hubs

programme. The Department is also focusing on reforms needed to deliver significantly improved outcomes for children and young people in alternative provision, so that children who are suspended or expelled, and children at risk of suspension or expulsion, receive high quality education and support suited to their individual needs.

■ Pupil Premium

Sarah Olney:

[174928]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) primary and (b) secondary school pupils who will not receive pupil premium funding as a result of the eligibility dates changing from January 2021 to October 2020.

Nick Gibb:

The January 2021 census will be used to determine pupil premium eligibility for alternative provision and pupil referral units for the financial year 2021-22. Pupil premium eligibility for mainstream and special schools will be based on the October 2020 census.

Per pupil funding rates will be the same as in 2020-21, which is expected to increase pupil premium funding from £2.4 billion in 2020-21 to more than £2.5 billion in 2021-22 as more children have become eligible for free school meals. In addition to this the Government announced a further £300 million for a one-off Recovery Premium which will be allocated to schools based on the same methodology as the pupil premium. In this way, schools with more disadvantaged pupils will receive larger amounts.

The Department will confirm pupil premium allocations for the financial year 2021-22 in June 2021. This will provide the public with information on the specific amounts that regions, local authorities, and schools are receiving through the pupil premium for 2021-22.

Data on the number of pupils who have become eligible for free school meals since 2 October 2020 is currently being collected in the spring school census and is not yet available.

The Department publishes information on pupil premium allocations and the number of pupils eligible annually. The most recent publicly available figures can be found via this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>.

■ Remote Education: Computers

Stella Creasy:

[175842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish the number of laptops that local authorities were required to buy for children who are eligible for (a) free school meals, (a) pupil premium, (c) education, health and care plans and (d) other

vulnerabilities following the announcement of an additional funding allocation for laptops by his Department in February 2021.

Nick Gibb:

The Government is investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care services, including making 1.3 million laptops and tablets available for disadvantaged children and young people.

Upon delivery, laptops and tablets are owned by schools, academy trusts, local authorities or further education colleges who can lend these to the children and young people who need them most, during the current COVID-19 restrictions .

■ **Schools: Coronavirus**

Alex Cunningham:

[\[174829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 157325 on the Academic Year and School Day, what progress his Department is making on examining a range of options to help schools use evidence-based interventions to support their pupils to make up lost learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and when he plans to make an announcement on that matter.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[175844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2021 to Question 157325, on the Academic Year and School Day, what progress his Department is making on examining a range of options to help schools use evidence-based interventions to support their pupils to make up lost learning as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and when he plans to make an announcement on those options.

Nick Gibb:

The Department appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to oversee our long-term recovery plan. Sir Kevan will speak with parents, pupils, and teachers whilst developing this, and will review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact COVID-19 has had on education. We will share further details in due course.

In June 2020, we announced a £1 billion catch-up package including a National Tutoring Programme and a Catch-up Premium for this academic year, and in February 2021 we committed to further funding of £700 million to fund summer schools, the expansion of our tutoring programmes and a Recovery Premium for the next academic year. Funding will support pupils across early years, schools, and colleges.

■ **Schools: Inspections**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[174754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what adaptations he plans to make to the Ofsted inspections and standards regime in response to the exceptional circumstances prevailing in schools in England as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Nick Gibb:

It is intended that Ofsted will step up its inspections over the summer term, with a view to returning to its full programme from September 2021. Inspections will resume in the summer term in a way that is fair and proportionate. Ofsted has published details of its summer inspection programme for schools, which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update>, and is piloting some changes to its inspection guidance to take account of the challenges raised by COVID-19. It will publish updated inspection handbooks with full details of these changes later this month.

The Government will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams results for 2020 or 2021 in performance tables. Further information on the current accountability arrangements can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-performance-measures/coronavirus-covid-19-school-and-college-accountability-2020-to-2021>. Announcements on performance data arrangements for future years will be made in due course.

Schools: Mental Health Services**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:****[174219]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of the recently announced £700 million of funding to help students catch-up on lost learning will be made available for the provision of mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[174221]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to make additional wellbeing and mental health support available in schools and colleges to support children and young people dealing with the effect of the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Ford:

The support schools provide to their pupils as they return to face-to-face education should include time devoted to supporting mental health and wellbeing, which will play a fundamental part in supporting children and young people's recovery. The £700 million package includes a new one-off Recovery Premium for state primary, secondary and special schools to use as they see best to support disadvantaged students. This will help schools to provide their disadvantaged pupils with a one-off boost to the support, both academic and pastoral, that has been proved most effective in helping them recover from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and can be used for mental health and wellbeing support.

This funding follows our £1 billion COVID-19 "catch-up" package which includes £650 million shared across early years, schools and 16-19 providers over the 2020/21 academic year to support education settings to put the right catch-up and pastoral support in place. This is already being used by schools to put in place additional mental health and wellbeing support.

We have recently announced a £79 million boost to children and young people's mental health support, including through Mental Health Support Teams. The support teams, which provide early intervention on mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in schools and colleges, will grow from the 59 set up by last March to around 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. This increase means that millions of children and young people will have access to significantly expanded mental health services.

The department has convened its Mental Health in Education Action Group, to look at the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in nurseries, schools, colleges, and universities. It is bringing together partners to take additional action to support mental wellbeing of children and young people with the return to education settings and with transitions between education settings in September 2021. This will include looking at what more we can do to help schools to make the most effective use of recovery premium to support mental health and wellbeing.

We also remain committed to our joint green paper delivery programme with the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England, including introducing new mental health support teams for all schools and colleges, providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges, and testing approaches to faster access to NHS specialist support.

■ Sex and Relationship Education

Jess Phillips:

[175887]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that the teaching of relationships and sex education on (a) contraception, (b) fertility and (c) abortion is based on scientific evidence; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to supporting schools to implement relationships, sex, and health education (RSHE) and has published non statutory implementation guidance titled 'Plan your Relationships, Sex and Health Curriculum', alongside teacher training materials. Both are designed to provide teachers with further clarity and practical advice on how to implement the RSHE curriculum, to help all teachers increase their confidence and quality of teaching.

The teacher training module on intimate and sexual relationships, including sexual health, covers contraception, fertility, and abortion. Information on this is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-about-relationships-sex-and-health>. Specifically, pupils will be taught the facts about contraception, reproductive health, and medically and legally accurate, impartial information regarding pregnancy.

■ Sex and Relationship Education: Gender

Jess Phillips: [\[175885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the appropriateness of the language in RSE teaching resources in terms of references to gender roles.

Jess Phillips: [\[175886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to prevent misogynistic and homophobic relationships and sex education (RSE) resources from being used in schools as RSE is rolled out; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

Schools must be aware of issues such as everyday sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and gender stereotypes, and take positive action to build a culture where these are not tolerated, and that any occurrences are identified and tackled. As part of the statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum, all pupils should be taught, at an age-appropriate point, how stereotypes, particularly stereotypes based on sex, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability, can cause damage.

To support the teaching of these subjects, the Department has published implementation guidance and teacher training modules to equip all schools to construct a comprehensive curriculum.

There are many external resources available to support the delivery of RSHE lessons. The Department does not play a role in assessing these. Any material used should align with the teaching requirements set out in the statutory guidance. Schools should assess all resources carefully to ensure they are age appropriate, meet the outcome of the relevant part of the curriculum, and are in line with the school's legal duties in relation to impartiality and the Equality Act.

■ Special Educational Needs

Dan Jarvis: [\[174131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities places available in schools in (a) Yorkshire and Humber and (b) England.

Dan Jarvis: [\[174132\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many Special Educational Needs and Disabilities places are available in schools in (a) Yorkshire and Humber and (b) England as at 23 March 2021.

Vicky Ford:

The statutory duty to provide sufficient school places, including for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) sits with local authorities. We provide funding for all the places that are needed, based on local authorities' own data. We

have announced nearly £500 million to provide places needed for 2023. This funding is on top of over £8.1 billion to provide places needed from 2015 to 2022 and our investment in the Free Schools programme. School capacity published data estimates that, as at May 2019, local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber still needed to provide a further 8,644 places by September 2021. Funding is allocated at local authority level. The local authorities within Yorkshire and Humber have been allocated £1 billion to provide new school places between 2011 and 2023.

In addition to this funding, we are investing £300 million in 2021-22 for new places for children with SEND or who require alternative provision. This funding is on top of £365 million allocated to local authorities through the Special Provision Capital Fund across 2018-19 to 2020-21, with local authorities across Yorkshire and the Humber receiving nearly £22 million through this fund. Funding for future years will be determined as part of the next Spending Review.

The majority of children with special educational needs[1] (SEN) are educated in mainstream settings[2]. Of those identified in state-funded education[3] as either requiring SEN Support (983,559) or who have an education, health and care plan (269,022), 1,125,476 are currently educated in mainstream settings in England. This trend is replicated in the Yorkshire and Humber region, where 116,079 of 126,703 children requiring SEN support or have an education, health and care plan are in mainstream settings.

Under the SEND Code of Practice 2015, all mainstream schools are under a duty to use their best endeavours to support children with SEN (whether or not the child has an education, health and care plan). The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEND under review (including its sufficiency), working with parents, young people, and providers.

[1] We collect data on pupils with a special educational need (SEN). This does not cover all disabilities and pupils may have a disability without a special educational need.

[2] Mainstream refers to state-funded primary and secondary schools only.

[3] State-funded refers to state-funded primary, secondary and special schools only.

■ Turing Scheme

Zarah Sultana:

[174281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of widening the scope of the Turing Scheme to include placements for (a) teaching staff, (b) college staff and (c) youth workers.

Michelle Donelan:

Teaching and college staff mobility will not be funded as part of the Turing scheme in academic year 2021/22, as we are prioritising ensuring as many students, learners and pupils as possible have access to life-changing mobilities to support them in developing the skills they need to thrive. We will assess the impact of the scheme

during its first year, and this will inform the scheme in future. Funding decisions for future years will be subject to future spending reviews.

International opportunities for the youth sector and young people outside of formal education settings are being considered as part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport-led Youth Review, which was commissioned by HM Treasury at the 2020 Spending Review.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Animal Products: UK Trade with EU

Jonathan Edwards: [\[175800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with farming unions on the merits of negotiating a veterinary agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary rules with the EU.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[175801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of a negotiated veterinary agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary rules with the EU on reducing barriers for UK food exporters.

Jonathan Edwards: [\[175802\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) UK food exporters and (b) his counterparts in the EU on negotiating a veterinary agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary rules with the EU.

Ben Lake: [\[175980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the Government plans to negotiate a veterinary agreement on sanitary and phytosanitary rules with the EU to reduce the barriers for UK food exporters.

Victoria Prentis:

The sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) chapter of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) puts in place a framework (including an SPS Specialised Committee) that allows the UK and the EU to take informed decisions to reduce their respective SPS controls, with a commitment to avoid unnecessary barriers to trade. It is in both Parties' interests to use this framework to reduce the rate of SPS checks required.

We are open to discussions with the EU on additional steps we can take to further reduce trade friction, but these cannot be on the basis of future alignment with EU rules as this would compromise UK sovereignty over our own laws.

Defra's reach and engagement with the agri-food sector is extensive and well established. We have maintained and built on conversations with stakeholders over the last four years, to ensure a strong two-way dialogue at both a ministerial and official level. We engage directly with the largest exporting businesses (the top ten of

whom alone account for around 25% of exports). We also reach businesses through trade associations. The Secretary of State meets fortnightly with the F4 group, representing the four main business representative organisations across the agri-food chain: the Food and Drink Federation, National Farmers' Union, UK Hospitality and the British Retail Consortium.

In order to hold productive discussions on specific issues, Defra holds regular forums with the different food and drink sectors. For example, we engage the farming sector through groups such as the Arable and Livestock Chain Advisory Groups, manufacturers through the Food and Drink Manufacturers Roundtable and meat processors through the M4 forum. Defra also holds a Retailer Forum and has regular calls with Wholesale stakeholders.

Regular meetings such as the F4 and F4 sub-groups have allowed for productive two-way engagement with stakeholders across the supply chain. They are an important source of intelligence and industry feedback is that this approach of bringing stakeholders and policy experts together is making good progress towards resolving issues.

■ **Countryside: Codes of Practice**

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[174102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to increase awareness of The Countryside Code as covid-19 restrictions are eased and more people visit the countryside.

Rebecca Pow:

Natural England has a statutory duty to produce and promote the Countryside Code which provides three levels of information: short and long versions for the public plus additional information for land managers and owners for areas of open country.

Natural England has worked with a broad range of stakeholders to refresh the Countryside Code and a relaunch of advice to the public took place over Easter. The launch at Easter marked the beginning of a year-long piece of work with stakeholders and partners to promote the Code more widely and look at how we can best encourage positive behaviours. We want to make the code inclusive and welcoming, to make sure that people are aware that nature is available to all, and that they understand how they can respect and protect the countryside.

■ **Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953**

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[174735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when the provisions of the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 were last reviewed by him, what assessment he made of the effectiveness of the penalties in that legislation; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

My Department takes the issue of livestock worrying very seriously, recognising the distress this can cause farmers and animals, as well as the financial implications.

All reported crimes should be taken seriously, investigated and, where appropriate, taken through the courts and met with tough sentences. The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953 provides a specific offence of allowing a dog to worry livestock with a maximum fine of £1,000. Data available shows that on average 36 livestock worrying cases faced prosecution per annum from 2015 to 2019.

Recent reports on livestock worrying, including by the National Chiefs' Police Council, have recommended reforming the 1953 Act to address current enforcement challenges and ensure it remains fit for purpose. We are currently engaging closely with key stakeholders to improve our understanding of the scale of the issue and the views of both livestock keepers and dog owners. That includes considering the effectiveness of this law and opportunities to improve it.

In addition to the 1953 Act, the police can and do take action under the Dogs Act 1871 where there are dogs that are out of control and dangerous to other animals. Section 2 of the 1871 Act allows a complaint to be made to a Magistrate's court by any individual, the police or local authorities, where a dog is "dangerous and not kept under proper control". The court may make any Order it considers appropriate to require the owner to keep the dog under proper control, or if necessary, that it be destroyed. The court may specify measures to be taken for keeping the dog under proper control, such as muzzling and remaining on a lead when in public.

Guidance is available to educate owners about handling their dogs responsibly in the vicinity of livestock, in order to prevent the occurrence of attacks or chasing.

The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs provides owners with information on how to provide for their dog's natural needs as required by the Animal Welfare Act 2006. The Code of Practice explains how to handle dogs responsibly in the vicinity of other animals, including livestock, in order to prevent the occurrence of attacks or chasing. It also clearly sets out that all dogs need to be trained to behave well, ideally from a very young age and should be introduced gradually and positively to different environments, people and animals. If owners become aware of changes in behaviour, or their dog is fearful of, or aggressive, towards other dogs and people, they should avoid the situations which lead to this and seek veterinary advice. The Code asks owners to ensure that they prevent their dogs from chasing or attacking any other animals, including livestock and horses; for example, through use of a lead or avoidance of such situations.

Natural England is currently working with a broad range of stakeholders to review and refresh the Countryside Code. This work will be in two phases: the refresh of the detail of the Code in time for Easter and an associated campaign running from then throughout 2021 which will include a broader conversation with stakeholders about what a 'post Covid' Code for the 21st century would look like and how to promote

more awareness and positive behaviour. Both the short and long versions of the Code make specific reference to keeping dogs under control.

■ Fisheries: Quotas

Emma Hardy:

[\[174250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release, UK agrees fishing catch limits with EU and Norway, published on 16 March 2021, what proportion of the approximately 25,000 tonnes of unallocated Arctic Cod quota the UK will attempt to acquire for the UK far fishing fleet.

Victoria Prentis:

The press release of 16 March 2021 relates to the trilateral agreement between the UK, Norway, and the EU on catch limits for the six jointly managed stocks in the North Sea.

The UK remains in discussion with Norway on possible bilateral quota exchanges for 2021 across a range of stocks, including Arctic stocks. In conducting these discussions, the Government considers the interests of the entire UK fleet.

■ Food: Labelling

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[175818\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the French government's Maitre-Restaurateur designation scheme to promote the sale of meals prepared from fresh ingredients; and whether he has plans to introduce that scheme in the UK.

Victoria Prentis:

We are delivering our manifesto commitment to promote British food and drink through a range of measures to boost the capability and consumer reach of local producers and SMEs, as well as a refreshed approach to public procurement focusing on local, seasonal and sustainable food.

No assessment has been made of the French government's Maitre-Restaurateur designation scheme to promote the sale of meals prepared from fresh ingredients, and there are currently no plans to introduce the scheme.

■ Food: Waste

Sir Greg Knight:

[\[175720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) reduce food waste and (b) promote more efficient use of resources; and if he will make a statement.

Rebecca Pow:

We are fully committed to meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 target, which seeks to halve global food waste at consumer and retail levels by 2030.

In December 2018, the Government launched its Resources and Waste Strategy which sets out our approach to address food waste.

Government grant funding of nearly £3m is supporting the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to reduce food waste across the supply chain and in the home.

Consumer campaign initiatives including Food Waste Action Week in March and the *Love Food Hate Waste* programme aim to help consumers tackle waste in the home.

This is supported by the Courtauld 2025 Commitment, a collaboration across the supply chain which aims to help the industry become more resource efficient including a target to reduce UK food waste by 20% per capita by 2025. We also work closely with WRAP on its work with the hospitality industry and the provision of resources such as *Guardians of Grub* to embed food waste management at the centre of business operations.

In addition to the WRAP funding, a £15m Food Waste Fund was announced in 2018 to help tackle food waste. Over £11m has been awarded to help food surplus redistributors to get more surplus from the supply chain to those in need. Awards have also been made to behaviour change projects and support for a field force for the Food Waste Roadmap that helps businesses become more resource efficient through a Target, Measure, Act approach to food waste.

■ Horses: Animal Welfare

Robert Halfon: [\[174088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to review the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and their Hybrids.

Robert Halfon: [\[174089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce the practice of horse tethering.

Robert Halfon: [\[174090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to ban the practice of horse tethering.

Robert Halfon: [\[174091\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that tethered horses have access to clean water, adequate food and shelter from the prevailing winds, summer sun and flies.

Victoria Prentis:

This country leads the way in animal welfare, including setting standards for horse welfare. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, all owners and keepers of horses must provide for the welfare needs of their animals. I consider that current legislation and guidance provides the right safeguards and powers in respect of horse tethering.

However, we will continue to engage with key stakeholders to see if more can be done to spread best practice among horse owners as well as increased partnership working in order to tackle the issue of inappropriate horse tethering.

Tethering can be a useful equine temporary management tool when it is used appropriately. The statutory Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids provides owners and keepers with general welfare information, including a specific section on the tethering of a horse. Whilst it is not an offence to breach the Code, if proceedings are brought against someone for a welfare offence under the 2006 Act, (including failing to tether a horse appropriately and ensuring that it's welfare needs are met) it could be used as evidence in support of those proceedings.

The equine welfare sector promotes good welfare practice through their respective websites and via social media for example the National Equine Welfare Council's compendium: <http://www.newc.co.uk/advice/>

■ **Sugar: Environment Protection**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[174004]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it the policy of the Government to promote the substitution of cane sugar for beet sugar on environmental grounds; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Now that we have left the EU we are looking to deliver the greatest possible benefit for both the UK cane refining sector and the UK beet sector. As the UK has a sugar deficit it is important that a diversity of supply is available. Having at least two sources of sugar is important for competitiveness and food security.

The UK Government's approach seeks to balance strategic trade objectives, such as the delivery of the UK's trade ambitions and FTA trade agenda, whilst maintaining the Government's commitment to developing countries to reduce poverty through trade. The Government is committed to making sure that any future trade agreements work for consumers, farmers and businesses across the UK and ensuring that we will not compromise on our high environmental protection.

■ **Take-away Food: Litter**

Dan Jarvis:

[174128]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of drive-through restaurants including customer's car registrations on take away cups to help tackle littering.

Dan Jarvis:

[174129]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on reducing littering in and around drive-through services in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra does not think it would be appropriate to require take-away food vendors to implement a vehicle registration number printing and tracing system for packaging, due to the additional burden this would place on these businesses and those who would be responsible for enforcement. Data protection issues have also been raised.

The Litter Strategy sets out how we intend to work with the relevant industries to tackle certain types of problematic litter, including fast-food packaging.

To this effect, I held a roundtable in September 2020 with large fast-food retailers, many of whom are associated with 'drive-through' type restaurants, to understand what action they are taking now to tackle the litter created by their products. It was encouraging to hear about the initiatives they are working on and, more importantly, that they are committed to delivering lasting change by working together to tackle what is an industry wide issue. We are watching closely to see how their commitments translate into action.

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on litter. Defra has had no discussions with the Department Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on reducing littering in and around drive-through services in the UK.

Our recently published EPR packaging consultation proposes that producers who make or handle consumer-facing packaging should fund the full net-costs associated with the collection, sorting and treatment of the packaging they place on the market, once it becomes waste. We are also proposing that these fees could cover the costs of consumer information campaigns on recycling packaging waste and litter-related costs. We will continue to engage with producers as these measures come forward.

The Environment Bill will provide the powers necessary to introduce such an extended producer responsibility scheme via secondary legislation.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**■ Algeria: Religious Freedom****Imran Ahmad Khan:****[175004]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to support freedom of religion in Algeria.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to defending Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. We regularly engage the Algerian authorities on this issue, including raising the importance of freedom of religion or belief as set out in Algeria's Constitution, and the need to ensure that Algeria's laws and processes allow the freedom to practise one's religion or belief. Our Embassy in Algiers is in regular contact with minority religious

groups in Algeria, including the Protestant Church of Algeria (EPA) and the Ahmaddiya Muslim community.

■ Americas: Democracy

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[176103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of democracy in countries in the Americas categorised as Not Free by the Freedom House index for 2020.

Wendy Morton:

Promoting democracy and defending democratic freedoms is a fundamental part of the UK's foreign policy. We believe that strong democratic institutions and accountable government, which uphold universal rights and the rule of law, are key building blocks for secure and prosperous states. The way we act to support democracy in each country is different, and dependent on the context and needs of the country concerned. Our approach is practical, based on an understanding of where and how we can affect positive change.

In the Americas, we support a wide range of democracy-building initiatives, including funding NGOs that increase citizen participation, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups, providing training for legal professionals, promoting freedom of expression, and strengthening political parties and parliaments. As a 'force for good,' the UK will continue to work with its allies, including championing and strengthening democracy through international bodies like the UN.

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[176104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of democracy in countries in the Americas categorised as Partly Free by the Freedom House index for 2020.

Wendy Morton:

Promoting democracy and defending democratic freedoms is a fundamental part of the UK's foreign policy. We believe that strong democratic institutions and accountable government, which uphold universal rights and the rule of law, are key building blocks for secure and prosperous states. The way we act to support democracy in each country is different, and dependent on the context and needs of the country concerned. Our approach is practical, based on an understanding of where and how we can affect positive change.

In the Americas, we support a wide range of democracy-building initiatives, including funding NGOs that increase citizen participation, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups, providing training for legal professionals, promoting freedom of expression, and strengthening political parties and parliaments. As a 'force for good,' the UK will continue to work with its allies, including championing and strengthening democracy through international bodies like the UN.

Americas: Internet

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[176105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of internet freedom in countries in the Americas categorised as Not Free by the Freedom House index for 2020.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[176106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of internet freedom in countries in the Americas categorised as Partly Free by the Freedom House index for 2020.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to a free, open, peaceful, and secure internet. It enables freedom of expression, and provides a wide arena for human rights defenders and civil society to engage in democratic processes, and hold governments to account.

The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office is supporting the NGO Access Now's #KeepItOn campaign, which brings together a coalition of over 100 countries to counter internet shutdowns. The UK also works to defend internet freedom through our membership of the Freedom Online Coalition, a coalition of 32 countries.

Asia: Democracy

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[176099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of democracy in countries in Asia categorised as Not Free by the Freedom House index for 2020.

Nigel Adams:

Promoting democracy and defending democratic freedoms is a fundamental part of the UK's foreign policy. We believe that strong democratic institutions and accountable government, which uphold universal rights and the rule of law, are key building blocks for secure and prosperous states. The way we act to support democracy in each country is different and dependent on the context and needs of the country concerned. Our approach is practical, based on an understanding of where and how we can affect positive change. We support a wide range of democracy-building initiatives, including funding Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that increase citizen participation, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups, providing training for legal professionals, promoting freedom of expression, and strengthening political parties and parliaments.

Imran Ahmad Khan: [\[176100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to increase the level of democracy in countries in Asia categorised as Partly Free by the Freedom House index for 2020.

Nigel Adams:

Promoting democracy and defending democratic freedoms is a fundamental part of the UK's foreign policy. We believe that strong democratic institutions and accountable government, which uphold universal rights and the rule of law, are key building blocks for secure and prosperous states. The way we act to support democracy in each country is different and dependent on the context and needs of the country concerned. Our approach is practical, based on an understanding of where and how we can affect positive change. We support a wide range of democracy-building initiatives, including funding Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that increase citizen participation, promoting inclusion of marginalised groups, providing training for legal professionals, promoting freedom of expression, and strengthening political parties and parliaments.

■ Bahrain: Politics and Government**Layla Moran:**[\[174958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has sought to meet with UK resident members of the (a) Bahrain Freedom Movement and (b) Bahraini pro-democracy movement.

James Cleverly:

I can confirm that we have sought no meetings with either of the groups in question.

■ Bangladesh: Rohingya**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[174069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of a reported fire in Cox bazar on Rohingya refugees.

Nigel Adams:

The UK government is gravely concerned by the impact on Rohingya refugees of the large fire that took place on Monday 22 March in the Kutapalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. A number of refugees have lost their lives and others have been injured, although the numbers have yet to be verified. Others have been separated from their families, including children. A large number of shelters have been damaged affecting around 40,000 refugees on current estimates. Services including health facilities, community centres, food distribution points and learning centres have been badly damaged and in some cases completely destroyed. We are closely monitoring the impacts of the fire and are working alongside the UN and our implementing partners to fully understand the scale of the needs and how we can support the refugees' most immediate needs.

■ Brazil: Environmental Protection**Stephen Timms:**[\[175693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of Brazilian (a) deforestation and forest burning and (b) mining of indigenous lands on (i) climate and environment and (ii) indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Wendy Morton:

We continue to be concerned by the rising rates of deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon. We have a long-established partnership with Brazil, supported by over £200 million of UK Climate Finance which aims to: i) improve the capacity of governments to reduce deforestation; ii) incentivise forest protection through results-based payments that are re-invested to protect forests, and boost livelihoods; iii) enable businesses and communities to grow rural economies sustainably whilst protecting forests. Implementation arrangements for HMG-funded programmes regularly assess deforestation levels as well as their underlying drivers. The UK stands ready to support Brazil's efforts to counter increasing deforestation rates. We welcome the recent reduction of approximately 25% in areas under deforestation alerts in Brazil, driven particularly by state level action.

The Foreign Secretary and Secretary of State for International Trade have spoken to Brazilian counterparts about a range of issues, and raised with them the crucial importance of combating illegal deforestation at the UK-Brazil Strategic Dialogue (October 2020), and Joint Economic and Trade Committee (November 2020). We regularly discuss issues affecting indigenous peoples with the Brazilian authorities, and will continue to do so. The UK continues to support work with indigenous communities across Brazil, including in the Amazon region. In Brazil, UK programmes on building back better after the COVID-19 pandemic include a focus on vulnerable groups, and in the Amazon region, work on issues such as solar energy, primary health, and skills development.

■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Overseas Aid**Stephen Doughty:**[\[174843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding was allocated for the UK Government Chagosian Support Package since 2016.

Nigel Adams:

A Written Ministerial Statement issued on 16 November 2016 (www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-11-16/HCWS260/) announced a support package of approximately £40 million over a ten year period. Of this £732,879.49 has been spent to date.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[174844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many Chagossians have been supported through funding from the UK Government Chagossian Support Package in each year since 2016.

Nigel Adams:

The number of Chagossians supported through funding from the Support Package since 2016 are:

YEAR	TOTAL
2017	28
2018	33
2019	134
2020	60
2021 (Jan to March)	116

Stephen Doughty:

[\[174845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which geographical areas by (a) Council or (b) Devolved Administration have received funding for projects from the UK Government Chagossian Support Package since 2016.

Nigel Adams:

Projects within the geographical areas of Crawley Borough Council and Manchester City Council have received funding from the support package since 2016.

■ **Chen Quanguo**

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[175017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if the Government will place sanctions on Chen Quanguo, the highest ranking Chinese Communist Party Official in Xinjiang.

Nigel Adams:

On 22 March, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK has imposed, under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime, asset freezes and travel bans against four Chinese government officials responsible for the violations that have taken place and persist against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Alongside those individuals, the UK also designated the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the organisation responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang. By acting with 30 other countries on an agreed set of designations we increased the reach and impact of these measures and sent the clearest possible signal of the international community's serious concern

and collective willingness to act. The FCDO will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review.

■ **China: Airspace**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[174740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the implications for its policies of the increase in the number of intrusions by Chinese warplanes into Taiwan's air defence identification zone in 2021.

Nigel Adams:

The UK's longstanding position on Taiwan has not changed. We are concerned by any action which raises tensions in the region and risks destabilising the status quo. HMG considers the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue.

■ **China: Taiwan**

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[175780\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans the Government has to ensure British ships instigate freedom of navigation exercises in the straits between China and Taiwan.

Nigel Adams:

Many international ships, both military and commercial, travel through the Taiwan Strait and such actions are routine and non-contentious. All activities conducted by the Royal Navy are and will be in accordance with international law.

■ **China: Uighurs**

Sarah Owen:

[\[174968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional steps the UK Government is planning to take in response to the human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Province of China against the Uyghur Muslims.

Nigel Adams:

The Government remains gravely concerned by the human rights situation in Xinjiang and is committed to continued robust action to hold China to account for its human rights violations in the region. In February, the Foreign Secretary used a personal address at the UN Human Rights Council to reiterate his call for China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, or another independent expert, urgent and unfettered access to Xinjiang. On 22 March, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK had imposed, under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime, asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese government officials responsible for the violations that have taken place and persist against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Alongside those individuals, the UK also designated the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the organisation

responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang.

Sarah Owen:

[\[174969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions (a) he, (b) officials of his Department and (c) Cabinet colleagues have had with representatives of the UN on potential steps the UN plans to take in response to the human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Province of China against the Uyghur Muslims.

Nigel Adams:

The Government is committed to working with international partners, including the UN, to hold China to account for its human rights violations in Xinjiang. Ministers and Officials are in regular contact with counterparts at the UN in New York and Geneva. For example, the Minister for Human Rights, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, spoke to the High Commissioner for Human Rights in September. In February, the Foreign Secretary used a personal address at the UN Human Rights Council to reiterate his call for China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, or another independent expert, urgent and unfettered access to Xinjiang.

Geraint Davies:

[\[175687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what additional steps the (a) Government and (b) UN are planning to take in response to the human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Province of China against the Uyghur Muslims.

Nigel Adams:

The Government remains gravely concerned by the human rights situation in Xinjiang and is committed to continued robust action to hold China to account for its human rights violations in the region. In February, the Foreign Secretary used a personal address at the UN Human Rights Council to reiterate his call for China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, or another independent expert, urgent and unfettered access to Xinjiang. On 22 March, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK had imposed, under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime, asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese government officials responsible for the violations that have taken place and persist against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Alongside those individuals, the UK also designated the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the organisation responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang.

Geraint Davies:

[\[175689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation of Uyghur children in China following reports of the forced separation of exiled families and children in the recent report by Amnesty International entitled China: The nightmare of uyghur families separated by repression.

Nigel Adams:

We are deeply concerned by reports of the mistreatment of Uyghur children, including reports of children being forcibly separated from their parents and placed in state run institutions. The Government has taken careful note of Amnesty International's report of 19 March 2021 and will continue to engage with a range of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and other experts, to inform our understanding of the situation in Xinjiang and guide policy development. We will also continue to take action to hold China to account for its human rights violation in Xinjiang, working closely with international partners. On 22 March, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK has imposed, under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime, asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese government officials responsible for the violations that have taken place and persist against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Alongside those individuals, the UK also designated the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the organisation responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[175788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation of Uighur children in China in the context of reports of the forced separation of exiled families and children, highlighted in the recent Amnesty International report, entitled China: The Nightmare of Uyghur Families Separated by Repression.

Nigel Adams:

We are deeply concerned by reports of the mistreatment of Uyghur children, including reports of children being forcibly separated from their parents and placed in state run institutions. The Government has taken careful note of Amnesty International's report of 19 March 2021 and will continue to engage with a range of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and other experts, to inform our understanding of the situation in Xinjiang and guide policy development. We will also continue to take action to hold China to account for its human rights violation in Xinjiang, working closely with international partners. On 22 March, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK has imposed, under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime, asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese government officials responsible for the violations that have taken place and persist against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Alongside those individuals, the UK also designated the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the organisation responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[175789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what further steps the (a) Government and (b) UN are planning to take in response to human rights abuses in the Xinjiang Province of China against the Uyghur Muslims.

Nigel Adams:

The government remains gravely concerned by the human rights situation in Xinjiang and is committed to continued robust action to hold China to account for its human rights violations in the region. In February, the Foreign Secretary used a personal address at the UN Human Rights Council to reiterate his call for China to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, or another independent expert, urgent and unfettered access to Xinjiang. On 22 March, the Foreign Secretary announced that the UK had imposed, under the UK's Global Human Rights sanctions regime, asset freezes and travel bans against four senior Chinese government officials responsible for the violations that have taken place and persist against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang. Alongside those individuals, the UK also designated the Public Security Bureau of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, the organisation responsible for enforcing the repressive security policies across many areas of Xinjiang.

■ Developing Countries: Blasphemy**Tommy Sheppard:**[\[175919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps he has taken to help prevent the misuse of blasphemy legislation globally.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and to promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. We remain deeply concerned by the use of blasphemy laws. These laws generally limit freedom of expression and are only compatible with international human rights law in narrow circumstances. We regularly apply diplomatic pressure to countries that use blasphemy laws. This often involves private lobbying, as it can be the most effective way of resolving a sensitive case or bringing about longer term change.

Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's human rights priorities. Bilaterally, ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern, and discuss practices and laws that discriminate on the basis of religion or belief. Multilaterally, we work within the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance ('Alliance'), and other international organisations and networks to promote and protect FoRB for all where it is threatened. The Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, underlined the UK's commitment to FoRB for all in a number of international meetings in November 2020, speaking at the Ministerial to Advance FoRB and the Ministers' Forum of the Alliance. On 20 December 2020, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his commitment to FoRB by appointing Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy for FoRB. Mrs Bruce represents the UK at meetings of the Alliance, which works to advocate for the rights of individuals being discriminated against or persecuted on the basis of their faith or belief.

■ Developing Countries: Genito-urinary Medicine**Preet Kaur Gill:****[174935]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral evidence of the Prime Minister at the Liaison committee on 24 March 2021, whether the budget for the Women's Integrated Sexual Health programme will be reduced in the 2021-22 financial year.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is proud to defend universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights which is fundamental to the empowerment of women and girls. Global health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), is a top priority for the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). A final decision has not yet been made regarding the 2021-22 budget for the Women's Integrated Sexual Health programme.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions**Dr Julian Lewis:****[173989]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to respond to (a) Question 162501 tabled on 3 March 2021 and (b) Question 163140 tabled on 4 March 2021 by the Rt. hon. Member for New Forest East.

Nigel Adams:

My officials have been in touch with the Table Office and discovered an IT issue with the submission portal. This has now been corrected to show that these questions were both answered on time on 8 and 9 March.

Responses to these questions can be found on the Parliamentary website at <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-04/163140> and <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-03/162501>

■ Ghana: Overseas Aid**Anna McMorris:****[174948]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential environmental effect of the UK aid-funded Private Infrastructure Investment Group (PIDG) providing a \$31 million loan to the Tema gas project in Ghana.

James Duddridge:

The UK invests in the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) to improve access to critical infrastructure services for people in the poorest regions of Africa and Asia. Before approving any investment, PIDG gives due consideration to the environmental impact of projects. This is done through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment of every project. Each investment must comply with PIDG's Environmental, Social, Health and Safety standards, which are based on the

internationally recognised International Finance Corporation Environment and Social Performance Standards.

With regards to a project's climate impacts specifically, PIDG only invests in projects which satisfy stringent tests. In 2020, PIDG updated its climate change approach to adopt a new 'Climate Change Standard'. This is in line with the UK Government's policy that it will no longer provide any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, with the exception of gas in limited circumstances where it is aligned with climate goals. The Tema Energy investment in Ghana is a legacy transaction which pre-dates the PIDG Climate Change Standard. PIDG undertook detailed assessments of the transaction to determine the impact of the project on Ghana's renewable energy targets, decarbonisation of the energy mix and transition risks. This assessment concluded that the project will play an important role in Ghana's transition from oil dependency and improve security of fuel supply to the poorest, with positive economic and net Green House Gas emissions benefits.

■ Human Rights

Claire Hanna:

[\[175000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of developing a human rights defenders strategy to complement his Department's 2019 policy document, UK Support for Human Rights Defenders.

Nigel Adams:

The UK strongly supports Human Rights Defenders worldwide to enable them to carry out their work safely and without fear. We are considering carefully the request from Amnesty International and other Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) for a UK Government strategy on Human Rights Defenders. In 2019, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon launched the document 'UK support for Human Rights Defenders' which was drawn up with significant and important input from relevant stakeholders, including Amnesty International, and which sets out how the UK Government engages with Human Rights Defenders to advance the human rights agenda globally.

■ India: Blasphemy and Religious Freedom

Tommy Sheppard:

[\[175920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the application of blasphemy laws in India on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The British High Commission in New Delhi maintain a continuous assessment of the human rights situation in India, including the situation for minorities and the right to freedom of expression. India has a proud history of religious tolerance and a vibrant civil society. We look to the Government of India to address the concerns of any

people that may be affected by blasphemy legislation. Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India.

■ Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[174931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy 2021, whether Women, Peace and Security is a Government focus for Africa only and not other regions.

James Cleverly:

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and promoting global gender equality internationally is a key priority for the Government. The UK's fourth National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS 2018-22 outlines HMG's WPS strategy and is jointly owned by FCDO and MOD. We deliver the NAP globally, but with a particular emphasis on nine focus countries: Afghanistan, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria. Yemen was identified as an additional priority country in 2019, due to ongoing conflict and humanitarian crisis. The UK Government will continue to promote WPS across the world, in Africa and beyond, following the Integrated Review.

■ IRA: Libya

Louise Haigh:

[\[175939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Shawcross Report; and what discussions he has had with William Shawcross on the contents of that report.

James Cleverly:

The Government response to the Shawcross report on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism is set out in the 23 March Written Ministerial Statement (WMS). Since Mr Shawcross was the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, the FCDO has led the Government's relationship with him.

■ Jonathan Taylor

Caroline Nokes:

[\[174816\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether whistleblower Jonathan Taylor is no longer subject to an Interpol Notice or diffusion; and whether he has had discussions with the Croatian authorities on that matter.

Wendy Morton:

This is a matter for the Croatian courts, who are considering the legal basis for Mr Taylor's extradition to Monaco. Any concerns Mr Taylor has about the circumstances

in which an Interpol red notice was applied are a matter for Interpol's independent monitoring body, the Commission for Control of Files, and for Mr Taylor's lawyer. As set out in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, we cannot interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, or bypass their laws, just as we would not accept similar interference here. As part of our consular assistance to British nationals overseas we can raise concerns about individuals on diplomatic channels. I spoke to the Monegasque Foreign Secretary and the Croatian State Secretary for European Affairs on 13 November 2020 and sought assurances that both authorities would treat Mr Taylor fairly. Monaco provided direct assurances to Croatia in January.

■ **Libya: Compensation**

Louise Haigh:

[174904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Libyan Government on the levels of redress for victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terror.

James Cleverly:

The Government has repeatedly urged the Libyan authorities, including at the highest levels of the Libyan government, to engage with UK victims and their representatives, and to address their claims for compensation. However, there are clear practical difficulties in obtaining compensation from Libya for Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. The conflict, political instability and economic instability that have prevailed in Libya for most of the last ten years since the fall of the Qadhafi regime present particular challenges. The UK will continue to press the Libyan authorities to address the Libyan State's historic responsibility for the Qadhafi regime's support for the IRA.

■ **Libya: IRA**

Simon Hoare:

[174179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release of 6 March 2019 entitled Foreign Secretary appoints Special Representative on UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, what steps (a) Ministers of his Department and (b) British diplomats in Libya have taken to encourage the Libyan authorities to engage constructively with (i) those victims and (ii) their representatives since the publication of that press release; on what dates those representations were made to those authorities on that issue; and what the outcome has been of that work.

James Cleverly:

The Government set out its position on Mr Shawcross's report on compensation for UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism in a Written Ministerial Statement made on 23 March. The Written Ministerial Statement notes the clear practical difficulties in obtaining compensation from Libya for Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism, and that the conflict, political instability and economic instability that have prevailed in Libya for most of the last ten years since the fall of the Qadhafi regime present particular challenges. Nonetheless, the UK has consistently pressed the

Libyan authorities to address the Libyan State's historic responsibility for the Qadhafi regime's support for the IRA, and will continue to do so.

Louise Haigh: [\[174905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Shawcross Report contained estimates of the levels of redress that victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terror would be entitled to.

James Cleverly:

As noted in the Government's Written Ministerial Statement published on 23 March, Mr Shawcross considered issues including the difficulties of defining UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism given the extensive nature of Libyan support for the IRA, and the range of proposals for providing compensation for the victims.

Louise Haigh: [\[175934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has (a) spoken to or (b) met with William Shawcross to discuss the contents of his report on Libyan-sponsored IRA terror.

James Cleverly:

The Foreign Secretary has taken a close interest in the issue of compensation for UK victims of Qadhafi-sponsored IRA terrorism. As ministerial lead on this issue, the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa James Cleverly, and senior FCDO officials, kept Mr Shawcross abreast of work on a Government response to his report.

■ **Muhammed Salem Ayyad Al Fahim**

Navendu Mishra: [\[176082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2021 to Question 155445, if he will make representations to the Moroccan authorities on the disappearance and death of Muhammed Salem Ayyad Al Fahim.

James Cleverly:

We continue to follow media reporting on the death and disappearance of Muhammed Salem Al Fahim to better understand the facts of the case.

■ **Myanmar: Military Coups**

Stephen Kinnock: [\[175027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, if he will make an assessment with the Home Secretary of the potential merits of introducing temporary protected status based on the US model for Burmese nationals in the UK to help ensure they are not in danger as a result of the military coup in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation on the ground in Myanmar, and condemns the further killings of innocent people over the weekend. I [Minister

Adams] have discussed with my counterpart in the Home Office about our options to support Myanmar nationals in the UK who could be in danger if they return.

The majority of Myanmar nationals present within the UK have already utilised the switching provisions, including Exceptional Assurance, within our immigration system to continue their regularised stay.

■ Myanmar: Politics and Government

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[175790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his counterpart in Myanmar on the reported use of excessive force against peacefully protesters following arrests of opposition leaders in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is appalled at the actions of the military in killing its own people. The killing of children, many in their own homes, is abhorrent. The violent crackdown on peaceful protestors is completely unacceptable and requires a strong message from the international community. The people's right to a peaceful protest should be respected. We urge the military to exercise utmost restraint and respect human rights and international law.

We continue to shine a spotlight on the actions of the military on the international stage, including through the UN Security Council and the G7. I [Minister Adams] have twice summoned the Myanmar Ambassador to register concern at the coup and the violent actions by the military.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[175791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Myanmar to release unconditionally and drop all charges against (a) opposition government figures, (b) activists and (c) human rights defenders.

Nigel Adams:

The arbitrary detention of thousands of people, as well as credible reports of torture are deeply concerning. It is essential that all those arbitrarily detained, are released. We condemn the politically motivated charges against those who are protesting against the coup.

I [Minister Adams] formally summoned the Myanmar Ambassador twice and stressed that State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and others who had been arbitrarily detained should be released. We have used our Presidencies of both the G7 and the UN Security Council to secure strong statements which re-iterated these points.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[175956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is Government policy to recognise Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe as a hostage, in the context of her continued detention in Iran at the end of her sentence.

Tulip Siddiq: [\[175957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will place a copy of its assessment of whether Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is a hostage under the terms of the 1982 Taking of Hostages Act in the Library.

James Cleverly:

We do not accept our nationals being used as diplomatic leverage and have repeatedly made this clear to Iran. By exercising diplomatic protection in Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case, we formally recognised that her treatment fails to meet Iran's obligations under international law, that it has been unlawful and intolerable, and raised it to a State-to-State issue.

■ Nigeria: Overseas Aid**Anna McMorris:** [\[175986\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the value is of UK official development assistance investments in the Indorama Eleme petrochemicals plant in Port Harcourt, Nigeria (a) in total and (b) through the (i) CDC Group, (ii) Private Infrastructure Investment Group, (iii) International Finance Corporation and (iv) African Development Bank.

James Duddridge:

While CDC Group (CDC), Private Infrastructure Investment Group (PIDG), International Finance Corporation (IFC), African Development Bank (AfDB) are funded by UK ODA, their investments are not solely funded by the UK. Details of CDC, PIDG, IFC and African Development Bank investments in Indorama are available from their websites. Investment into Indorama has helped Nigeria meet its domestic needs for urea fertiliser and plastics as well as shifting the country to be a net exporter.

Further details can be accessed on the respective data portals at www.cdcgroup.com/en/our-impact/search-results/, <http://data.pidg.org/>, <https://disclosures.ifc.org/> and <https://mapafrica.afdb.org/en/>.

■ Overseas Aid**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[174228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of not announcing the impact of Official Development Assistance reductions for individual programmes and activities for 2021 on the ability for organisations and country offices to plan.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has had to take urgent decisions to safeguard the British economy in light of the COVID pandemic. This includes the difficult decision to temporarily reduce the UK aid budget to 0.5% of GNI. The Foreign Secretary has kept Parliament informed at every stage of this process, including through my announcement of a new Strategic Framework for ODA last November and a statement on the outcome of the cross-government ODA review in January this year.

Final decisions on individual programmes and activities have not yet been made. Heads of Mission will receive notice of their country-level settlement once Ministers have taken those decisions. Delivery partners will be informed of any implications for their programmes as soon as possible, in most cases via communication with the FCDO Senior Responsible Owner.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[174932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether gender equality and Women, Peace and Security is planned to be included in his upcoming Development Strategy.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary will lead a cross-departmental review on a new development strategy to ensure close alignment of UK aid with the objectives set out in the Integrated Review. The Government will consult widely on the strategy, including with officials working on gender equality and Women, Peace and Security.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[174937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral evidence of the Prime Minister at the Liaison Committee on the 24 March 2021, whether Official Development Assistance spend on girls' education will be ring fenced for the 2021-22 financial year.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister has made clear our continued commitment to stand up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education. The Foreign Secretary has set out seven strategic priorities for the UK's aid budget this year, within the overarching pursuit of poverty reduction. Girls' education is one of these priorities, and this new strategic approach will allow us to drive greater impact through our aid budget, notwithstanding the difficult financial position we face. No decisions have yet been made on individual budget allocations.

ODA spending is only one of the tools in achieving our ambitions. This year, we will also be co-hosting the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Replenishment with Kenya, and using our G7 Presidency to rally the international community in stepping up support for girls' education.

■ Overseas Aid: Fossil Fuels

Anna McMorris:

[\[175985\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what restrictions on investment in fossil fuels apply to CDC Group's recently announced \$100 million investment in the Helios Investors IV fund.

James Duddridge:

Every investment CDC makes is assessed for its positive development impact using an internationally recognised methodology. In addition to this, through its Code of Responsible Investing, CDC applies rigorous environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards to each investment.

As part of its commitment to Helios Investors IV, CDC has in place legal agreements to ensure that the fund cannot invest in a range of fossil fuel activities, including coal-fired power plants, coal mining, processing and trading, upstream oil and gas exploration and production, midstream oil, oil refineries and HFO only-fired power plants and mini-grids.

Anna McMorris:

[\[175990\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the new fossil fuel policy outlined in the Government's response to the Aligning UK International Support for Energy Transition consultation in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is firmly committed to Sustainable Development Goal 7 aimed at helping developing countries establish a secure and sustainable energy supply, economic growth and poverty reduction. We do this in a way that supports the UK's climate and environment objectives. Since 2011, the UK International Climate Finance (ICF) has provided 33 million people with improved access to clean energy.

HMG's fossil fuels policy demonstrates the UK's global climate leadership ahead of the UK's COP 26 Presidency. In developing this policy, HMG consulted with civil society, oil and gas majors, SMEs and industry bodies to gather views and evidence which reinforced the importance of the UK taking ambitious and decisive action on climate. However, in doing so, HMG would also ensure that the skilled and dynamic UK energy industry is effectively supported to transition successfully to clean energy export markets. And, in support of SDG 7, there would be few limited exemptions allowed for activities that support health and safety improvements, form part of wider clean energy transitions, decommissioning and humanitarian responses.

■ Religious Freedom: International Cooperation

Zarah Sultana:

[\[174280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his international counterparts on ensuring freedom from religious persecution.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and to promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. On a multilateral level, we work within the UN, OSCE, Council of Europe, International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance ('Alliance'), and other international groupings to promote and protect FoRB for all. On a bilateral level, Ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern, and discuss practices and laws that discriminate on the basis of religion or belief.

In 2019, the Bishop of Truro issued a report commissioned by the then Foreign Secretary looking into the then FCO support for persecuted Christians, with recommendations to improve the lives of people persecuted for their religion, faith, or belief. Of the 22 recommendations, we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and we are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022. The Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, underlined the UK's commitment to FoRB for all in a number of international meetings in November 2020, speaking at the Ministerial to Advance FoRB and the Ministers' Forum of the Alliance. On 20 December 2020, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his commitment to FoRB by appointing Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy for FoRB. Mrs Bruce represents the UK at meetings of the Alliance, which champions the rights of individuals being discriminated against or persecuted on the basis of their faith or belief.

■ Sahel: Religious Freedom**Alexander Stafford:**[\[176126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of trends in the level of religious violence in the Sahel.

James Duddridge:

The UK is deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel. There were more deaths by violence in 2020 than in any previous year in the past decade. The UK condemns all attacks, including those targeting particular religions or ethnic communities. Nobody should live in fear because of their identity or beliefs. The UK is particularly concerned about reported human rights abuses and violations, which exacerbate grievances and drive the cycle of violence in the region. Through our recent deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and our programmatic support for stabilisation and conflict resolution, the UK is committed to building long-term peace and stability in the Sahel. We also use our humanitarian assistance to support those worst affected by conflict and have been pressing in the UN Security Council and in the region for renewed efforts to tackle impunity for human rights abuses and violations.

■ Sierra Leone: Family Planning**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[174936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral evidence of the Prime Minister at the Liaison Committee on the 24 of March 2021, whether the budget for the IRC family planning programme in Sierra Leone will be reduced in the 2021-22 financial year.

James Duddridge:

Due to the severe impact of the pandemic on the UK economy, the Government has made the difficult decision to temporarily reduce the UK's aid budget. The Prime Minister has made clear our intention to return to 0.7 per cent when the fiscal position allows.

Final decisions on individual programmes and activities have not yet been made. Our Heads of Mission will receive notice of their country-level settlement once Ministers have taken those decisions. Programme delivery partners will be informed of any implications for their programmes as soon as possible. Although we are having to make difficult decisions, our commitment to women and girls remains strong - including, as the Prime Minister said, co-hosting a girls education summit next year.

■ South America: Economic Situation**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[176117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in South American countries ranked in the bottom quartile of the Economic Freedom Rankings by the Fraser institution on liberalising their economies.

Wendy Morton:

I have spoken to my Argentine counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Pablo Tettamanti, about a range of issues, including economic cooperation. On 3 March, he and I discussed future engagement to support market access, among other issues. I also spoke to the Argentine delegation about green finance and post-COVID recovery strategies at the recent Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) Annual Meeting. The UK Government has offered to share technical expertise with Argentina on green finance, electromobility, and sustainable infrastructure in order to facilitate a global green recovery.

The UK does not recognise the Maduro regime in Venezuela, and remains deeply concerned at the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation in the country. Economic mismanagement has resulted in hyperinflation, shortages of food and medicine, and the collapse of critical infrastructure.

■ Switzerland: Civil Liberties

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[174191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Swiss counterpart on the vote in that country on 7 March 2021 to ban face coverings in public; and what steps he plans to take to encourage the Swiss Government to protect women's (a) freedom of expression and religion and (b) rights in that country.

Wendy Morton:

We note the outcome of the vote in Switzerland on 7 March in a referendum to ban face coverings in public. Ministers regularly speak to their Swiss counterparts on a broad range of issues.

■ Syria: Civilians

Stephen Timms:

[\[173997\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the UK is taking as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to put pressure on the Syrian regime to disclose the fates of disappeared civilians.

James Cleverly:

On 15 March we raised the plight of detainees held by the Asad regime, affiliated militias and proscribed terrorist organisations at the UN Security Council. We are also showing leadership at the Human Rights Council, where this month we are hosting a side event to discuss next steps for accountability. We have provided over £1m in funding to the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) since 2019 to support Syrian families of the missing to secure their rights to justice, truth and reparations. We wholly support ICMP as the holder of an impartial database of all those who have gone missing, regardless of their origin, role in the conflict, or the circumstances of their disappearance.

We support the UN's request to the Asad regime and Syrian armed groups to allow humanitarian actors and medical teams unhindered access to prisons and expect all parties to the Syrian conflict to respect their obligations and responsibilities towards civilians under the applicable international law regimes that apply, including international humanitarian law. Additionally we continue to pursue sanctions as a policy tool to hold the Syrian regime to account and to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict.

■ Syria: Third Sector

Stephen Timms:

[\[173998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the proposed reductions to the UK's allocation of 2021-22 official development aid on civil society groups in Syria.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO is in the process of a rigorous internal prioritisation process in response to the announcement on the reduction in Official Development Assistance spend. We are still working through what this means for individual programmes and no decisions have yet been made.

Stephen Timms:[\[173999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the results of UK Government support for Syrian civil society.

James Cleverly:

Although the Assad regime continues to impede a UN-led political process for Syria, we assess that our support to civil society has produced positive results. Recent outreach has included support to the NGO Search for Common Ground, contributing £800,000 to capacity-building for civil society actors across Syria, focused on local needs. We supported the International Commission on Missing Persons' work with Syrian civil society, which contributed to data collection on missing persons and provision of assistance to the families of the missing. On gender related issues, since 2018, we have contributed £2 million to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and together we have strengthened women's participation in decision-making, and gender sensitive transitional justice.

The UK government engages widely with Syrian civil society to promote their voices and inform our policy on the Syria crisis. On 15 March I hosted an event at the 46th Human Rights Council to discuss accountability for human rights abuses in Syria. The next day I attended a joint Syria Relief UK and Syrian British Council event, developing policy for alleviating the crisis. We believe civil society, women and minorities must play a role in reaching a lasting settlement in Syria.

■ Tibet and Xinjiang: Forced Labour**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[175016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to tackle the use of forced labour in (a) Tibet and (b) Xinjiang.

Nigel Adams:

Evidence of forced labour within Tibet and Xinjiang is credible and growing. The UK continues to urge China to respect all fundamental rights in line with both its own constitution and its international human rights obligations. The Foreign Secretary raised concerns about Uyghur forced labour in his intervention at the UN Human Rights Council on 22 February. On 12 January, the Foreign Secretary announced robust, targeted measures to help ensure that British organisations, whether public or private sector, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang. These measures will target in a forensic way either those profiting from forced labour or those who would financially support it, whether deliberately or otherwise.

■ Tibet: Buddhism

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[175014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Chinese Government on the persecution of Tibetan Buddhists.

Nigel Adams:

On 22 February, the Foreign Secretary expressed his deep concerns about the human rights situation in Tibet in a ministerial statement at the Human Rights Council. Officials have also raised concerns with the Chinese Embassy in London and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing in recent months. We consistently urge China to respect all fundamental rights in line with both its own constitution and the international frameworks to which it is a party. We will continue to raise the situation in Tibet with the Chinese authorities.

■ Tigray: Human Rights

Stephen Doughty:

[\[174846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on allegations of serious human rights abuses and atrocities in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

James Duddridge:

We are deeply concerned at the mounting evidence of human rights abuses and violations in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Since the conflict started, the UK alongside international partners, have consistently called for an end to fighting, and for all parties to the conflict to prioritise the protection of civilians. We welcome Prime Minister Abiy's statement on 23 March that the perpetrators of human rights atrocities should face justice - whoever they are. We need to see action now to stop further atrocities and to allow for the independent investigation of those that have occurred.

In a joint statement on Ethiopia with 41 other countries at the 46th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), we condemned in the strongest terms the reported killings of civilians. Eritrea's role in the conflict is particularly concerning; there are numerous reports of atrocities involving Eritrean forces, and the presence of Eritrean forces is fuelling insecurity. We welcome the announcement, on 26 March, of their withdrawal and call for this to be immediate and unconditional. We continue to call for independent, international investigations into atrocities reported in Tigray in the multilateral fora, including at the UNHRC, and for the Government of Ethiopia to ensure full access for human rights organisations.

Stephen Doughty:

[\[174847\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the proportion of Tigray, Ethiopia that is accessible to humanitarian assistance and humanitarian organisations.

James Duddridge:

The UK has been consistent in calling for free and unfettered humanitarian access to the 4.5 million people in Tigray in need, with estimates that 80% of the Tigray region has been inaccessible to relief agencies. The fluidity of the context makes it extremely challenging to determine precisely but humanitarian organisations report that huge numbers of people across the region are located in inaccessible locations. The Foreign Secretary raised the need for humanitarian access to Tigray with Prime Minister Abiy during his visit to Ethiopia and pressed for a political dialogue to bring lasting peace to the region. I [Minister Duddridge] re-enforced the urgency of the need for humanitarian access when I [Minister Duddridge] spoke with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 24 February. The presence of Eritrean troops in Tigray is one the main barriers to humanitarian access and they should leave Ethiopia immediately. Humanitarian providers must be protected to ensure they can help those in need.

We continue to work with the UN to promote and monitor access and the delivery of humanitarian support to all those who need it, including to civilians in contested areas. UK-funded aid agencies in Tigray are delivering support in challenging circumstances, including food, shelter, water and healthcare. A joint humanitarian and political team from the British Embassy in Addis Ababa visited Mekelle on 5 March. They met with the provisional administration of Tigray, Mayor of Mekelle, humanitarian agencies and people displaced by the violence. The Embassy team heard harrowing accounts of human rights violations, the challenges of aid delivery and how some of the £15.4m of UK Aid is helping to support those affected by the Tigray conflict. The Government of Ethiopia must act now to protect its people.

■ Uighurs: Forced Labour**Geraint Davies:**[\[175688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to ensure that UK companies are not complicit in the use of Uyghur forced labour in (a) the manufacture of products and (b) chains of supply.

Nigel Adams:

The Department for International Trade has been taking forward measures to help make sure British businesses are not complicit in human rights violations in Xinjiang, as announced in Parliament by the Foreign Secretary on 12 January. This includes a review of export controls as they apply to Xinjiang, to make sure that we are doing everything that we can to prevent the export of any goods that could directly or indirectly contribute to any such violations. It includes updating our Overseas Business Risk guidance too, underlining the specific risks faced by companies with links to Xinjiang and the challenges of conducting effective due diligence there.

We continue to advise businesses with supply chain links in Xinjiang to conduct appropriate due diligence to satisfy themselves that their activities do not support, or risk being seen to be supporting, any human rights violations.

■ Uzbekistan: Religious Freedom

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[175003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps his Department has taken to support freedom of religion in Uzbekistan.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities. The UK and Uzbekistan have an open dialogue on a wide-range of human rights issues. The UK's Human Rights Ambassador, Rita French, recently undertook a virtual visit to the country, and held a follow up meeting with the Uzbek Deputy Foreign Minister, which included discussions on protection of fundamental freedoms. Following lobbying from our Ambassador to Uzbekistan, alongside other diplomatic missions in Tashkent, the Uzbek authorities submitted a draft law on freedom of conscience and religious organisations to the Venice Commission and we urge Uzbekistan to consider the Commission's response to the draft. Our Ambassador also recently met with local religious groups and listened to concerns regarding registration of religious organisations. We will continue to raise issues related to freedom of religion or belief with the Uzbek authorities.

The Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, underlined the UK's commitment to FoRB for all in a number of international meetings in November 2020, speaking at the Ministerial to Advance FoRB and the Ministers' Forum of the Alliance. On 20 December 2020, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his commitment to FoRB by appointing Fiona Bruce MP as his Special Envoy for FoRB. Mrs Bruce represents the UK at meetings of the Alliance who work to advocate for the rights of individuals being discriminated against or persecuted on the basis of their faith or belief.

■ Voluntary Service Overseas: Finance

Lisa Nandy:

[174111]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 12 March 2021 to Question 167935, on Voluntary Service Overseas: Finance, whether his Department has made a decision on the future of the Volunteering for Development Grant.

Wendy Morton:

As mentioned in my previous reply, we are working through the implications of changes in our aid budget for all individual programmes and partners, including Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO).

Volunteers and volunteering organisations like VSO make an important contribution. We have offered VSO a short-term funding extension for the Volunteering for Development programme, while the review process continues.

■ Yemen: Armed Conflict**Anna McMorris:**[\[174947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the oral contribution of the Prime Minister of 3 March 2021, Official Report, column 242, what the UK's role is in the Saudi-led coalition's participation in conflict in Yemen.

James Cleverly:

The UK is not a member of the Saudi-led coalition. We have an ongoing relationship with Saudi Arabia which includes sharing advice and guidance to support the Saudi military's compliance with International Humanitarian Law and efforts to protect their national security. The UK continues to use all our diplomatic and humanitarian expertise to support UN-led peace efforts to end the conflict and alleviate the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Neil Parish:**[\[914210\]](#)

What plans he has for the future role of community hospitals.

Edward Argar:

Community hospitals are a hugely valuable and valued part of our health and care system. As we have seen during the pandemic, they have played a vital role in providing intermediate care for patients not yet well enough to return home and play a much broader role year-in year-out to the communities they serve. While it is for local communities to make decisions on specific local services, we are clear that our community hospitals should continue to play a central role in healthcare provision for many years to come.

Ellie Reeves:[\[914211\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on NHS pay.

Helen Whately:

The independent Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) will make a recommendation on pay for National Health Service staff in the spring. In reaching their recommendations the PRBs will take into account the cost of living and inflation, recruitment and retention, morale and motivation, affordability and value for the taxpayer. The Department works closely with HM Treasury when submitting evidence to the PRBs.

Stephen Timms:[\[914212\]](#)

What assessment he has made of the public health impact of household overcrowding during the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has continuously monitored emerging evidence to understand the effect of household overcrowding on public health. The Government has carefully considered robust advice from medical advisers and the scientific community to ensure we are taking the right action at the right time. We have published a range of guidance to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, including for those living in overcrowded housing.

Chris Stephens:[\[914214\]](#)

What steps he is taking to ensure his Department adequately supports the health and social care workforce during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

We have done our utmost to support health and social care workers throughout the pandemic. This support includes refreshments for National Health Service staff, funding for social care providers to pay full pay when staff are isolating and a comprehensive package of mental health support across health and social care.

Layla Moran:[\[914215\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of adult social care funding allocated to Oxfordshire County Council.

Helen Whately:

Our priority is ensuring that councils have the resources to manage the immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic.

In 2020-21, Oxfordshire County Council received £16.5 million specifically for adult social care, to support its COVID-19 response.

This year, alongside the ability to raise funding through the precept, it will receive £12.6 million through the Social Care Grant and £4.1 million through the Infection Control and Testing Fund.

Simon Baynes:[\[914217\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to reform mental health legislation.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

On 13 January we published our White Paper on reforming the Mental Health Act 1983. Our public consultation is open for a further week in which we are inviting views to ensure we develop the right proposals.

We will respond to this with a formal report which will inform the development of our planned Mental Health Bill.

Mr Clive Betts:[\[914218\]](#)

What steps he is taking to tackle the cancer care and treatment backlog.

Jo Churchill:

Cancer is a priority. As well as a £325 million investment in diagnostic machines, we have provided an additional £1 billion to the National Health Service to tackle the

elective backlog, and ensure there is sufficient capacity in place to diagnose and treat the additional people coming into the system. To encourage patients to come forward to their general practitioner if they have symptoms, we launched the successful 'Help us Help you' campaign. NHS England also recently published Priorities and Operational Planning Guidance, highlighting that cancer recovery remains a priority for the NHS as a whole. Systems should meet the increased level of referrals and treatment required to address the shortfall in number of first treatments by March 2022.

■ Antenatal Care: Coronavirus

Catherine West:

[174208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the delivery of perinatal services; and what precautionary and remedial steps his Department has taken to help reduce the (a) practical difficulties arising from the disruption caused by the covid-19 outbreak and (b) mental health consequences of that disruption for users of perinatal services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Throughout the pandemic, NHS England and NHS Improvement have been guiding maternity services to prioritise maintaining safe and personalised maternity care by making adjustments to service provision only where necessitated by the local impact of COVID-19.

Wherever possible, services have been asked to reinstate a fully personalised approach to meeting the needs of individual women and their families across the maternity pathway.

Talking therapies are being made available remotely so people can access help safely from home and the National Health Service is working to ensure the option of face to face support is provided to people with serious mental health illnesses across all ages where it is clinically safe to do so.

■ Artificial Sweeteners: EU Law

Paul Maynard:

[174802]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to replace EU Additives Regulation 1129/2011 to permit sugar reformulation using sweeteners in breakfast cereals as part of the tackling obesity strategy.

Jo Churchill:

The retained European Union Regulation 1333/2008 governs the use of food additives in food. This legislation already permits the use of several sweeteners in energy reduced or no added sugar breakfast cereals, which can form part of a healthy balanced diet.

Babies: Coronavirus**Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[174923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what support he is providing to ensure that babies benefit from the covid-19 recovery efforts.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to providing all babies with the best possible start to their lives. The Government recently published A Best Start for Life: A Vision for the 1,001 Critical Days. The Vision outlines actions for both national and local government to improve health outcomes for babies and children in England. The Healthy Child Programme continues to provide support for babies through local services as well as additional support where needed.

Blood: Contamination**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[174760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the number of people who have died as a result of contaminated blood factor products in the (a) HIV and Hepatitis C (co-infected haemophiliacs), (b) Hepatitis C infected haemophiliacs excluding HIV and (c) HIV infected spouses/ partner categories since 2017.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Bowel Cancer: Screening**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[170678\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the take-up rate for bowel cancer screening was in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry in each of the last five years; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the up-take rate in those areas.

Jo Churchill:

Bowel screening data is not collected at constituency level. The coverage rate, or the percentage of the eligible population who are screened, for bowel screening in Coventry in each of the last five years is shown in the following table.

YEAR	COVERAGE RATE
2016	57.0%
2017	56.4%
2018	55.7%
2019	55.5%
2020	59.2%

Up-take data, or the percentage of those invited who are screened, covering 2020/21 and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic is undergoing validation and will be published in due course.

■ Breast Cancer: Clinical Trials

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[174865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2020 to Question 56022 on Breast Cancer: Clinical Trials, what proportion of breast cancer clinical trials have been paused in England as a result of the covid-19 outbreak since June 2020.

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[174866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2020 to Question 56022 on Breast Cancer: Clinical Trials, what proportion of breast cancer clinical trials have restarted in England since June 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The Department's National Institute for Health Research Clinical Research Network reports that of the 92 breast cancer clinical trials it was supporting on 21 May 2020, 36 or 39% were paused as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of 26 March 2021, 30 or 83% of these paused breast cancer trials have restarted and 25 new breast cancer trials have entered the portfolio since 21 May 2020.

Dr Philippa Whitford: [\[174867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 June 2020 to Question 56022 on Breast Cancer: Clinical Trials, what plans his Department has to recover and restart recruitment to clinical trial.

Edward Argar:

The Department's National Institute for Health Research is supporting the National Health Service to deliver life-saving research through the Clinical Research Network which provides the infrastructure that allows high-quality clinical research funded by charities, the life-sciences industry and the public sector to be undertaken throughout the health and care system.

To enable research studies that have been paused to restart, plans are being developed to transition and manage the delivery of non-COVID-19 studies to ensure successful recovery of the portfolio.

■ Cancer: Bevacizumab

Luke Pollard: [\[176036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what advice he has given to NHS trusts on the cheaper procurement of Avastin to treat cancers.

Luke Pollard:

[176037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of people in England who are privately funding use of Avastin for cancer treatment.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has not issued advice. We understand that a number of patents for Avastin are due to expire over the next few years and other companies plan to place similar medicines to Avastin on to the market to treat the same conditions. These are called biosimilars. We have made no estimate of the number of people in England who are privately funding use of Avastin for cancer treatment as this data is not collected centrally.

■ Care Homes: Visits

Navendu Mishra:

[176090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish further guidance on visiting people in supported living, as set out in the Guidance on care home visiting document updated on 9 March 2021.

Helen Whately:

On 30 March, we published an update to our visiting guidance for supported living and extra care settings, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-living-services-during-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-supported-living>

The default position in this guidance is that visits should be supported and enabled wherever it is safe to do so and explains how providers can develop a policy for visiting which mitigates risks. For example, lateral flow testing is now available to providers who are currently eligible for staff testing. There are still some national restrictions in place across England which people in supported living, and their family and friends, must follow. Further information can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

■ Clinical Trials: Regulation

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[175695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to use powers under the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021 to improve the regulation of clinical trials; and if he will make a statement.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Work is ongoing to develop proposals for the regulation of clinical trials, including using powers under the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2021. We plan to consult on these proposals later this year, in advance of bringing forward legislation.

■ Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[174859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 170666, whether his Department plans to centrally collect data on the number of people experiencing long covid symptoms at a (a) constituency and (b) local authority level.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department currently has no plans to centrally collect data on the number of people experiencing long covid symptoms at a constituency and local authority level.

■ Coronavirus Act 2020**Dawn Butler:**[\[174033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the two-monthly report on the status of the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 published on 28 January 2021, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of maintaining powers under (a) s 52 and (b) Schedule 22 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

As part of the one-year review of the Act, the Government has conducted a thorough review of the non-devolved provisions to check they are necessary and proportionate and has considered whether there is a robust justification for keeping those powers we propose to retain.

Section 52 and Schedule 22 confer powers to issue directions in relation to events, gatherings and premises. These will be important powers to maintain when the current lockdown regulations expire as they will continue to provide the mechanism for a targeted approach to potential local outbreaks.

■ Coronavirus: Bedfordshire**Sarah Owen:**[\[174967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Oral Statement on 18 March 2021, Official Report, col 517, what discussions his Department has had with the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group regarding the suspension of first dose appointment bookings.

Nadhim Zahawi:

No such discussions have taken place. There has been no suspension of first doses available in Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care System although as the number of people who are due their second dose increases, the balance of appointments will change to reflect vaccine availability and the need to complete those second doses within 12 weeks.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Philip Davies:

[174779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 3 March 2020 to Question 157049 on Coronavirus: Disease Control, what informal assessment has been made on that matter.

Jo Churchill:

Public Health England (PHE) has made no such assessment.

PHE collects data on disease surveillance for example on flu and other respiratory pathogens. However, these reports do not show the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on immunity of children and adults.

Julian Sturdy:

[174821]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on the health of the population.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Whenever restrictions are being considered, the Government assesses the impact those restrictions may have on the health of the public. Any potentially negative impacts have to be considered against the public health benefits associated with controlling the spread of COVID-19.

Julian Sturdy:

[174822]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on (a) the mental health of the population and (b) mental health care outcomes.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Public Health England publishes and updates the 'COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report', which presents close to real-time surveillance on the mental health and wellbeing of the population in England during the pandemic and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report>

No specific assessment has been made of the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on mental health care outcomes.

Julian Sturdy:

[174823]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of date at which the health effect of covid-19 restrictions outweighs the risk of the virus when the covid-19 vaccine has been rolled out to the most vulnerable people.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government published the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' on 22 February, to provide a roadmap out of restrictions that balances social and economic priorities while remaining vigilant to the latest scientific evidence.

At each step of the roadmap we will make an assessment against the following four tests: the vaccine deployment programme continues successfully; the evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated; infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the National Health Service; and our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants of concern. Following these tests will manage the risk of needing to increase restrictions, including further lockdown.

In order to set out a strategy for full relaxation, we will learn more about the impact of the vaccination programme and the effects of easing of restrictions. We are conducting a number of reviews, including on social distancing and other baseline measures. The results of these reviews will help inform the timing and circumstances under which we may be able to lift remaining restrictions.

■ Coronavirus: Medical Treatments**Mary Glendon:**[\[174122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 21 January 2021 to Question 135939, on Coronavirus: Medical Treatments, if he will ask the relevant bodies to examine the results of the trial by East Kent Hospitals into possible benefits for covid-19 sufferers of Sambucol Black Elderberry liquid; and if he will consult representatives of the National Institute of Medicinal Herbalists on the potential merits of herbal medicines for that illness.

Jo Churchill:

The Department continues to monitor any new, high quality evidence from clinical trials on the effectiveness of different therapeutics for COVID-19 and works to ensure that any identified as credible or plausible are rapidly considered for entry into a United Kingdom priority platform clinical trial. Additionally, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) secretariats are monitoring the evidence around nutrition and COVID-19 and are due to update the SACN at their next meeting in June 2021.

The Department does not maintain a position on any complementary or alternative medicine treatments. It is the responsibility of local National Health Service organisations to make decisions on the commissioning and funding of any healthcare treatments for NHS patients, taking into account issues around safety and clinical and cost-effectiveness. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence does not currently recommend that homeopathy should be used in the treatment of any health condition.

■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[174002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish guidance advising shop keepers against excluding customers who are exempt from the requirement to wear face coverings during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has published specific guidance for shops and branches on working safely during the pandemic, which is available on GOV.UK. While any business has the right to an entry policy, the Government's regulations and guidance make clear that the law does not require a person to wear a face covering if they are exempt or have a reasonable excuse.

Robert Halfon:

[\[175813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the pilot by his Department of transparent face masks for use by NHS staff and care workers, which types of transparent masks have been approved; and for which settings the use of those masks has been approved.

Robert Halfon:

[\[175814\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's pilot of transparent face masks, what evidence on the (a) effectiveness and (b) safety of those masks has been provided to other Government departments.

Jo Churchill:

The ClearMask transparent mask used in the pilot undertaken in September has received approval from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for use during the COVID-19 pandemic and can be used in the National Health Service supply chain in healthcare settings, subject to a number of limitations. It is currently the only transparent mask that has been approved.

A transparent mask working group has been set up by NHS England and NHS Improvement. They are producing a new technical specification which gives testing, design and performance requirements for single-use transparent face masks which are intended to provide comparable protection to that of a Type IIR medical mask. It is intended that the technical specification, which has been informed by clinical usability assessments, can be used as part of the assessment of a broader scope of transparent facemask products. The technical specification will be published online once completed.

Work is also underway to evaluate Type IIR transparent masks for procurement, which will be assessed against the prevailing Type IIR standards.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Rachael Maskell: [124791]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will introduce rapid covid-19 testing for relatives of seriously ill patients in hospital, who may have suffered significant or life changing injuries, to allow the hospital to risk assess the case more quickly.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 8 December 2020]: There are no plans to do so at present.

Alex Sobel: [176025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support sole traders who are excluded from the workplace covid-19 testing scheme.

Helen Whately:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for New Forest West (Sir Desmond Swayne) to Question [168813](#) on 24 March.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Jessica Morden: [133751]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that non-malignant stem cell transplant patients who received their transplant more than six months ago receive the same priority for the covid-19 vaccine as other stem cell transplant patients.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 January 2021]: Priority group 6 includes all those who are defined as clinically vulnerable and at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19. People who have received a stem cell transplant more than six months ago are included in this definition. People who have received a stem cell transplant within the last six months will be defined as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV), in which case they are included in priority group 4. Both groups should now have been called forward for vaccination.

Further information can be found at the following links:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus-clinically-extremely-vulnerable/>

<https://www.anthonynolan.org/patients-and-families/understanding-stem-cell-transplants/coronavirus-and-your-stem-cell-transplant>

Afzal Khan: [138506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many frontline health and social care staff have received the (a) first dose and (b) second dose of the (i) Pfizer-BioNTech covid-19 Vaccine and (ii) Oxford-AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccine as at 15 January 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Data for frontline health and social care staff categorised by vaccine type is not held centrally.

Mr Steve Baker:**[R] [140797]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason the iProov-Mvine vaccine passport, which was developed with Innovate UK funding, is undertaking a trial.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: At the time of the COVID-19 Fast Start competition, launched in April 2020, the path the pandemic would follow was unclear and the Government supported every project which could aid the response, including 'vaccine passports'. Two British companies, Mvine and iProov, were funded by Innovate UK to develop a working prototype of a vaccine passport.

The Government will review whether COVID-19 status certification could play a role in reopening the economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety. This will include assessing to what extent certification would be effective in reducing risk, and the potential uses to enable access to settings or a relaxation of COVID-19 secure mitigations. The Government will also consider the ethical, equalities, privacy, legal and operational aspects of this approach and what limits, if any, should be placed on organisations using certification. It will draw on external advice to develop recommendations that take into account any social and economic impacts and implications for disproportionately impacted groups and individuals' privacy and security.

Hywel Williams:**[143711]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Royal Mail on the delivery of NHS vaccination invitation letters.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 1 February 2021]: Minsters have had discussions with Royal Mail to emphasise the importance of vaccination letters reaching people as quickly as possible.

Derek Twigg:**[144935]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to reduce the number of covid-19 vaccines available to North West England and transfer those vaccines to other English Regions.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 2 February 2021]: There are currently no plans to reduce the number of vaccines available to North West England and transfer those to other English regions. To ensure all of those people in the top priority groups can get vaccinated quickly, targeted deliveries are being made to areas where there are more people left to vaccinate in the priority cohorts - proportionate to the at-risk population they have registered. This should allow any existing disparities to be addressed,

alongside standing up community pharmacy and additional vaccination centres across the country to ensure access for everyone.

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to work with vaccination sites across the country to ensure an adequate and consistent supply of vaccine.

Each Primary Care Network site receives their own supply and work has been carried out with local CCG colleagues to ensure that vaccine supply aligns with the number of registered patients in the priority cohort groups. Where sites may progress through their supply more quickly than others, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with sites to ensure that supplies are replenished to continue vaccinating our most vulnerable.

Mr William Wragg: [\[145044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the bonus payments that GPs have received for administering the covid-19 vaccine to care home patients to the vaccination of other difficult to reach groups.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 2 February 2021]: We have made no such assessment.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[145883\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of prioritising vaccinating those with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 3 February 2021]: On 24 February, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published a clarification of their advice on vaccinating people with a learning disability. The JCVI confirmed their advice that prioritisation should be for those with a severe and profound learning disability as in their view the evidence does not support prioritised vaccination for those with learning difficulties outside this group. However, the committee supported a practical approach of inviting everyone who is on a General Practitioner Learning Disability Register for vaccination in priority group 6. The Government accepted this advice and everyone who is on a GP Learning Disability Register is now included in priority group 6 of Phase 1 of the vaccine programme.

Claudia Webbe: [\[148953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and their international counterparts on the decision to extend the maximum wait to receive the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech covid-19 vaccine to 12 weeks.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly discusses a range of issues related to the pandemic with the Secretary of State for Foreign,

Commonwealth and Development Affairs, including COVID-19 vaccines. Ministers and officials are regularly in discussions with other countries to share learning and collaborate internationally on the vaccination programme.

Updating the dosing interval is in line with the advice of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). Whilst the National Health Service across the United Kingdom will prioritise giving the first dose of the vaccine to those in the most high-risk groups, everyone will still receive their second dose within 12 weeks of their first. The JCVI's statement on changing the dose interval is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prioritising-the-first-covid-19-vaccine-dose-jcvi-statement/optimising-the-covid-19-vaccination-programme-for-maximum-short-term-impact

Dame Diana Johnson:

[150720]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of which vaccine had been administered to people who have died from covid-19 after receiving a vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 11 February 2021]: Episodes of possible vaccine failure, which includes those who have been vaccinated and subsequently die from COVID-19, are being recorded for each vaccine. Such episodes are being assessed and followed up through enhanced surveillance approaches. More information will be available in due course.

Barbara Keeley:

[152445]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that people in priority groups 1 to 4 with (a) learning disabilities and (b) severe mental illness are able to access covid-19 vaccines.

Barbara Keeley:

[152446]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to identify people with (a) learning disabilities and (b) severe mental illness who are in each of the current priority groups for covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 22 February 2021]: On 24 February the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published a clarification of their advice on vaccinating people with a learning disability. They confirmed their view that priority should be given to those with a severe and profound learning disability, but recognised concerns about coding of Learning Disability on general practitioner (GP) systems and supported a practical approach of inviting everyone who is on the GP Learning Disability Register for vaccination in cohort 6.

The JCVI also supports an approach for the National Health Service to work with local authorities to identify adults with learning disability in residential and nursing

care, and those who require support, for example as part of assisted living in the community, and those in shared accommodation with multiple occupancy.

The NHS can identify adults who have severe mental illnesses, including individuals with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or any mental illness that causes severe functional impairment, who are eligible for vaccination in cohort 6 through GP records.

Local systems are best placed to reach out to our diverse communities and avoid inequalities in access, and every system should have a plan for full coverage for health inclusion groups. Regional teams working with local systems have identified local health inclusion groups that will require access to the vaccine, within eligible patient cohorts. Locally commissioned arrangements to reach these groups may include local NHS Community & Mental Health Trust providers, primary care networks, or partnership activity with statutory and voluntary services.

Andrew Bridgen:

[158048]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria is being used to prioritise clinically vulnerable, moderate risk, people with inflammatory bowel disease for the covid-19 vaccine; and which healthcare professionals are responsible for identifying those patients and adding them to the appropriate vaccination list.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation current view is that inflammatory bowel disease is not in itself an indicator of increased risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19. However where an individual is, as a result of disease or treatment, immunosuppressed they may be either defined as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and therefore are prioritised in priority group 4 in Phase 1 of the vaccine programme or if the immunosuppression is less severe will have been included in priority group 6. Clinicians responsible for individuals' care, whether in hospital or in primary care, are primarily responsible for ensuring they are in the appropriate priority group. Anyone who is concerned that they have not been yet offered vaccination but believe they do meet the criteria for either group 4 or 6 may wish to discuss with their general practitioner or hospital clinician.

Helen Hayes:

[158989]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the capacity of local healthcare services to plan their covid-19 vaccine supply in advance to ensure that all second doses are given on time, with reference to the short notice of vaccine deliveries.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 2 March 2021]: COVID-19 vaccine supply is being managed at a national level by NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England to ensure all areas get the supply they need to offer a first vaccine to all registered priority cohorts and to ensure all patients can receive the second dose within 12 weeks of the first. All vaccinations are recorded on the National Immunisation

Management Service and individual General Practitioner patient records to enable a second vaccines to be provided in line with national guidance on delivery of the second dose.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[159013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to ensure that visually impaired people are sent information on the covid-19 vaccine in an accessible format.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 2 March 2021]: The national booking letters are sent in size 16 font as standard as defined by RNIB as large print and provide dialling 119 as an option. Public Health England has also published braille and large print versions.

Yvette Cooper:

[159240]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the most recent (a) number and (b) proportion of population by age of people vaccinated against covid-19 in each electoral ward in Normanton, Pontefract, and Castleford constituency.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 3 March 2021]: The data is not available in the format requested. NHS England publishes daily data for vaccinations in England, showing the total first and second doses given to date by region. NHS England also publishes the number of vaccinations in each lower tier local authority, each Middle Layer Super Output Area and each constituency by age group, which is updated weekly. The data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

Henry Smith:

[160620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for international collaboration on research into the covid-19 vaccine response in immunocompromised groups.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Our investment in the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) supports ongoing vaccine research and development to respond to an evolving virus. Whilst there are no current plans for United Kingdom Government-initiated international research into the COVID-19 vaccine response on immunocompromised groups, it is important to emphasise that the research community is truly global in its collaboration and studies, those planned or published, will be shared, discussed and closely scrutinised by international researchers in this field and vice versa.

UK Research and Innovation is funding research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals specifically, as part of its support for the OCTAVE study. This study includes those with inflammatory disorders, high risk cancer patient groups, and patients with severe kidney and liver disease.

Henry Smith:

[160621]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when second doses of the covid-19 vaccine will be administered to all clinically extremely vulnerable people; and what long term support will be provided to clinically extremely vulnerable people after the shielding deadline of the 31 March 2021.

Nadhim Zahawi:

By mid-February we successfully offered a first vaccine dose to everyone in the top four priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), including clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) individuals. The National Health Service across the United Kingdom will continue prioritising the first dose of the vaccine to those in the most high-risk groups; however, this will not interfere with everyone receiving their second dose within 12 weeks of their first. The second dose completes the course and is important for longer term protection.

As virus infection rates continue to fall, advice to CEV individuals to shield will cease from 1 April, but they must continue to follow the rules in place for everyone under the current national restrictions. Those on the shielded patient list will receive letters with updated guidance on steps people can take to reduce their risk.

Regarding longer term support for CEV individuals, local councils will continue to provide support to those in their communities in need and have systems and relationships in place with other organisations to provide that. The NHS Volunteer Responders Programme will also continue providing support with food, prescriptions and essential items to those who are self-isolating for any reason. This also includes anyone that is clinically extremely vulnerable, or anyone that is vulnerable for another reason.

Further guidance on shielding and protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable can be found at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

Andrew Gwynne:

[161701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of covid-19 vaccination wastage levels at the (a) Manchester Etihad Stadium mass vaccination and (b) Primary Care Network sites in (i) Tameside and Glossop CCG and (ii) Stockport CCG.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 8 March 2021]: We have made no such assessment of vaccine wastage at those sites.

No vaccines should be wasted. All vaccination centres should have a backup list people in the cohorts currently being vaccinated, who can be called in case doses would be wasted. If no members of the currently vaccinated cohorts are available, it is recommended that members of the priority cohorts next in line be vaccinated.

In the unlikely case the above is not possible, in line with Enhanced Service Specification, individuals present on site should be vaccinated based on clinical judgement. The Enhanced Service Specification is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/12/C0917-Covid-19-Enhanced-Service-ES-Specification-1-December-2020.pdf>

Andrew Gwynne:

[161702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make a comparative assessment of the effectiveness of the supply of covid vaccination vials to (a) the Manchester Etihad Stadium mass vaccination site and (b) Primary Care Network sites in (a) Tameside and Glossop CCG and (b) Stockport CCG.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 8 March 2021]: There are no specific plans to do so.

Each region is given an allocation of vaccine based on national levels of supply and plans submitted by local systems, which is allocated to vaccination sites. The plans are based on a range of criteria, including previous activity, population and the remaining number of people in the eligible cohorts. Each Primary Care Network site receives their own supply and work has been carried out with local clinical commissioning group colleagues to ensure that vaccine supply aligns with the number of registered patients in the priority cohort groups.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with vaccination sites across the country to ensure that supplies are replenished as required and to ensure an adequate and consistent supply of vaccine.

Alex Norris:

[163285]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment has he made of the risk that patients with latex allergies face from the administration of the covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 9 March 2021]: Anyone who has ever had a serious allergic reaction should tell their healthcare professional before they are vaccinated. Serious allergic reactions are rare. If people do have a reaction to the vaccine, it usually happens in minutes. Staff giving the vaccine are trained to deal with allergic reactions and all locations providing vaccinations are required to have anaphylaxis packs on-site, allowed staff to treat them immediately.

As with other vaccination programmes and advised by the World Health Organisation (WHO), gloves are not recommended when administering a vaccine unless persons administering vaccinations have open lesions on their hands or are likely to encounter a patient's body fluids. Plastic syringes do not contain latex and nor do needles.

Vicky Foxcroft:**[169902]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department was informed by the expert advisory group that an extra 1.7 million people would need to be added to the clinically extremely vulnerable list.

Jo Churchill:

An expert subgroup of the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group was commissioned by the Chief Medical Officer to develop a predictive risk model to enable a more sophisticated approach to clinical risk.

In February 2021, the expert advisory group commissioned NHS Digital to apply the model to medical records of adults in England to identify those at highest risk. Those identified were subsequently added to the Shielded Patient List as a precautionary measure.

Mr Kevan Jones:**[170556]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March 2021 to Question 167165 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, how that data on prisoner vaccination prior to release is held.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 22 March 2021]: This information is not collected.

Helen Hayes:**[173099]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to taking to ensure local authorities are adequately resourced to encourage strong vaccine uptake locally.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 March 2021]: To ensure local authorities are adequately resourced to encourage strong vaccine uptake locally, on 25 January we released £23.75 million funding to support our Community Champions Scheme. This supports councils and voluntary groups to expand COVID-19 communications with at risk groups. Community Champions will share COVID-19 vaccine advice and information to boost local vaccination take-up and will fund support for extra school programmes, helplines and phone calls to those in at risk groups.

The funding is to boost national organisations and voluntary and community groups who specialise in working with communities most at risk from COVID-19 so they can expand their work locally. This is part of over £7.9 billion government funding provided to councils to help them support their communities during the pandemic.

For More information on how we are supporting local authorities in encouraging uptake locally through the Community Champions Scheme can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-champions-to-give-covid-19-vaccine-advice-and-boost-take-up>

Dr Julian Lewis:

[173990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason data on the number of people admitted to hospital with covid-19 more than three weeks after having been vaccinated against covid-19 (a) once and (b) twice is not being collected; and if he will take immediate steps to implement a system for the (i) collection and (ii) daily publication of that data.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Data on the number of people admitted to hospital with COVID-19 more than three weeks after having been vaccinated with either one dose or two doses is being collected through Public Health England's (PHE) Severe Acute Respiratory Infection Watch surveillance system. These data are used for vaccine effectiveness studies and for vaccine impact analysis.

PHE has published early data on vaccine effectiveness based on pillar two positive results in those who are over 80 years old which is linked to the national emergency care dataset. This analysis differentiates those who are unvaccinated, those who are within two weeks of first dose and those who are more than two weeks on from their first dose. This analysis is available at the following link:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/phe-monitoring-of-the-effectiveness-of-covid-19-vaccination

PHE has no plans to publish data on a daily basis as there is a lag before hospitalisations are observed. In addition, analysis needs to allow for a vaccine induced immune response to be able to measure risk of hospitalisation from time since first and second dose of a vaccine.

Chris Green:

[174873]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether covid-19 vaccines are eligible for the Medicines Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency's Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In principle, COVID-19 vaccines are eligible for applying to the Innovative Licensing and Access Pathway (ILAP). Inclusion in the ILAP is subject to fulfilment of the Innovation Passport criteria.

Jim Shannon:

[175850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has plans to prioritise elite level athletes for early covid-19 vaccinations in light of the progress of the vaccination programme.

Nadhim Zahawi:

If elite level athletes are captured in phase one or two of the programme due to age or clinical need, then they will be vaccinated accordingly. However, we are not currently planning to prioritise elite level athletes for COVID-19 vaccination.

■ Crown Salvage: Contracts

Fleur Anderson:

[174283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the details of the contract for personal protective equipment supplies awarded to Crown Salvage on 13 April 2020.

Jo Churchill:

The contract is available at the following link:

https://atamis-1928.cloudforce.com/sfc/p/#00000000rwim/a/4J000000kHkx/O0SzPUcLh0QLRGRy vlsW0.Hwrcy4A4Zjp_Dr.A9HYDM

Some information concerning pricing and the precise amounts of personal protective equipment ordered has been redacted as this is considered commercially sensitive.

■ Dementia: Coronavirus

Andrea Jenkyns:

[144759]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that those living with Dementia who have been offered a covid-19 vaccine are supported to arrive at their scheduled appointment; and what steps his Department is taking to follow up with dementia sufferers who miss covid-19 vaccine appointments.

Nadhim Zahawi:

A number of steps have been taken to ensure those living with dementia have been offered a COVID-19 vaccine and are supported to arrive at their scheduled appointment, which are outlined in a Standard Operating Procedure published by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

This states that under the Equalities Act 2010, people with a learning disability or health condition that has a substantial and long-term effect on day-to-day activities are entitled to reasonable adjustments when accessing health services. This means that steps must be taken to remove or minimise the barriers that individuals with serious mental illness (SMI), dementia, a learning disability or autistic people may face in accessing the vaccine.

Most people with a SMI, dementia, learning disability or autism will be able to receive their vaccine in the standard way. However, for the minority of individuals where this is not suitable, reasonable adjustments should be determined in advance of the vaccine provision, centred around individual needs to minimise discomfort or distress.

■ Dental Services: Contracts

Robert Largan:

[155477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the full guidance issued to NHS commissioners in respect of (a) the year-end reconciliation process for NHS dental contracts and (b) how exceptional circumstances will be

assessed and recognised in payments during the fourth quarter of the financial year 2020-21.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances when the dental activity target may not be deliverable and, in these situations, National Health Service regional commissioners have the discretion to make exceptions, for instance in cases where a dental practice has been impacted by staff being required to self-isolate and the reinstatement of shielding during the national lockdown. Cases will be considered on an individual basis and contractors are advised to contact commissioners early if they feel that exceptional circumstances may apply. The full guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/dental-provider-assurance/dental-assurance-reviews/mid-year-year-end-contract-reconciliation>

■ **Dental Services: Fees and Charges**

Judith Cummins:

[175898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to increase dental charges in 2021-22.

Judith Cummins:

[175899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Written Statement of 23 November 2020, Official Report, HCWS593, whether he plans to increase dental patient charges by five per cent in the 2021-22 financial year.

Judith Cummins:

[175900]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that future increases to dental patient charges do not exceed the rate of inflation.

Jo Churchill:

No decision has been made on changes to dental patient charges for the 2021/22 financial year.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Dudley North**

Marco Longhi:

[176060]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to deliver civil service jobs in his Department to Dudley North constituency.

Edward Argar:

Departmental staff predominantly work in the London and Leeds offices, with a smaller number of staff based in the Reading, Runcorn and Burnley sites. The majority of staff have been working at home due to the pandemic and the Department is currently considering future ways of working once restrictions support a physical return to our sites. As part of and the Places for Growth programme, we are considering locations and are engaging with staff and partners in health and social

care to consider our future geographic footprint. This may result in an expansion of existing locations and the Department will consider the potential benefits of any additional locations for recruitment, retention, capability and staff diversity.

■ **Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**

Naz Shah:

[\[174150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Questions 169877 and 169876 tabled by the hon. Member for Bradford West on 16 March 2021.

Edward Argar:

We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold the Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The hon. Member's questions will be answered as soon as possible.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[175783\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to his Department of responding to Written Parliamentary Questions since March 2020.

Edward Argar:

We have made no such estimate.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[175798\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 25 March 2021 to Question 149740 on Care Homes: Coronavirus, whether any Deloitte employees were involved in the drafting of that Answer; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

Deloitte employees were not involved in drafting this answer.

Paul Blomfield:

[\[175841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to Question 158024, tabled by the hon. Member for Sheffield Central on 24 February 2021.

Edward Argar:

We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold the Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The hon. Member's question will be answered as soon as possible.

■ Drinking Water: Fluoride

Paul Bristow:

[\[174287\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to publish a preliminary assessment of the (a) timetable and (b) associated costs for the roll out of water fluoridation in England under the proposed powers in the White Paper, Working together to improve health and social care for all.

Jo Churchill:

Water fluoridation is an effective public health intervention that has the ability to improve oral health and reduce oral health inequalities. We are not yet in a position to share any firm plans for expansion, which would be subject to funding being agreed and public consultation following the successful passage of the Bill.

■ Drugs: Regulation

Geraint Davies:

[\[175686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the oral contribution of Baroness Penn of 11 November 2020 Official Report, Column 450GC on the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill, what progress has been made on the scoping project led by NHS England and NHS Improvement with the devolved Administrations and professional bodies on the current and potential future use of medicines supply, administration and prescribing mechanisms by a range of non-medical healthcare professionals.

Jo Churchill:

The seven consultations were open from 15 October to 10 December 2020. NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently analysing the responses.

■ Endometriosis: Medical Treatments

Theresa Villiers:

[\[174750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve patient access to specialist treatment for endometriosis.

Theresa Villiers:

[\[174751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to improve the speed of diagnosis of endometriosis.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Research exploring the experiences of women who present with endometriosis-like symptoms in primary care is currently underway, hosted by the National Institute of Health Research. The results will be published later this year and will help to understand delays in diagnosis.

On 8 March, we launched a 12-week call for evidence as part of the first Government-led Women's Health Strategy for England. The online survey within the call for evidence seeks information on gynaecological conditions, including

endometriosis. The treatment and diagnosis of endometriosis will be carefully considered as part of the ongoing work on the Women's Health Strategy.

■ **Familial Hypercholesterolaemia: Screening**

Henry Smith: [\[171568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when genomic laboratory hubs will fully implement the National Genomic Test Directory to ensure uniform testing for familial hypercholesterolaemia is available across the UK.

Edward Argar:

Each of the devolved administrations has a different approach to the delivery of genomics into the healthcare system. In England, genomic testing for familial hypercholesterolaemia is already available as part of the NHS Genomic Medicine Service through the genomic testing network of seven Genomic Laboratory Hubs for all patients in England who meet the eligibility criteria for testing as outlined in the National Genomic Testing Directory, which aligns with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidance.

■ **Food: Advertising**

Jason McCartney: [\[175807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which products are planned to be included in the scope of the proposed ban of TV advertising of products High in Fat, Sugar and Salt (HFSS); and whether only products of particular appeal to children are planned to be banned.

Jo Churchill:

The current proposal is to use the categories originally put forward by Public Health England (PHE) as part of the calorie reduction programme, sugar reduction programme and the soft drinks industry levy overlaying this with the 2004/05 Nutrient Profiling Model. As outlined in our consultations, one of the key objectives of any further advertising restriction was to be targeted at the products of more concern to childhood obesity.

Officials are considering the final list put forward by PHE as well as views fed in as part of the consultation process to come to a final decision on what products are in scope and will publish our full response to the consultation shortly.

Ben Bradley: [\[176030\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169025 on Food: Marketing, whether the Government will make it its policy to introduce the proposed restrictions on foods high in fat, salt and sugar in ways other than secondary legislation, in order to permit additional parliamentary scrutiny and debate.

Jo Churchill:

Non-regulatory options have been considered as insufficient to reduce the excess purchasing and therefore overconsumption of products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS). Previous voluntary actions by retailers, including through measures such as the public health responsibility deal, had limited impact. Businesses have also stated that voluntary action on promotions is not feasible.

We want to create a level playing field in which stores that make voluntary progress are no longer penalised. The response to the consultation on restricting promotions of HFSS food and drink made clear the Government's intention to use powers in the Food Safety Act (FSA) 1990 to lay secondary legislation before Parliament by mid-2021. That position remains.

Gender Recognition: Clinics**Apsana Begum:**[\[174977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of waiting times for appointments at NHS Adults' Gender Identity Clinics; and if he will allocate additional resources to reduce those waiting times.

Jo Churchill:

The Department and NHS England recognise that waiting times for gender identity clinics are unacceptably long. To address this, a new service specification has been developed to deliver services in local health settings. Three new clinics, operating as a pilot scheme for this specification, have been established in London, Manchester and Cheshire and Merseyside. These clinics are subject to ongoing evaluation with the ambition of further clinics being established.

General Practitioners: Coronavirus**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[164383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the risk to GP surgeries of resuming face-to-face services for all appointments during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

General practice is open and has been throughout the pandemic. On 14 September 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to general practice to raise the importance of providing face-to-face appointments, which included a communications toolkit to help practices provide patients with clear messaging on how they can access services by phone, online or in person. General practice in response to COVID-19 has transformed the way its care services operate. Practices have delivered alongside face-to-face appointments, total triage and remote consultations to serve as many patients as possible, while protecting staff and the public from risk of infection.

General practice appointment levels are now close to pre-pandemic numbers. In February 2021, an estimated 23.5 million appointments were booked in general

practice in England - an average of 1.19 million per working weekday, compared to 1.24 million appointments per working weekday in February 2020. In February 2021, 13.0 million appointments were face to face, which is 55.3% of all appointments.

The Government has published clear guidance on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for health and social care workers, including general practitioners (GPs), consistent with World Health Organization advice. PPE guidance supports and allows the safe recommencement and maintaining of face-to-face GP appointments and where appropriate, PPE has been made available free of charge.

■ Health Services and Social Service: Pay

David Linden:

[\[914248\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure adequate pay levels for health and social care staff.

Helen Whately:

The independent Pay Review Bodies (PRBs) will make a recommendation on pay for National Health Service staff in the spring. In reaching their recommendations the PRBs will take into account the cost of living and inflation, recruitment and retention, morale and motivation, affordability and value for the taxpayer. The Department works closely with HM Treasury when submitting evidence to the PRBs.

Social care pay is set by care providers. We expect local authorities to pay providers a fair rate for care to enable fair levels of workforce pay.

■ Health Services and Social Services: Standards

Geraint Davies:

[\[175685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's policy paper entitled Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all, published on 11 February 2021, what discussions officials in his Department have had with the (a) Allied Health Professions Federation, (b) Royal College of Podiatry, (c) Society and College of Radiographers, (d) Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, (e) College of Paramedics, (f) Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, (g) British and Irish Orthoptic Society, (h) Royal College of Occupational Therapists, (i) British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists, (k) British Dietetic Association, (l) British Association of Drama therapists, (m) British Association of Art Therapists and (n) British Association for Music Therapy on the (i) themes and (ii) proposals contained in that paper.

Edward Argar:

The recommendations in this paper build on engagement with stakeholders representing different parts of the health and care system, with more than 100 organisations engaged on the White Paper's themes to date. This includes engagement with the Social Partnership Forum, of which several members of the

Allied Health Professions Federation are also members. Officials will continue to have discussions with stakeholders accordingly.

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[175901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all White Paper, published on 11 February 2021, whether ICS Health and Care Partnerships will not be able to include private sector organisations.

Edward Argar:

The statutory Integrated Care Systems (ICS) National Health Service Boards will not include private providers among the core members set out in statute. Local areas may choose to involve a range of providers, including from the voluntary and independent sector, in their ICS Health and Care Partnerships.

Margaret Greenwood:

[\[175902\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all White Paper, published on 11 February 2021, what type of joint appointments should be enabled; and what assessment he has made of whether those arrangements could potentially lead to a joint appointment of one individual to act as both the executive director or chief executive of an NHS Foundation Trust and the executive director or chief executive in a local authority.

Edward Argar:

Appointing people to joint roles across two organisations can support aligned decision making, enhance leadership across organisations and improve the delivery of integrated care. In the Health and Care Bill we are proposing to introduce the ability to issue guidance on joint appointments between National Health Service bodies; NHS bodies and local authorities; and NHS bodies and combined authorities. This will ensure that there is a clear set of criteria for organisations to consider when making joint appointments. Ahead of publishing any guidance, NHS England would consult with appropriate organisations.

■ Health Services: Sign Language

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[174912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that British Sign Language interpreters are available to people who need to access medical care.

Helen Whately:

All National Health Service organisations are required to comply with the Accessible Information Standard and meet the information and communication support needs of patients, service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss, including providing British Sign Language (BSL).

NHS England and NHS Improvement have put in place several measures to ensure disabled people's communications needs have not prevented them from receiving the care and treatment they need. This includes a BSL interpreter for NHS 111, access to interpreters, communication toolkits for staff, clear mask personal protective equipment as well as a range of easy read materials to simplify communications.

■ **Health: Finance**

Stuart Anderson: [\[176041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding is available to local community groups as part of the Government's strategy to encourage healthy and active lifestyles.

Jo Churchill:
This information is not collected centrally.

■ **Health: International Cooperation**

Anne Marie Morris: [\[174842\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether work has started on establishing the Global One Health Intelligence Hub.

Jo Churchill:
We are working closely with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the United Nations Environment Programme to build the proposal for developing the Hub and are discussing potential support with G7 partners.

■ **HIV Infection: Drugs**

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[174218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the level of adherence to HIV medication among young people transitioning from children's HIV services to adult HIV services.

Jo Churchill:
As part of the remit of HIV services, there is continuous monitoring of compliance for the adherence of patients under the care of the treating clinician and pharmacy teams. No specific assessment has been made.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[174886\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2021 to Question 166476, what equality impact assessment has been done on HIV prevention drug PrEP only being available in sexual health services; and what assessment he has made of the (a) benefits and (b) risks for diverse communities of PrEP being available in (i) GP practices, (ii) pharmacies, and (iii) other NHS services.

Jo Churchill:

No equality impact assessment has been completed. Public Health England, in collaboration with stakeholders, is currently developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the routine commissioning of the HIV prevention drug pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). This will use established surveillance systems and include measures of PrEP need and use among key population groups to inform equitable delivery and access. The provision of PrEP, including the settings in which PrEP should be made available outside of specialist sexual health services, will be considered as part of the development of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and HIV Action Plan, which we plan to publish in 2021.

■ Home Care Services: Coronavirus**Alex Norris:****[140244]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that all (a) homecare workers working for (i) registered and (ii) unregistered organisations, (b) live-in carers and (c) personal assistant care workers receive an invitation for a covid-19 vaccination at the correct time according to the Government's priorities for the administration of those vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 25 January 2021]: All frontline healthcare staff who are eligible for seasonal influenza vaccination should be offered COVID-19 vaccination. This includes those working in independent, voluntary and non-standard healthcare settings such as hospices and community-based mental health or addiction services. Care home staff, personal assistants to personal budget holders, domiciliary support workers and day centre workers are included in the definition of social care workers. Also included are those non-clinical ancillary staff at care homes who may have social contact with patients but are not directly involved in patient care.

In order of priority, most people already resident in the United Kingdom will be contacted by their general practitioner to book their vaccine via an online or telephone system. Those in the initial priority groups can also arrange their vaccination appointment by calling 119 or through the national booking system at the following link:

www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination

General practitioners are also able to add any additional patients who they feel should have been included in cohorts one to nine to the register for vaccination.

■ Hospitals: Parking**Layla Moran:****[176020]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reintroduce parking charges for NHS staff working at NHS hospitals in England following the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

Hospital car parks are free for National Health Service staff for this pandemic and this remains the Government's position.

From its introduction in March 2020 and until October 2020, any loss of income was covered by the COVID-19 reimbursement provided to trusts. Since October 2020, funding for the delivery of free staff parking has been included as part of trusts' overall system allocation.

■ Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis: Nintedanib and Pirfenidone**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[176003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing universal access to Pirfenidone and Nintedanib for people with Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis.

Jo Churchill:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for producing evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service on whether medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources. NICE has published guidance recommending nintedanib and pirfenidone as options for treating adults with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis if the person has a forced vital capacity between 50% and 80%. NICE is currently considering whether an update to this guidance is required and expects to inform stakeholders of the outcome in April 2021.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation**Alberto Costa:**[\[175911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to IVF for women whose partner has children from a previous relationship.

Helen Whately:

The Government is clear that it expects local National Health Service bodies to commission fertility services in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, to ensure equitable access across England.

We are aware that some individual clinical commissioning groups set additional non-clinical criteria, which can include having children from previous relationships. This is outside the best clinical practice within the NICE fertility guidelines and we are currently considering options to address these variations.

■ Integrated Care Systems: Finance**Margaret Greenwood:**[\[174874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Integration and Innovation: Working together to improve health and social care for all White Paper,

what (a) the maximum percentage is of the NHS budget for England and (b) the minimum percentage is of the NHS budget for England that would be shared between all ICSs in England.

Edward Argar:

This information is not currently available. NHS England allocate the budget in England for integrated care systems and its own commissioning functions, for example for specialised commissioning. NHS England are currently examining how best to allocate resources to systems for the financial year 2022/23 and will publish these allocations in due course.

■ **Maternity Services**

Ellie Reeves:

[\[174943\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish details on the future of Public Health England's maternity and early years functions.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[174944\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the needs of babies, children and young people in decisions on the restructure of Public Health England.

Jo Churchill:

On Monday 29 March, we published 'Transforming the Public Health System: Reforming the Public Health System for the challenges of our times', which sets out our reform plans for the public health system. The publication can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-the-public-health-system>

We are proposing to move most of the Public Health England functions that directly support development and delivery of national health improvement policy into the new Office for Health Promotion in the Department of Health and Social Care, alongside existing Departmental capability on prevention and health improvement, as they are integral to policy development and delivery, and directly support national decision-making. This will include subject-matter expertise on a range of important public health issues, including but not limited to obesity and nutrition, physical activity, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sexual health, public mental health, children and young people's public health.

Our proposals will strengthen the system and ensure it can meet the needs of the population. This means improving health throughout the life course; from pregnancy and early years, all the way through to old age. We will present more detail on our plans and ambitions for improving the public's health later in 2021.

■ Medical Treatments: Coronavirus**Lee Anderson:** [\[128731\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the (a) economic and (b) societal effects of medical treatments are taken into account when assessing medicines, in the context of the approval and procurement of covid-19 vaccine candidates.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has accepted the recommendations from the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to authorise three COVID-19 vaccines for use - Pfizer/BioNTech, Oxford/AstraZeneca and Moderna. While this approval is not specifically on the basis of economic and societal benefits, it is on the grounds of patient safety. No vaccine would be deployed in the United Kingdom unless the expected standards of safety, quality and efficacy are met.

■ Members: Correspondence**Matthew Pennycook:** [\[175959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Greenwich and Woolwich of 11 November 2020 on his constituents' individual funding requests.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member's letter on 4 December 2020.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People**Tim Loughton:** [\[172009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the £79m Government funding to support children and young people's mental health is planned to be spent; and when local Clinical Commissioning Groups and councils are planned to be able to access that funding.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 24 March 2021]: This funding will allow an additional 22,500 children and young people to access community mental health services and an additional 2,000 children and young people to be able to access eating disorder services compared to what was planned as part of the NHS Long Term Plan, and will accelerate the roll-out of mental health support teams in schools so that we reach our target of 20-25% coverage a year earlier than planned. The funding is being made available to support the 2021/22 National Health Service operational planning and contracting round which is ongoing. Through this process, local systems will work with their partner organisations, including clinical commissioning groups and local authorities, to agree their mental health finance planning for financial year 2021/22.

■ Neuromuscular Disorders: Medical Treatments

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[175739\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the delivery of the NHSE commissioning policy for transcranial Magnetic Resonance Guided Focused Ultrasound (MRgFUS) for the treatment of medication refractory ET; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[175740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of providers required, (b) the timescale for delivery and (c) the procurement policy required to implement the NHSE commissioning policy for transcranial Magnetic Resonance Guided Focused Ultrasound (MRgFUS) for the treatment of medication refractory ET; and if he will make a statement.

Sir Mike Penning:

[\[175741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with his devolved Government counterparts on cross-border access for patients requiring transcranial Magnetic Resonance Guided Focused Ultrasound (MRgFUS) for the treatment of medication refractory ET; and if he will make a statement.

Edward Argar:

Significant progress has been made in the delivery of the commissioning policy for transcranial Magnetic Resonance Guided Focused Ultrasound (MRgFUS), published in November 2020 and effective from 1 April 2021.

MRgFUS is used in the treatment of medication refractory essential tremor. It has been estimated that there will be approximately 150 cases a year which, in the first instance, will require two centres to meet the needs of the population of England. A centre at Imperial Healthcare NHS Trust in London has already been identified and it is intended that this service will commence in May.

A second centre in the North of England will be required and discussions are ongoing with commissioners about its possible location. It is envisaged that there will need to be a formalised provider selection process given the number of expressions of interest received. Cross-border discussions have taken place with the devolved authorities in Scotland as to the feasibility of a third centre being commissioned in Scotland, and these discussions continue.

■ NHS: Dental Services

Navendu Mishra:

[\[174984\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of NHS dentists taking new patients on the NHS in (a) Stockport, (b) the North West and (c) England.

Navendu Mishra:**[174985]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are on the waiting list for an NHS dentist in (a) Stockport, (b) the North West and (c) England.

Navendu Mishra:**[174987]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children are on waiting lists to register with an NHS dentist in (a) Stockport, (b) the North West and (c) England; and how many of those children have been on the waiting list for over six months.

Jo Churchill:

No waiting list data is held centrally on adults or children wishing to access National Health Service dental services in Stockport, the North West or England.

The Department is working closely with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Chief Dental Officer for England to increase levels of service, as fast as is safely possible. On 29 March we announced that the threshold for full NHS contractual payment would be raised to 60% of normal activity. Nearly 700 urgent dental care centres also remain open across England to ensure that patients are able to access urgent dental treatment. We continue to explore what more can be done to increase capacity including piloting pre-appointment testing.

■ NHS: Research

Dr Philippa Whitford:**[175897]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to publish further details on the right of referral to research as part of the NHS Long-Term Plan.

Edward Argar:

The right of referral to research is one action aimed at increasing participation in research. NHS England and NHS Improvement have indicated that this work has been delayed and they are looking to consider it further as they work with other partners, including the Department, to develop the England specific action plan that will underpin the vision. Increasing participation in research is a key strand of the national vision for clinical research published on 23 March, The Future of UK Clinical Research Delivery, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-future-of-uk-clinical-research-delivery>

■ NHS: Waiting Lists

Colleen Fletcher:**[175893]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on average waiting times for NHS treatment in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England; and what steps his Department is taking to clear backlogs for NHS treatment in those areas.

Edward Argar:

The COVID-19 outbreak has placed significant pressure on waiting times for National Health Service treatment across England. Comparison of the latest waiting times from January 2021 to January 2020 shows there has been an increase of just under 4 weeks in average (median) waiting times for NHS treatment across England, with an increase of over four weeks for University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust and across the Midlands.

The NHS continues to work hard to deliver the maximum amount of elective activity and reduce waiting times as much as possible across Coventry, the West Midlands and the rest of England.

We have provided £1 billion to help address the elective backlog, as well as a further £6.6 billion funding to support the wider health system. Providers in Coventry and the West Midlands will be supported to maximise elective activity, taking full advantage of the opportunities to transform the delivery of services. We will continue to work with NHS England to ensure all patients across the country receive the best quality treatment and as quickly as possible.

Podiatry**Jonathan Ashworth:**[\[175853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the value of podiatry services following the award of the Royal Charter to the College of Podiatry.

Jo Churchill:

The Government recognises the important role that Allied Health Professionals, including podiatrists, play in supporting treatment for a wide range of conditions, including those where there is increasing demand for treatment due to diseases such as diabetes. This is also highlighted in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Podiatry provides high quality expert advice and specialist treatment for conditions affecting the lower limb and foot, working alongside areas such as vascular and diabetology to help improve patient care. The value and importance of good podiatry services is well recognised across a number of different specialties. The award of the Royal Charter to the College of Podiatry will allow the College to further raise its profile and help give a greater voice to its members and their patients in all areas of the Health and Social Care agenda.

Pregnancy: Caffeine**Jim Shannon:**[\[175846\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the findings of the recent study by the University of Rochester that caffeine consumed during pregnancy can alter the structure of an unborn baby's brain; and whether his Department has plans to undertake further research on the effects of caffeine consumption during pregnancy.

Jo Churchill:

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) keeps under review the evolving body of credible scientific evidence on the safety of food including caffeine and advises the Government if any action is needed.

The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) is an independent scientific committee that provides advice to the Food Standards Agency on matters concerning the toxicity of chemicals. Current Government advice on caffeine consumption during pregnancy is based on the COT evaluation of the evidence. The COT is currently undergoing a review of various chemicals in relation to maternal health during pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes. Caffeine will be reviewed as part of this work .

Therefore, the FSA does not consider that any action in relation to the safety of caffeine is needed at the present time.

■ Pregnancy: Screening**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[174841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how his Department plans to ensure that the initial launch of noninvasive prenatal testing (NIPT) will be expanded to enable all women to have the choice to utilise that technology during pregnancy through the NHS.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) will be available to all women as an additional option as part of the NHS Fetal Anomaly Screening Programme. NIPT will be offered if the woman has been identified by existing tests as having a higher chance of having a baby with Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome or Patau's syndrome.

The target date to commence the offer of NIPT is 1 June 2021. NIPT will be nationally introduced as an 'evaluative roll out'. This means the programme will be able to monitor how the introduction of NIPT is working at each stage and make any required changes to the pathway and screening processes quickly and effectively.

■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[176006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps he has taken to ensure pregnant women prescribed sodium valproate are aware of the potential health risks.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The product information, approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which outlines the potential health risks of sodium valproate, is available online and in hard copy to support discussions between medical professionals and all women and to help ensure the use of sodium valproate is minimised during pregnancy. Healthcare professionals have been reminded of their responsibility to inform women and girls of the risks of sodium valproate specifically

through letters from the United Kingdom's Chief Medical Officers and Chief Pharmaceutical Officers and by articles in the MHRA's electronic bulletin Drug Safety Update.

Guidance for specialists to support adherence to the pregnancy prevention requirements for women of childbearing potential taking sodium valproate during the pandemic, particularly patients who are shielding due to other health conditions was published by the MHRA in May 2020. This included guidance on annual review of patients using digital consultations. Materials that form the basis of the Pregnancy Prevention Programme were updated and redistributed in hard copy in December 2020.

■ **Prescriptions: Paper**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[175733\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to end the use of paper prescriptions.

Jo Churchill:

The Government wants to enable as many prescriptions as possible to be sent electronically. However paper prescriptions for those who require them will still be available.

In England there has been an unprecedented growth in the use and availability of electronic prescriptions in primary care, and more is being done to expand their use. This builds on work already ongoing throughout the National Health Service, where in January 2021 89% of prescription items were sent via the Electronic Prescription Service.

NHS Digital is looking to improve the current functionality of electronic prescribing and extend its use into other care settings.

Expansion has been implemented in phases.

■ **Respiratory Syncytial Virus: Babies**

Chris Green:

[\[174870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to alleviate the effect of infant respiratory syncytial virus on (a) the NHS and (b) population health.

Jo Churchill:

To alleviate the effect of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) on the National Health Service, Public Health England (PHE) is working with NHS England as part of its preparing and planning for the 2021 RSV season. This includes ensuring access to Synagis out of season in the event of a spring/summer outbreak and ensuring that clinicians have access to the most up to date and evidence-based guidance to support patient treatment and safe discharge from hospital. PHE monitors levels of

RSV activity in the population of England and Wales and publishes information throughout the RSV season.

Chris Green: [\[174871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the long-term effect of infant respiratory syncytial virus on healthcare utilisation.

Jo Churchill:
No such assessment has been made.

■ **Stepping Hill Hospital: Coronavirus**

Navendu Mishra: [\[176094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many appointments have been cancelled at Stepping Hill hospital during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:
The information requested is not available. The collection of data on cancelled operations has been paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to release capacity across the National Health Service to support the response.

■ **Stepping Hill Hospital: Sick Leave**

Navendu Mishra: [\[176095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS staff based at Stepping Hill Hospital have taken sick leave in the last five years; and how many days were lost to sickness at that hospital.

Helen Whately:
The information is not collected in the format requested, as sickness absence data is only collected at trust level rather than individual site.

■ **Terminal Illnesses: Suicide**

Christine Jardine: [\[175995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people diagnosed with a terminal illness who end their own lives each year.

Ms Nadine Dorries:
We have made no such estimate.

■ **Tobacco**

Jason McCartney: [\[175805\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to bring forward proposals in the Green Paper, Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s, in the upcoming Tobacco Control Plan.

Jason McCartney:

[\[175806\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish his timeframe for the policy development and publishing of the Tobacco Control Plan.

Jo Churchill:

A new Tobacco Control plan is due to be published later this year and will set out further ambitions to deliver a smoke free country by 2030. Policies for the new plan are currently under development. We will consider all proposals from the 2019 Green Paper, including those on e-cigarettes and addressing smoking in particular vulnerable groups.

■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

Apsana Begum:

[\[176068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason visiting elderly relatives abroad is not a permitted reason for travel during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of permitting those overseas visits on medical and compassionate grounds.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

At this time international travel is limited to reduce the risk of the virus spreading, including variants of concern. However some of the reasonable excuses for international travel will enable people to visit relatives where essential, such as where it is reasonably necessary to provide care and assistance to a vulnerable person.

HOME OFFICE

■ **Airguns**

Karin Smyth:

[\[175915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the evidence gathered for the review of air weapons regulation in England and Wales.

Karin Smyth:

[\[175916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for what reason the Government conducted aspects of the Air Weapons Review in private.

Karin Smyth:

[\[175917\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 147915 on Airguns, if she will publish the evidence on controls on air weapons in Scotland and Northern Ireland that her Department considered as part of its review of air weapons.

Karin Smyth:

[\[175918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish the Government's response to the Firearms Safety Consultation.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government conducted a review of air weapons regulation following the death of a child involving an air weapon. We invited views on the issue from a wide range of interested parties. As part of the review, the Government also looked at the arrangements that apply to the controls on air weapons in Scotland and Northern Ireland, but we did not solicit specific evidence in relation to the position in those administrations.

We published the outcomes of the review and sought views on our proposals for changes to the regulation of air weapons in the public consultation on firearms safety issues which ran from 24 November 2020 to 16 February 2021.

We will publish our formal response to the consultation, including in relation to air weapons controls in due course, following a full and careful consideration of the responses we received.

■ Asylum: Slavery**Liz Saville Roberts:****[175960]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of granting asylum seekers who are victims of modern slavery a minimum of one year of leave to remain in the UK to support their long term recovery.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK's policy for confirmed victims of modern slavery is to consider granting discretionary leave to remain on a case-by-case basis, based on the individual's circumstances. The published policy can be found on gov.uk [Discretionary leave for victims of modern slavery casework guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/discretionary-leave-for-victims-of-modern-slavery-casework-guidance) and gives a number of examples in which a grant of discretionary leave is appropriate.

Confirmed victims of modern slavery who are also asylum seekers are eligible for a grant of leave under the same policy, but this usually only needs to be considered if the asylum claim is refused.

As part of the New Plan for Immigration announced on 24 March 2021, we are consulting on a proposal that confirmed victims with long-term recovery needs linked to their modern slavery exploitation can be considered for a grant of temporary leave to remain to assist their recovery. This builds on our end-to-end needs-based approach to supporting victims. We also make clear that temporary leave to remain may be available to victims who are helping the police with prosecutions and bringing their exploiters to justice.

■ British Nationality: Children**Preet Kaur Gill:****[174237]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the February 2021 Court of Appeal decision in R v SSHD EWCA [2021] Civ 193, what the timescale is for reviewing child citizenship registration fees.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has acknowledged the judgment and is reviewing the fee in line with its duties under Section 55. We will confirm the outcome of this review in due course.

In the meantime, the fees set out in the Immigration and Nationality (Fees) Regulations 2018 continue to be charged.

■ British Nationality: Fees and Charges**Chris Law:**[\[175906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will make it her policy to remove citizenship application fees for children.

Kevin Foster:

We keep fees for immigration and nationality applications under review and ensure they are within the parameters agreed with HM Treasury and Parliament, as set out in Section 68 (9) of the Immigration Act 2014.

■ Clandestine Threat Board and Illegal Migration Strategy Board**Holly Lynch:**[\[175932\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Questions 167900 and 167901 answered on 12 March 2021, who the members are of (a) the Illegal Migration Strategy Board and (b) Clandestine Threat Board.

Chris Philp:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer given on 12th March 2021 to UIN 167900 and 167901. As was the case with previous administrations, it is not the Government's practice to provide details of all such meetings.

■ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence**Gill Furniss:**[\[174212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the UK will (a) become fully compliant with the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and (b) ratify that treaty.

Victoria Atkins:

The UK signed the Istanbul Convention in 2012, signalling its strong commitment to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) and this Government remains committed to ratifying it as soon as possible.

The Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017 requires Ministers to publish annual reports on their progress towards being able to ratify the Convention. The most recent report was published on 22 October 2020 and can be found here: [Ratification of the Council](#)

[of Europe convention on combating violence against women and domestic violence - progress report 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](#)

The October 2020 report confirmed that the UK already complies with almost all of the Convention's articles (and in a number of respects goes beyond them) and sets out the steps which the Government and the Devolved Administrations are taking, to comply with the outstanding articles as we progress toward ratification.

When we are satisfied that we are compliant with the Convention then we will, in line with section 1(3) of the Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Ratification of Convention) Act 2017, make a statement to Parliament confirming that fact and outline when we would expect to ratify.

■ Customs: Northern Ireland

Bridget Phillipson:

[175827]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what value of excise goods have been seized by HMRC in Northern Ireland in each week of 2021 so far, having been imported to Northern Ireland from the rest of the EU at a price not including UK excise duty; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

Border Force does not routinely publish this level of data on the value of excise goods seized at the border at specific ports.

Seizures relating to products related to the Tax revenue that is protected through detecting goods where excise duty has not been declared, including are published quarterly on the.gov.uk website. The latest information can be found at:

[Transparency Data Feb 2021](#)

■ Detention Centres: Females

Holly Lynch:

[175933]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169893, whether the Equality Impact Assessment carried out by her Department will be published after completion.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office plan to supplement the opening of a new immigration removal centre (IRC) for women, in County Durham, by continuing to provide some detention capacity for women at Colnbrook, Dungavel and Yarl's Wood IRCs.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be completed for the change to predominantly male accommodation at Yarl's Wood IRC. The Home Office will publish the EIA in due course.

■ Domestic Abuse

Jess Phillips:

[174854]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish the outcomes framework it is working towards in assessing the (a) quality and (b) outcome of current domestic abuse training from her work with the College of Policing; and when she expects to be able to report on that work.

Victoria Atkins:

The Domestic Abuse Matters programme, commissioned by the College of Policing and developed in collaboration with SafeLives has so far been delivered to 25 forces as of January this year, with a further six forces in discussion. The College keeps training content under continuous review.

A recent evaluation (link below) of the training found that the Domestic Abuse Matters programme is effective in increasing the levels of recording and the number of arrests for coercive and controlling behaviour.

[Policing a new domestic abuse crime: effects of force-wide training on arrests for coercive control: Policing and Society: Vol 0, No 0 \(tandfonline.com\)](#)

■ Domestic Abuse: Homicide

Jess Phillips:

[174855]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people killed in a domestic homicide were over 50 years of age in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

Information on domestic homicides is held in the Home Office Homicide Index. The latest available data shows that in 2019/20, there were 54 victims of domestic homicide where the victim was aged over 50, accounting for 47% of all domestic homicides. The figures for 2018/19 were 46 victims and 34%.

This information is correct as at 15 December 2020; figures are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and by the courts, or as further information becomes available.

Jess Phillips:

[174856]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people killed in a domestic homicide had no recourse to public funds in (a) 2019 and (b) 2020.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office does not hold the information requested. Some of this information is included in Domestic Homicide Reviews, which the government is currently reviewing how to collate.

■ Fraud: Internet

Stephen Timms: [\[174716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans she has to tackle user-generated or non-paid-for content on online platforms that leads to scams or fraud.

Stephen Timms: [\[174717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the growth in the number of scams facilitated by content hosted on online platforms through adverts or user-generated content in the last twelve months.

Kevin Foster:

Fraudsters have shown they can and will exploit any vulnerability to commit their crimes, including through the use of technology and the internet. We are working with law enforcement and industry to close down these vulnerabilities.

Last year, the National Cyber Security Centre launched the Suspicious Email Reporting Service which has already led to tens of thousands of harmful websites and scams being shut down. We are also seeking to expand membership of the Joint Fraud Taskforce to involve a wider network of stakeholders in our fraud prevention activity.

We are also considering other routes to ensure the public are safe from all forms of online fraud, including legislation. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport is leading efforts on the Online Advertising Programme which will consider further regulation of online advertising to tackle harms including fraud.

■ Gender Based Violence

Jess Phillips: [\[174853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the thematic review led by Her Majesty's inspectorate into policing responses to violence against women and girls was first commissioned; and if she place the terms of reference for the review in the Library.

Victoria Atkins:

Following the Home Secretary's letter of 14 March to Sir Tom Winsor ([Letter from the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP to Sir Thomas Winsor \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#)) and subsequent discussions with HMICFRS, we formally commissioned this inspection on 26 March.

We have asked the Inspectorate to begin work immediately with the Department to define and agree the detailed terms of reference and an appropriate timeframe for its completion. We have asked to be kept updated on progress.

■ Home Office: Correspondence

Dawn Butler:

[\[174034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on how many occasions she has written to the Speaker to explain why legislation has come into force before it has been laid before Parliament since 1 September 2020.

Kevin Foster:

I can confirm the Home Office has not written to Mr Speaker since 1 September 2020 to explain legislation being brought into force before it is laid in both Houses.

■ Immigration

Stephen Timms:

[\[174718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to implement its commitment to external engagement and transparency as part of its review of the compliant environment; and if she will publish the (a) past and (b) future programme of external consultation on that review.

Chris Philp:

As part of our commitment to external engagement we have already spoken to a range of external stakeholders including employer groups, non-governmental organisations and other government departments. We will continue to do this throughout the review.

I can confirm we intend to publish a progress report on the evaluation at a suitable juncture. As set out in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan, initial analysis of data and evidence on the compliant environment will be completed by autumn 2021.

■ Immigration: EU Nationals

Peter Grant:

[\[175922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that EU citizens who are resident in care homes in the UK are made aware of the requirement to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has provided £17million in grant funding to a network of 72 organisations which provide bespoke support to vulnerable and hard to reach EU citizens and their family members eligible to apply to the EUSS, including those who are resident in care homes or receiving some element of support from the care sector.

On top of the £17million in grant funding, the Home Office recently announced a further £4.5million of funding to the 72 organisations to continue the support services well beyond the 30 June 2021 deadline.

Of the 72 Grant-funded Organisations (GFOs), 56 support the elderly to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. These organisations are spread across the four nations.

In Scotland, Citizen's Advice Scotland, have grant funding across their four consortiums, including thirty partner organisations who are working with 204 Care providers in the Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling local authority areas to target both EU citizens employed in the care sector, together with elderly EU citizens resident in care homes.

Peter Grant: [175923]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to help make applicants to the EU Settled Status Scheme aware of the requirement to notify renewed passport details to that Scheme.

Peter Grant: [175926]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of requiring EU Nationals with settled status to update their passport details with the EU Settlement Scheme each time they renew their passport.

Kevin Foster:

Holders of EU Settlement Scheme status are issued with a letter from the Home Office which provides clear instructions as to how and when individuals can update their details using the online service.

In addition to this relevant information is available on gov.uk by following this link:

[Update your UK Visas and Immigration account details - Update your details \(update-your-details.homeoffice.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/update-your-uk-visas-and-immigration-account-details).

We advise applicants to use the online Update Your Details service to update their passport information whenever it changes. When an update is made, the applicant will then use their new passport number to access their digital status.

Updating document details is advised, but not mandatory. Applicants can continue to log into their status using the document number they applied with.

Peter Grant: [175924]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that the rights of EU citizens to live and work in the UK are maintained in the event that those EU citizens have not been able to secure their status before the deadline for closure of the EU Settlement Scheme on 30 June 2021.

Kevin Foster:

In line with the Withdrawal Agreement, EU citizens resident in the UK by the end of the transition period have until 30 June 2021 to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme, unless they have reasonable grounds for missing the deadline.

Those who apply before the deadline, but whose application is not decided until after it, will have their rights protected pending the outcome of their application (and of any appeal).

Where a person with reasonable grounds for missing the 30 June 2021 deadline applies to the scheme after the deadline and is granted status, they will, consistent with the Withdrawal Agreement, enjoy the same rights from the time they are granted status as someone who applied before the deadline.

Peter Grant:

[\[175925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that EU citizens are able to access support to obtain their status through the EU Settlement Scheme by the deadline of 30 June 2021 in light of the disruption caused by the covid-19 pandemic.

Kevin Foster:

We have worked extensively to promote awareness of the EUSS. The Home Office has already spent a total of £4.6 million on marketing campaigns to encourage those EU citizens and their family members who have not yet applied to do so. We recently launched a new £1.5 million wave of UK-wide advertising to ensure EU citizens and their family members are aware of the deadline and know they need to apply.

Guidance on how to apply and details of the support available to applicants (as it has been throughout the pandemic), is available through the EU Settlement Resolution Centre (SRC), which is open seven days a week to provide assistance over the telephone and by email. The SRC also provides a direct line for organisations working with vulnerable groups. In specific cases the SRC has the capacity to transfer customers to Assisted Digital for more bespoke support.

As well as the above process of “warm transfer” customers from SRC to our supplier We-Are-Digital (WAD), we signpost customers to our supplier WAD for the Assisted Digital service, which is available cost-free for customers who cannot access or struggle to use technology.

We remain committed to making sure everybody eligible for the EUSS can apply, including those who are vulnerable or need extra support. We have already awarded £17 million of funding to a network of now 72 organisations across the UK, to ensure important information and assistance gets through to those who are hardest to reach, and no one is left behind. These organisations have helped more than 250,000 vulnerable people to apply to the EUSS already.

In addition, we recently announced a further £4.5 million for the Grant Funded Network so it can continue to provide a wide range of invaluable support across the UK, including after the 30 June deadline, ensuring those most at-risk continue to get the help they need.

■ **Lincolnshire Police: G4S**

Sarah Jones:

[\[174244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to provide additional support to Lincolnshire Police following the expiry of its contract with G4S and its transition to insourcing services.

Kit Malthouse:

All contractual matters between a police force and any third-party service provider are operational and financial decisions that are the responsibility of the force and locally accountable Police and Crime Commissioner.

If a force faces financial instability then they are able to make a Police Special Grant application. Guidance for Special Grant applications can be found on gov.uk and all applications meeting the criteria set within the guidance will be considered and a funding decision made in due course.

Members: Correspondence

Afzal Khan: [\[174259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton dated 16 February 2021 regarding Ismail Tarig Ismail Mohamed.

Kevin Foster:

The UK Visas and Immigration MP Account Management team responded on 24 March 2021.

John Spellar: [\[174725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 20 January 2021 from the Rt Hon Member for Warley regarding Mr A Ahmedzai.

Chris Philp:

UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team responded on 25 March 2021.

Afzal Khan: [\[176031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 12 February 2021 on Rukhsana Bashir.

Kevin Foster:

The UK Visas and Immigration MP Account Management team responded on 26 March 2021.

Migrant Workers: Visas

Paul Blomfield: [\[174109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Tier 2 (General) working visas have been issued in each of the last 24 months.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on Tier 2 (General) visas in the '[Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#)'.

Data on the number of Tier 2 (General) visas are published in table Vis_D02 of the [entry clearance visas applications and outcomes](#) dataset. Information on how to use the dataset can be found in the 'Notes' page of the workbook.

The latest data relates to year ending December 2020. Data for the first quarter of 2021 are due to be published on 27 May 2021.

Information on future Home Office statistical release dates can be found in the '[Research and statistics calendar](#)'.

■ Migrants: Taxation

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[174144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department took to establish mechanisms to receive tax return data of Highly Skilled Tier 1 (General) Migrants from HMRC for indefinite leave to remain decisions.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office and HMRC have an agreed sharing protocol.

Section 40 of the UK Borders Act 2007 provides a statutory gateway to allow HMRC to share data with the Home Office for immigration and nationality functions as set out in the legislation.

Afzal Khan:

[\[174257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department has taken to provide Highly Skilled Tier 1 (General) migrant tax return data to HMRC for indefinite leave to remain decisions.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not provide tax return data to HMRC.

HMRC hold this data and provides it to the Home Office.

Stephen Timms:

[\[175690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what provisions her Department has in place to (a) receive and (b) share tax return data with HMRC for immigration enforcement.

Stephen Timms:

[\[175692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what agreements and safeguards there are in respect of the General Data Protection Regulation of using tax return data held by HMRC for informing immigration enforcement decisions.

Chris Philp:

The Home Office and HMRC have a long-established relationship underpinned by a single Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement sets out the framework under which HMRC and the Home Office work together. Sitting under this Partnership Agreement are a number of Memorandums of Understanding regarding the sharing of data for immigration enforcement purposes.

In accordance with such arrangements, the Home Office has policies and procedures in place to support fulfilling its data protection obligations when processing personal data.

■ Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre

Holly Lynch:

[\[175931\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to open a short-term immigration holding facility for men and women at Morton Hall in Lincolnshire.

Chris Philp:

The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review, to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient capacity and provides value for money.

The Home Office is developing plans for a new small residential short-term holding facility on part of the site of the current Morton Hall immigration removal centre, which will open later this year.

■ Offenders: Foreign Nationals

Sir John Hayes:

[\[175702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of foreign national offenders in the UK; and what steps she is taking to identify and deport those offenders.

Chris Philp:

The Government is clear foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them. Any foreign national who is convicted of a crime and given a prison sentence is considered for deportation at the earliest opportunity.

For non-European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, deportation will be pursued where it is conducive to the public good including where a person receives a custodial sentence of 12 months or more, commits an offence that caused serious harm or is a persistent offender. European Economic Area (EEA) nationals are deported in accordance with European Union (EU) law on the grounds of public policy or public security where relevant conduct occurred before 1 January 2021 and under the same deportation thresholds that apply to non-EEA nationals for relevant conduct after 31 December 2020.

No guarantee can ever be given that every foreign criminal will have their deportation enforced – for example, sometimes the UK's current obligations under international law such as the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights ultimately prohibit us from returning certain individuals despite their criminality. Legal or re-documentation barriers can frustrate immediate deportation. However, we never give up trying to deport these individuals to make our communities safer and since January 2019 we have removed 7,240 foreign national offenders.

The Home Office publishes data on individuals detained in the Home Office detention estate and HM Prisons solely under Immigration Act powers and Returns of people who do not have any legal right to stay in the UK in the ' [Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release](#) ' and [Transparency release - Immigration Enforcement data](#).

■ Police: UN Climate Conference 2021

Alex Norris:

[174249]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether police officers mobilised for the G7 summit will receive their covid-19 vaccinations in advance of that mobilisation to ensure the (a) operational resilience of and (b) safety of the public at that summit.

Kit Malthouse:

The roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines is being delivered in line with the guidance of the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). This prioritises those who are most likely to suffer the most serious health outcomes as a result of catching the virus, where age is assessed to be the most significant factor. Police officers will continue to be vaccinated in line with the JCVI-guided prioritisation, and many will have received at least a first dose ahead of the G7 Summit in June.

We recognise the importance of Personal Protective Equipment for all of those on the frontline and continue to work with the police to ensure officers receive the essential equipment they need in order to carry out their jobs safely.

The health and safety of all staff and attendees at the Summit, and local residents in Cornwall, is paramount. Government will take all necessary measures to ensure that the G7 Summit is fully COVID-secure.

■ Rape

Ms Harriet Harman:

[174709]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many allegations of rape were reported to the police in each of the last five years in England and Wales.

Ms Harriet Harman:

[174713]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people were charged with the offence of rape in each of the last five years in England and Wales.

Victoria Atkins:

The Home Office collects and publishes statistics on the number of allegations of rape recorded by the police in England and Wales.

The data can be found in the **Rape incidents and crime data year ending March 2017 to year ending March 2020** Home Office Open Data Tables, available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables>

The Home Office also publishes the outcomes of crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, including the number of rape offences resolved through a charge. These data can be found at the same link in the crime outcomes tables.

■ Safer Streets Fund

Helen Hayes: [\[174919\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's press release, Government moves to provide reassurance to women and girls: 15 March 2021, whether any changes have been made to the eligibility criteria for the Safer Streets Fund to ensure that the fund delivers improvements in women's safety.

Helen Hayes: [\[174920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's press release, Government moves to provide reassurance to women and girls: 15 March 2021, how much additional funding has been allocated to the Safer Streets Fund in March 2021; and how much of the £45 million is from previous funding announced for that Fund.

Helen Hayes: [\[174921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Prime Minister's press release, Government moves to provide reassurance to women and girls: 15 March 2021, what proportion of the £45 million allocated to the Safer Streets fund has already been (a) spent and (b) awarded to specific projects.

Helen Hayes: [\[174922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the amount and proportion of the Safer Streets Fund for which London boroughs will be eligible.

Kit Malthouse:

Recent tragic events have highlighted the importance of ensuring people are safe whilst walking our streets.

We have announced we are investing a further £25m into the Safer Streets Fund for the 2021/22 financial year, building on the £45m already committed between 2020 and 2022. This additional funding will look to deliver innovative and evidence-based crime prevention measures in public spaces, with a focus on ensuring women and girls feel safe when in the public domain.

£25m of the Fund has already been spent through the first round, launched in January 2020. The second £20m round of the Fund launched on 28 January 2021, with the bidding window closing on the 25 March; we will carefully consider all bids against defined criteria, before announcing successful areas. The criteria and application process for this second round will remain unchanged.

The additional 'round 3' £25m investment will be launched in May, once the pre-election period for local elections has ended, and will be available to both Police and Crime Commissioners and Local Authorities. The amount allocated to any geographical region will depend on the bids that are submitted.

■ Suicide

Christine Jardine:

[175994]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will publish the number of police investigations that have taken place under sections 2(1) and 2(A) of the Suicide Act 1961 from 1 April 2009 to 31 July 2020.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office routinely publishes number of offences and the investigative outcomes of crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales including for the offence of encouraging or assisting the suicide or attempted suicide of another person. The latest published data is up to September 2020, and the specific crime is recorded under offence code '76 Aiding suicide', and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables> .

■ Undercover Policing Inquiry

Richard Burgon:

[174914]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of instructing the police and security services to make available to their unredacted registry files to the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

Kit Malthouse:

The police and Security Service are operationally independent from the Home Office and decisions concerning their engagement with the Undercover Policing Inquiry are a matter for them. It would not be appropriate for the Home Office to comment on or intervene in those organisations' engagement with the Inquiry while it is ongoing.

Richard Burgon:

[174915]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of appointing panel members with expertise in (a) institutional racism, (b) sexism, (C) class bias and (d) the other relevant issues in the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

Kit Malthouse:

The issue was carefully considered in 2018 and it was decided that panel members would not be appointed at that time. A judicial review of the decision was subsequently refused. Sir John Mitting is an experienced High Court Judge and has the necessary expertise to deliver the Inquiry's terms of reference.

The Inquiry's Strategic Review of May 2018 set out the Chair's views that the appointment of a panel to assist in Module three of the Inquiry's investigations timetable would be useful, and any such appointment would be subject to consultation between the Inquiry Chair and Home Secretary.

Richard Burgon:

[174916]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of not providing live audio and video streaming of the Undercover

Policing Inquiry on the ability of the (a) public and (b) core participants to engage with that inquiry.

Kit Malthouse:

The Undercover Policing Inquiry is independent of the Home Office and so, decisions on the conduct of its investigations and hearings are for the Inquiry to make.

The Inquiry has sought the views of Core Participants and relevant parties on how it should conduct its evidence hearings. Following the completion of the November 2020 evidence hearings the Inquiry held a directions hearing in January 2021 which discussed arrangements for Phase 2 of Tranche 1 hearings that are scheduled to commence on 21st April 2021.

The outcome of this directions hearing was published in February by the Inquiry, detailing its provision of live audio and video streaming to the public and the rationale behind this. This can be found on the Inquiry website at: https://www.ucpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20210205-directions-t1_p2_hearings.pdf

Richard Burgon:

[174917]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of not funding the legal costs for participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry.

Kit Malthouse:

The Undercover Policing Inquiry is independent of the Home Office and decisions regarding funding for Core Participants are for the Inquiry to make.

Under section 40 of the Inquiries Act 2005, the Inquiry Chair has the power to award reasonable amounts to cover expenses, including in respect of legal representation for those who give evidence to the Inquiry. This includes witnesses, as well as core participants.

More information can be found on the Inquiry's website at: <https://www.ucpi.org.uk/about-the-inquiry/#costs>

■ **Undocumented Migrants**

Stephen Timms:

[174000]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made on reviewing the health stream of the compliant environment.

Stephen Timms:

[174001]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what external consultation has been conducted for the review of Right to Rent as detailed in the Windrush Lessons Learned Comprehensive Improvement Plan.

Priti Patel:

An independent evaluation on right to rent is currently being carried out with the final report due this summer.

Progress is being made to examine all of the individual measures that comprise the compliant environment as part of the response to recommendation 7. Healthcare is being assessed concurrently with all the other measures. As discussed in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan initial findings will be available in Autumn 2021.

Sir John Hayes:

[175701]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many illegal immigrants are estimated to currently reside in the UK.

Chris Philp:

In June 2019, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a note on '[measuring illegal migration](#)'.

By its very nature, it is not possible to know the exact size of the illegal population and so we do not seek to make any official estimates of the illegal population. The Government is focused on making it harder for people to enter and live in the UK illegally whilst ensuring those who have the right to reside in the UK can do so. Exit checks introduced in April 2015 will, over time provide more detailed insights into the behaviour of migrants and how they comply with the restrictions placed upon their length of stay in the UK, but the data obtained does not provide the total number of illegal migrants currently in the UK.

■ **Youth Mobility Scheme: EU Countries**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[174192]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 12 November 2020 to Question 113167 on Immigration: Au Pairs, what recent progress the Government has made on negotiating a Youth Mobility arrangement with the EU.

Kevin Foster:

We remain open to negotiating Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) arrangements with other countries and territories, including with the EU as a collective or individual countries within it, but they must be reciprocal as the YMS is not simply a one way route to recruiting cheap labour overseas.

Those who have employed an au pair can either look to offer a package which makes it attractive to those arriving in the UK with general rights to work or use the wide range of childcare options in the UK relied upon by most families.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

■ **Building Safety Fund**

Thangam Debbonaire:

[174880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the building safety fund registration statistics, what is classified as basic information to assess whether an application is eligible.

Christopher Pincher:

The criteria used to assess the eligibility of registrations for the Building Safety Fund is set out in the prospectus. The Building Safety Fund prospectus, as well the annex with the registration questions (Prospectus Annex B), can be found at:

www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#prospectus---outlining-eligibility-for-the-fund .

■ Buildings: Insulation**Dr Julian Lewis:****[173991]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to survey the extent to which inflammable cladding has been used in significant quantities in (a) NHS hospitals and (b) other publicly-owned buildings; and what requirements he plans to promulgate for the replacement of that material.

Christopher Pincher:

MHCLG publishes data on the identification and remediation progress of high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings (hospitals and schools) in England with ACM cladding systems unlikely to meet building regulations. The latest data is available [here](#) .

Neil Coyle:**[174138]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on removing VAT from fire safety works for leaseholders affected by materials deemed unsafe after the Grenfell tragedy.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to my answer to Question UIN 171625 on 23 March 2021.

Thangam Debbonaire:**[174885]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the RICS EWS1 form guidance published on 8 March 2021, what estimate he has made of the number of buildings over 18m where there are balconies that which stack vertically above each other and either (a) both the balustrades and decking are constructed with combustible materials or (b) the decking is constructed with combustible materials and the balconies are directly linked by combustible material.

Christopher Pincher:

This information is not held.

The department has published estimates regarding EWS1 requirements on residential buildings in England and these estimates are available online here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-safety-programme-estimates-of-ews1-requirements-on-residential-buildings-in-england/building-safety-programme-estimates-of-ews1-requirements-on-residential-buildings-in-england>.

The analysis is based on information provided by local authorities and housing associations who are conducting a data collection exercise as part of a programme to build a more complete picture of high-rise residential buildings and the variety of external wall systems in use.

To speed up valuations where EWS1 forms are justified, the Government is providing nearly £700,000 funding to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to train up to 2,000 more assessors in 2021. This training commenced in January and there are over 700 candidates on the course.

■ Burlington House

Tim Loughton:

[174707]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will list all the correspondence and communication he or his officials have had with the officers of the Learned Societies at Burlington House since June 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

Ministers and officials are in frequent contact with the Learned Societies.

The Learned societies pay discounted rent on new Burlington House, currently 30% of the market rate, in line with the agreement they reached with the then Government in 2006. The current arrangement would not see them pay market rent until 2085, however the Government is sympathetic to their position and is working with them to find a solution.

■ Council Housing

Yasmin Qureshi:

[174071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the number of people awaiting a council property in England.

Christopher Pincher:

The number of households in local authorities' waiting lists by local authority and region in each year since 1997 is reported in live table 600 which is published here <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies>. The latest available figures relate to 31 March 2020.

The number of households on the waiting list is not the same as the number of households waiting. Households may apply to multiple authorities and authorities only periodically review their lists to remove households who no longer require housing, so the total number of households on waiting lists is likely to overstate the number of households who still require housing. The frequency of reviews varies considerably and waiting list size may also be affected by other factors.

■ Delivery Services: Sheffield**Sarah Champion:**[\[175856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent progress has been made on Sheffield City Region's bid to the Delivery Vehicles Competition.

Christopher Pincher:

In October 2019 the Government launched the New Development Corporation Competition which invites ambitious proposals from local authorities to support transformational housing and economic growth opportunities, focusing on regeneration. Funding will help places explore delivery models that have been less commonly used in a contemporary context, such as development corporations. We have received a number of bids into the competition and will be making further announcements.

■ Domestic Abuse**Gill Furniss:**[\[174214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the adequacy of funding available to local authorities to fulfil their statutory duties to protect victims of domestic abuse.

Eddie Hughes:

MHCLG engaged with local authorities and service providers to ensure that the new duty is funded appropriately.

As a result of this evidence, £125 million new burden funding has been allocated to local authorities, to cover costs of the new duty to provide support in safe accommodation for 2021-22. Funding for future years will be determined as part of the next Spending Review.

■ Evictions: Coronavirus**Thangam Debbonaire:**[\[174887\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the (a) bailiff enforced eviction ban and (b) protection from eviction during the covid-19 outbreak applies to mortgage as well as landlord possession actions.

Christopher Pincher:

The Public Health (Coronavirus) (Protection from Eviction) (England) Regulations 2021 prevents the serving and execution of writs or warrants of possession by bailiffs up to 31 May 2021. Landlords and mortgage lenders are able to issue a claim and obtain a possession order, but the ban prevents bailiff enforcement. Limited exemptions exist to enable landlords to take enforcement action in the most serious cases.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 requires landlords to provide six months' notice before seeking possession through the courts except in the most serious cases. The notice periods do not apply to mortgage lenders when seeking possession from homeowners. A pre action protocol is in place to ensure mortgage lenders only take court action as a last resort. If a lender takes possession of a property and wishes to seek possession from sitting tenants, they will need to provide the relevant period of notice before they can seek possession through the court.

■ Home Ownership: West Yorkshire

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[175020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of home owners in (a) Wakefield and (b) West Yorkshire.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not hold this information.

The English Housing Survey can provide estimates of housing tenure for each region of England and is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2019-to-2020-headline-report>. In 2019-20, 63% of households in Yorkshire and the Humber were owner occupied households.

■ Homelessness: Ethnic Groups

Stephen Timms:

[175694]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the increase in homelessness among Black residents of (a) England and (b) Wales in 2020.

Eddie Hughes:

The latest data relating to ethnicity breakdown of homeless households in England can be found in the annual homelessness statistics and live homelessness tables here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

Housing is a devolved issue and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government does not collect homelessness data for Wales.

■ Homes (Fitness For Human Habitation) Act 2018

Zarah Sultana:

[174970]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department has taken to enforce the Home (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

Christopher Pincher:

We supported the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 because, for the first time, it empowers tenants in both the Private and Social Rented Sectors to hold

their landlord to account if they fail to keep the property fit for human habitation. Government does not enforce the Act, instead the Act enables tenants to take action in the courts for breach of contract on the grounds that the property is unfit.

We have published guidance for tenants to help them make the most of their rights under the Act. We have also published guidance for landlords and local authorities to ensure that they are aware of what the Act means for them.

■ Hospitality Industry: Licensing

Nickie Aiken:

[\[176039\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he plans to introduce measures to simplify licensing applications for hospitality businesses, with particular reference to trading outdoors, in order to support the reopening of business as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Luke Hall:

Last summer the Government introduced a series of measures to support hospitality businesses to open safely when lockdown restrictions were eased. The Secretary of State has made a statement in the House and written to local council leaders on planning and hospitality, setting out what these measures are, and confirming that they remain in place to support businesses as they reopen this year. These measures include the temporary pavement licence provisions introduced in the Business and Planning Act 2020 which create a quicker and cheaper process for businesses to obtain a licence to place outdoor furniture, including tables, chairs and stalls outside their premise. The Government intends to extend the temporary pavement licence provisions for 12 months until September 2022, subject to Parliamentary approval.

■ Housing: Insulation

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[175735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answers of 15 March 2021 to Questions 166341 and 166342, what assessment he has made of the ability of his Department to make effective policy on building safety without an estimate of the potential number of leaseholders who may (a) lose their home and (b) declare bankruptcy as a result of the costs of resolving fire safety issues relating to (i) cladding removal, (ii) balcony remediation, (iii) replacing combustible insulation, (iv) replacing missing fire breaks, (v) increased insurance premiums and (vi) waking watches.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to my response to Questions UIN 166341 and UIN 166342 on 15 March 2021.

■ Kingspan Group: Insulation

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[174876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to his letter to building control bodies on the retraction of three tests carried out on Kingspan K15 insulation, what contribution Kingspan is planned to make to the cost of remediation of buildings with Kingspan insulation, where that is required.

Christopher Pincher:

We have announced that we will be introducing a levy and tax on developers to contribute to righting the wrongs of the past. The proposed levy will be targeted and apply when developers seek permission to develop certain high-rise buildings in England.

It is also clear that further measures must be put in place to prevent unsafe products being placed on the market and there must be action against companies which advertise and sell unsafe products, or who game the testing regime.

That is why we have brought forward proposals to strengthen the regulation of construction products in the draft Building Safety Bill. We have also announced in January a new national regulator for construction products, which will be based in the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS), and who are receiving up to £10 million in 2021/22 to set it up. A review of the system for testing construction products was announced in January and will report its findings later this year. The Government will act where we see standards falling short.

■ Landlords and Letting Agents: fines

Navendu Mishra:

[\[176079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of civil fines that have been issued to landlords and property agents; and how much the average fine is.

Eddie Hughes:

Civil penalties were introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as an alternative to prosecution for certain housing offences under the Housing Act 2004 and a breach of a banning order under the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The Department does not currently collect data from local housing authorities on the number of civil penalties issued.

Local housing authorities are expected to develop and document their own policy on when to prosecute and when to issue a civil penalty and should decide which option it wishes to pursue on a case-by-case basis in line with that policy. The amount of the civil penalty should be determined by the local housing authority in each case, up to a maximum penalty of £30,000.

■ Landlords and Letting Agents: Standards

Navendu Mishra:

[176080]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many rogue (a) landlords and (b) property agents are listed in the national database; and how many orders banning landlords have been issued in (a) Stockport borough and (b) Stockport constituency.

Eddie Hughes:

There are 38 landlords and property agents listed on the database of rogue landlords and property agents. The database does not distinguish between landlords or property agents, only individuals and organisations.

There have been no banning orders issued in Stockport Borough or Stockport constituency.

Banning Orders and the database of rogue landlords and property agents are two of a range of tools available to local authorities to tackle rogue and criminal landlords, including civil penalties of up to £30,000 and rent repayment orders.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Derek Twigg:

[175717]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the oral contribution of the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on 16 March 2021, Official Report, column 192, on 16 March 2021, where are the data sets the Government used to priorities areas for funding from the levelling-up fund are available; and on what date they were published.

Luke Hall:

The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

We have published the index and further details of the methodology used to calculate the index of places set out in the prospectus:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-additional-documents/levelling-up-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note>.

■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Cities and Local Growth Unit

Steve Reed:

[175857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many FTE staff from his Department are employed in the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

Luke Hall:

The Cities and Local Growth Unit works across two Departments, reporting jointly into the MHCLG and BEIS Secretaries of State.

As of 28 February 2021, the most recent date for which data is available, the Unit employed 379.6 FTE MHCLG staff.

■ **New Homes Quality Board: Public Appointments**

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[174877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason appointments to the New Homes Quality Board were not subject to open applications.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[174878\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what the process was for selecting members of the New Homes Quality Board, including appointment of the Chair.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[174879\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the New Homes Quality Board is planned to include considerations affecting fire safety in its work putting together a Code of Conduct for the building industry.

Eddie Hughes:

The New Homes Quality Board is independent of Government and was established through an industry-led initiative. The Government had no role in making appointments to the Board or the appointment of the Chair. The Board brings together a wealth of relevant experience from across the housing industry and includes consumer protection groups. We are supportive of the Board's aims and we have been kept apprised of its work, including on a code of practice. However, the Government has not been involved in the code's development.

The Government is bringing forward legislation, through the Building Safety Bill, to provide for the New Homes Ombudsman which will resolve disputes, provide effective protection for new build home-buyers and will set out the arrangements for the New Homes Ombudsman scheme. Legislation will also underpin a developers' code of practice to cover the standards of conduct and quality of work expected of developers, including fire safety issues.

■ **Oxfordshire County Council: Youth Services**

Layla Moran: [\[176019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of funding for (a) children's and (b) youth services provided by his Department to Oxfordshire County Council in each of the last five years.

Luke Hall:

Funding for children's and youth services is generally not ring-fenced and is part of either the wider Local Government Finance Settlement or the Dedicated Schools Grant in the case of education-related funding. It is for local authorities to determine

how to spend their non-ring-fenced income, taking account of their statutory responsibilities, local need and their priorities.

This year's Local Government Finance Settlement increased Social Care Grant by £300 million, taking the total Social Care Grant to £1.7 billion for 2021/22.

Core Spending Power in England will rise by up to 4.6% in cash terms, from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22. This real-terms increase builds on the largest year-on-year increase in spending power in a decade last year and recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain children's and youth services.

Additionally, we have continued to support councils throughout the pandemic, demonstrated by the fact we have provided over £4.6 billion in un-ringfenced funding to councils this year. In Oxfordshire, this amounted to £2.47 million in 2020/21.

■ **Property Development: Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

Bob Seely:

[\[176035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to close loopholes in legislation that allow developers to destroy areas classed as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Christopher Pincher:

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

■ **Social Rented Housing: West Yorkshire**

Tracy Brabin:

[\[174222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on how many new social homes in receipt of funding from his Department has work commenced in (a) Batley and Spen constituency, (b) Kirklees and (c) West Yorkshire in each of the last three years.

Christopher Pincher:

The table below provides a breakdown of the total number of new social homes that have commenced over the last three years funded by Homes England. Please note that data is not held at constituency level. York is defined as a "non-constituent" local authority in the founding Combined Authority Order 2014, the table therefore provides separate columns to show the data with and without the contribution of York. Further details of Homes England's delivery data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/housing-statistics-1-april-2019-to-31-march-2020>.

YEAR	KIRKLEES TOTAL	WEST YORKSHIRE TOTAL (EXCLUDING YORK)	WEST YORKSHIRE TOTAL (INCLUDING YORK)
2017/18	36	932	1,096
2018/19	63	796	805
2019/20	35	985	1,153
2020/21 (To September 2020)	3	83	160

Tracy Brabin:

[174223]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on how many new build homes in receipt of funding from his Department has work commenced in (a) Batley and Spen constituency, (b) Kirklees and (c) West Yorkshire in each of the last three years.

Christopher Pincher:

The table below provides a breakdown of the total number of new build homes that have commenced over the last three years funded by Homes England. Please note that data is not held at constituency level. York is defined as a “non-constituent” local authority in the founding Combined Authority Order 2014, the table therefore provides separate columns to show the data with and without the contribution of York. Further details of Homes England’s delivery data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/housing-statistics-1-april-2019-to-31-march-2020>.

YEAR	KIRKLEES TOTAL	WEST YORKSHIRE TOTAL (EXCLUDING YORK)	WEST YORKSHIRE TOTAL (INCLUDING YORK)
2017/18	51	1,116	1,280
2018/19	115	1,143	1,181
2019/20	151	1,289	1,565
2020/21 (To September 2020)	3	88	175

■ Telecommunications: Local Government

Steve Reed: [175861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the Electronic Communication Code on local authority revenues.

Steve Reed: [175862]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what meetings (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had with other Government departments on the effect of reduced rental income to local authorities from site provisions for telecommunications infrastructure.

Steve Reed: [175863]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will list the annual revenues to local authorities in (a) England, (b) Wales, (c) Scotland and (d) Northern Ireland for the provision of sites for telecommunications infrastructure, for each of the last five years.

Steve Reed: [175864]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of revenues to local authorities for the provision of site rental for telecommunications infrastructure for each of the next five years.

Steve Reed: [175868]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the legal fees paid by local authorities that are in dispute with telecommunication companies regarding site rental income relating to the Electronic Communication Code.

Luke Hall:

The Electronic Communications Code (ECC) is the legal framework underpinning rights to install and maintain digital communications infrastructure on public and private land. The Code was substantially reformed in 2017 and a key aim of those reforms was to make it cheaper and easier for digital infrastructure to be deployed, maintained and upgraded. Government recognised that this would mean site providers receiving lower payments for allowing their land or buildings to be used for these purposes than had previously been the case. However, these changes were only introduced following an extensive period of consultation and research, and were considered necessary to reduce operator costs and encourage the industry investment required for the UK to get the digital communications infrastructure it needs. The initial impact assessment for the ECC has been published at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524895/ECC_Impact_Assessment.pdf.

The majority of Code agreements are negotiated by mutual consent between operators and site providers. Where acceptable terms cannot be agreed operators

may apply to the Lands Tribunal for the determination of any disputed matter, including the financial terms. In these cases, the Tribunal will have regard to the statutory valuation regime contained within the Code in determining the amount that should be paid. The Government has recently consulted on whether further changes to the Code are needed and is currently considering the responses to that consultation.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government collects and publishes annual data returns from local authorities in England. These figures can be found in the individual local authority data at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing>. We do not collect data on the ECC or revenue from site rentals for telecommunications infrastructure in these returns. The financial position of councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the relevant devolved administration

Ministers and officials from MHCLG have regular discussions with counterparts in other government departments on matters relating to local government.

■ UK Community Renewal Fund

Catherine West:

[175967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether he made an assessment of the potential merits of using the Indices of Multiple Deprivation to prioritise investments through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Luke Hall:

To ensure the UK Community Renewal Fund reaches the most in need, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. We are committed to transparency and a methodological note explaining how the 100 priority places were determined has been published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note> .

The IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) does not represent a 'one size fits all' solution to measuring economic need. Not all of the variables it considers are relevant to the particular interventions we want to support through the UK Community Renewal Fund, and some of the variables it does not consider, such as productivity, are central to the policy goals of the Fund.

■ UK Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund

Catherine West:

[175966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including measures of (a) crime, (b) barriers to housing and services, (c) living environment deprivation and (d) inequalities in a local authority area when developing the index of economic resilience for the UK Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Fund.

Luke Hall:

We have shaped the methodologies for the UK Community Renewal Fund and the Levelling Up Fund to reflect their individual and distinct objectives and policy goals. For example, the capital-focused Levelling Up Fund will invest in local transport and high street regeneration, and therefore includes metrics around local connectivity and commercial vacancy rates. By contrast, the revenue-focused UK Community Renewal Fund will look to invest across a range of smaller scale trial projects with the overall goal of supporting people and communities in need. For this reason it uses metrics which more broadly aim to assess a place's general economic resilience. Methodological notes explaining the two indices have been published and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-community-renewal-fund-prospectus/uk-community-renewal-fund-prioritisation-of-places-methodology-note>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-fund-additional-documents> .

■ Visas: British National (Overseas)**Naz Shah:****[174151]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what funding the Government has provided to support integration of British National (Overseas) visa holders in each of the last five years.

Eddie Hughes:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is leading the Government's work on welcoming Hong Kong BN(O)s into the UK. While the Department has run integration programmes such as the Controlling Migration Fund and the Integration Area Programme, these were not tailored to BN(O) communities.

The new BN(O) route and access to public services is an unprecedented offer following China's passing of the National Security Law. This new law significantly impacts the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong and since the situation that BN(O) status holders find themselves in has changed, it is right that their rights and entitlements in the UK change too.

The visa route reflects the historic and moral commitment to the people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK by taking up BN(O) status at the point of Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Export Duties: Iron and Steel****Alexander Stafford:****[176132]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to secure an exemption for UK steel exports from the US 232 tariffs.

Greg Hands:

The Government's objective is to secure the swift removal of unjustified measures on exports of steel and aluminium and has already raised this with the new US administration. We want to de-escalate the conflict and come to a negotiated settlement so we can deepen our trading relationship with the US.

Exports: Arts and Culture**Alison McGovern:**[\[174115\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what staffing resources her Department allocates to assessing exports in the UK's cultural and creative industries.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has a dedicated creative industries team of 14 staff, a network of approximately 275 International Trade Advisors (ITAs) in the English regions supporting companies of all types, and trade policy, export and investment specialists in over a hundred countries globally.

Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees**Anna McMorris:**[\[175993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 1 February 2021 to Question 144824 Fossil Fuels: Export Credit Guarantees, when she plans to provide details of the two upstream UK Export Finance funded projects located in Brazil and one midstream project in Turkmenistan.

Graham Stuart:

UK Export Finance (UKEF) carries out due diligence on all relevant aspects of a project before reaching a decision on whether to provide support. UKEF is currently reviewing whether any projects that had been under consideration fall within the limited exemptions to the new policy. It is not UKEF policy to comment on potential transactions for reasons of commercial sensitivity.

Import Duties: Iron and Steel**Alexander Stafford:**[\[176131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps she is taking to secure an exemption for UK steel exports from the EU steel safeguards.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Department for International Trade has already engaged closely with the European Commission to secure tariff-free quota allocations for some British steel exports into the European Union from 1st January 2021.

The United Kingdom has put in place some country-specific allocations within its overall tariff rate quotas for steel products subject to the steel safeguards, enabling EU companies to trade tariff-free into the United Kingdom. These tariff-free allocations came into operation on 1st January 2021 too.

Mutual provision of tariff-free quota allocations for steel exports for the United Kingdom's and the European Commission's respective Steel Safeguard measures will preserve traditional trade flows and provide as much continuity to industry as possible.

■ Investment and Trade

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[175977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to his Department's press release, Creation of four major new Trade and Investment Hubs across the UK, published on 23 March 2021, what steps her Department is taking to work with (a) consumers and (b) other interest groups via specific outreach in those areas and other parts of the UK.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: [\[175978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's press release, Creation of four major new Trade and Investment Hubs across the UK, published on 23 March 2021, if she will expand the remit of those hubs to widen outreach by engaging customers on trade across the UK.

Graham Stuart:

The new Trade and Investment Hubs will be home to teams of export and investment specialists. These teams can provide businesses with expert support and advice to help them maximise their export potential. They will also help businesses boost their trade in new markets overseas, gain better access to major trade markets like Japan, the US and India, and feed directly into the Department for International Trade's (DIT) free trade agreements programme.

The new Hubs build on the nationwide support already offered by DIT. This support includes the UK Export Finance offer, the £38m Internationalisation Fund, the Export Academy programme, our network of around 300 International Trade Advisors across England, and over 400 Regional Export Champions.

■ Trade Agreements: Brazil

Marco Longhi: [\[176061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress her Department has made on negotiations with Brazil on a free trade agreement.

Marco Longhi: [\[176065\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the timeframe is for implementation of the trade agreement with Brazil announced in December 2020.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom does not currently have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Brazil, but it remains a priority to deepen our trading relationship. Brazil is in a Customs Union – Mercosur – so, at the United Kingdom-Brazil Joint Economic Trade Committee held on 11th November 2020, we discussed the potential of a future

United Kingdom-Mercosur FTA. We continue our work with Brazil and other Mercosur partners to open markets and strengthen the rules based international trading system too.

■ Trade Agreements: Israel

Craig Tracey:

[\[175949\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what progress she has made on negotiations with Israel on an agreement for further trade cooperation beyond the trade continuity deal; and what steps she is taking to strengthen the UK's trade relationship with Israel in the science and technology sector.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom's trade relationship with Israel is already strong, totalling £4.9 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2020. The United Kingdom-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement entered into force on 1st January 2021. As the Foreign Secretary noted, the United Kingdom is now able to start scoping for greater ambition in our trade relationship with Israel. Science and innovation are key elements of this relationship and we are currently building a framework for a new Britain-Israel Science Partnership. Moreover, the 'TechHub', based in British Embassy Tel Aviv, continues to partner Israeli expertise with British companies, delivering significant benefits to the British economy.

■ Trade Agreements: Maldives

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[174748\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2021 to Question 149716 on Trade Agreements, what steps her Department is taking to increase (a) trade with and (b) investment in the Maldives fishing industry.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Maldives is an important partner for the United Kingdom and my officials are exploring pragmatic options to promote increased trade and investment at present.

We are exploring opportunities to enhance bilateral trade with The Maldives in areas of mutual interest, such as food and drink, defence, education, health and fitness, environmental science, and sustainable development.

HM Government is exploring a range of options for collaboration in financial services and infrastructure development too, including securing green financing to aid Maldivian efforts towards cleaner, renewable energy generation.

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[174801\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 171559, what steps she has taken to provide export opportunities for tuna fishermen in the Maldives through an Economic Partnership Agreement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The Maldives is an important partner for the United Kingdom and my officials are exploring pragmatic options to promote increased trade and investment at present.

We are exploring opportunities to enhance bilateral trade with The Maldives in areas of mutual interest, such as food and drink, defence, education, health and fitness, environmental science, and sustainable development.

HM Government is exploring a range of options for collaboration in financial services and infrastructure development too, including securing green financing to aid Maldivian efforts towards cleaner, renewable energy generation.

■ Trade Remedies

Alexander Stafford: [\[176129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment her Department has made of how to provide a level trading field for UK steel producers while the EU and US maintain import controls on steel goods.

Alexander Stafford: [\[176130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the need to extend the UK steel safeguards beyond the expiry date of June 2021.

Alexander Stafford: [\[176133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the role of the trade remedies in protecting UK foundation interests from import surges.

Alexander Stafford: [\[176134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what representations she has received on the importance of trade remedies to steel producing communities in the UK.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government recognises the important role trade remedies can play in protecting British businesses from import surges and unfair trading practices. We maintained steel safeguard measures on 19 steel product categories to ensure continued protection for British producers after the end of the transition period. Officials have regular discussions with interested parties on a wide range of important issues for the steel industry.

The Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID) initiated a review of the current safeguard measures on certain steel products on 1st October 2020. This review is ongoing and domestic producers, importers and other interested parties are encouraged to provide evidence to the review. TRID will consider the impact on the United Kingdom's steel industry of continuing, varying, or terminating the current British steel safeguard measures.

■ Trade: Wales**Hywel Williams:**[\[175726\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, how many meetings she has had with the Welsh Government on the (a) Welsh Government's trade strategy and (b) promotion of Welsh exports in 2020.

Hywel Williams:[\[175728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she had with the Welsh Government prior to the announcement of a Trade and Investment Hub in Cardiff.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) works closely with the devolved administrations on our full trade agenda. This includes regular ministerial engagement through the Ministerial Forum for Trade, which takes place at least 3 times a year and which met most recently on March 18th.

DIT also runs a substantial programme of senior official-level engagement which includes Welsh Government colleagues, for example through our Senior Officials Group and Executive Forum.

■ UK Trade with EU: Music**Alison McGovern:**[\[174114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Music Export Growth Scheme; and what criteria was used to make that assessment.

Graham Stuart:

My department has commissioned an independent evaluation of the economic benefits of the Music Export Growth Scheme, which will be completed by May 2021.

JUSTICE**■ Business: Coronavirus****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[175799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March to Question 167184, whether he has received any representations from (a) individuals and (b) legal professionals who are concerned that a case could be brought under the Equality Act 2010 as a result of people being denied access to businesses due to non-compliance with covid-19 related restrictions.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice is not aware of receiving any representations from (a) individuals or (b) legal professionals who are concerned that a case could be brought under the Equality Act 2010 as a result of people being denied access to businesses due to non-compliance with covid-19 related restrictions. The Government's equality

assessment of the Coronavirus Act 2020 can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-act-2020-equality-impact-assessment/coronavirus-act-2020-the-public-sector-equalities-duty-impact-assessment>

■ Coronavirus: Judicial Review

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[174706]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many applications for judicial review involving coronavirus regulations await (a) initial decision by a judge and (b) an oral hearing; and how long on average each of those applications has been waiting to be determined.

Chris Philp:

There are 6 outstanding cases in the Administrative Court seeking to judicially review the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care which involve a challenge to the coronavirus regulations. These can be broken down as follows:

- 4 await a decision on their initial permission application.
- 1 application has been refused on paper and is listed for an oral renewal hearing
- 1 has been heard and judgment is reserved

Of the 4 applications awaiting an initial decision, 3 have been waiting for an average of 7 weeks. One of the applications has been ongoing for 50 weeks, having been held back pending a decision of the Court of Appeal on a related case.

The application in which permission was refused is listed for a renewal hearing in April, which will be 31 weeks since it was received.

The final case in which judgment was reserved, took 13 weeks from receipt to the date permission was granted and a total of 37 weeks from receipt to the final hearing.

■ Coroners

Jessica Morden:

[175779]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average waiting time was for the completion of a coroner's report after a death in England and Wales in (a) 2018 (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Alex Chalk:

The Ministry of Justice publishes annual coroner statistics that include the average time taken to process an inquest. The timeframe of each inquest is defined between the date the death was reported, until the conclusions of that inquest.

In 2018 the average time taken to process an inquest was 26 weeks; in 2019, the average was 27 weeks. Information for 2020 is not yet available but will be included in the annual coroner statistics scheduled to be published on Gov.uk on 13 May.

■ Criminal Cases Review Commission: Children and Young People

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[175708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the ability of children and young people to easily access the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Chris Philp:

In 2019-20 the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) estimated that 3.5% of the people applying to the CCRC were aged 21 or under. Although this number continues to represent a small proportion of the people accessing the Commission, the CCRC continues to reach out to juveniles and others through engagement workshops, outreach videos and making improvements to its application forms, in order to increase awareness amongst young people.

■ Criminal Cases Review Commission: Finance

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[175706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Chris Philp:

The funding allocation the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) is reviewed each year internally within MoJ as part of setting budgets. At each Spending Review the overall MoJ budget is reviewed with HM Treasury. Annual budgets for departments and their Arm's Length Bodies are part of the Main Estimate, which is laid before Parliament each year by HM Treasury.

■ Criminal Injuries Compensation: Victims' Payments Scheme

Louise Haigh:

[\[174900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, prior to Written Ministerial Statement HCWS874 of the 23 March 2021, whether his Department had assessed whether family members of the bereaved or injured would be entitled to the (a) Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme or (b) The Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme.

Louise Haigh:

[\[174901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people affected by Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism who have received compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme.

Kit Malthouse:

I would like to express my profound sympathy for UK victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism, and indeed for all victims of the Troubles.

It is the case that state-funded compensation for victims of violent crime has been in place in Great Britain since 1964, with the first statutory scheme coming into force in 1996. In terms of entitlement, victims can claim compensation for physical and mental injuries they have directly suffered from a violent crime, and for other payments such

as for loss of earnings where they cannot work as a result of the injuries sustained. In fatal cases, qualifying relatives (as defined in the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme) may be eligible to apply for bereavement payments and continuing care payments for dependants. The rules on entitlement and eligibility apply equally to all violent crime, regardless of the nature of the incident that gave rise to the injury or caused the death of a loved one.

As to the number of people affected by Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism who have received compensation, given the time that has passed since the attacks, limited information is available. This is because, in order to ensure compliance with data protection legislation, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) which administers the Scheme, retains minimal information on historical applications to it or its predecessor, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Further, when making an application to the GB-wide Scheme, victims are compensated for the injuries they have sustained rather than the nature of the incident (with the exception of sexual assault or abuse). To support consistent decision-making, the CICA may record the nature of the incident where it has identified the potential for multiple applications in relation to the same circumstances. However, unless an applicant clearly states that they obtained their injuries from a terrorist attack, or this is mentioned in the police report, the CICA will not have this information.

Publicly funded support has also been made available to victims of the Troubles who are eligible for the Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme. We recognise that there is a wider issue around the suitability of arrangements to make payments to the bereaved in Northern Ireland, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has encouraged the Northern Ireland Executive to consider what more could be done to help.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Appeals

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[175705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the merits of the Westminster Commission on Miscarriages of Justice's recommendation that the real possibility test applied by the Criminal Cases Review Commission in referring cases to the appeal courts should be amended.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[175709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking in response to the recommendations of the Westminster Commission on Miscarriages of Justice's inquiry into the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Chris Philp:

I am grateful to the members of the Westminster Commission for their valuable conclusions. The Ministry of Justice is giving careful consideration to the recommendations and officials will maintain oversight of those which fall to the independent Criminal Cases Review Commission.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[175707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many appeals against conviction to the Court of Appeal (Criminal Decision) there have been where (a) leave to appeal has been (i) sought and (ii) refused by a single Judge, (b) the applicant has renewed the application to the full Court and (c) the renewed application for leave to appeal led to the conviction(s) being quashed in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Philp:

The information requested by The Hon. Member can be found in the table below. This shows the number of applications for leave to appeal a conviction received in each of the last 10 years; the number of those applications that were then refused leave to appeal by the single Judge; the number of those that went on to renew to the full Court; and of those, how many were subsequently allowed and the conviction quashed.

	APPLICATIONS FOR PERMISSION TO APPEAL A CONVICTION*	APPLICATIONS REFUSED BY THE SINGLE JUDGE	APPLICATIONS RENEWED TO THE FULL COURT	NUMBER OF APPEALS ALLOWED AND CONVICTION QUASHED
2011	1,551	1,071	524	17
2012	1,698	1,230	602	23
2013	1,547	1,100	540	23
2014	1,424	1,109	539	16
2015	1,515	1,174	538	19
2016	1,370	1,052	504	11
2017	1,301	1,037	484	13
2018	1,227	943	437	5
2019	1,084	853	348	6
2020	755	395	157	1
Total	13,472	9,964	4,673	134

* Some of these cases will still be live

■ Domestic Abuse: Reoffenders

Gill Furniss:

[\[174213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of polygraph tests in preventing reoffending by people convicted of domestic abuse related crimes.

Alex Chalk:

Requiring certain sexual offenders on licensed supervision to take polygraph tests has shown itself to be an effective means of protecting the public from harm, as part of a wider set of licence conditions, controls and interventions. As a result of the 5,228 tests carried out on 2,249 sexual offenders between 2015 and 2019, 1,449 significant disclosures were made, providing important information to probation officers which might not have been obtained from other sources. Probation officers have then used that disclosed information to question offenders or make other enquiries, to establish whether they have breached their licence conditions – and where they have, probation officers have taken robust enforcement action, including recalling offenders to custody.

Once statutory powers are available, working with the National Probation Service (NPS), the Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing will conduct a three-year pilot of mandatory polygraph examinations for domestic abuse perpetrators released on licence and assessed as presenting a high risk of causing serious harm. The pilot will involve a randomised control trial, with high risk domestic abuse perpetrators in four of the 12 NPS Regions split into intervention and control groups. Those in the treatment group will be required to take a polygraph test three months after release from custody and every six months thereafter (unless they fail a test, in which case the tests will become more regular). Those in the control group will not be tested, so that we can assess the effectiveness of polygraph testing on outcomes such as compliance with licence conditions, recall rates and reoffending. At the end of the period, the Government will lay a copy of the evaluation report before each House of Parliament and, based on its findings, will make final decisions regarding wider roll out.

Polygraph testing will be one of a set of standard and additional licence conditions to which those in the trial will be subject. The other licence conditions may include exclusion zones preventing offenders going to certain places (usually near where victims live or work), non-contact conditions preventing them contacting victims and their families, curfews, electronic monitoring and completing behaviour treatment programmes.

■ Offences against Children: Sentencing

Jess Phillips:

[\[174857\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, in the last full reporting year what the average sentence was for people convicted of a contact child sex offence.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on proceedings and outcomes for child sexual offences in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code data tool', available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938554/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2019.xlsx.

A full list of child sexual offences can be found in the table attached to the response to PQ 266750 (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2019-06-19/266750>).

All of the offences listed in the table are contact child sexual offences, apart from the following:

- 8602 - Taking, permitting to be taken or making, distributing or publishing indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children
- 8610 - Possess an indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child
- 8615 - Possess prohibited images of children.

The average custodial sentence length for offenders convicted of contact child sexual offences in 2019 was 5 years and 2 months (61.5 months).

Court statistics on proceedings and outcomes for 2020 will be published in May 2021.

■ Prison and Probation Service: Bullying**Grahame Morris:****[174807]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of (a) bullying, and (b) wrongdoing have been investigated by the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit within HMPPS in each of the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Grahame Morris:**[174808]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many cases of (a) bullying, and (b) wrongdoing have led to disciplinary action after investigation by the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit within HMPPS in each of the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement.

Alex Chalk:

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit (TUBU) began work in August 2020 and will help change workplace behaviours for the better through:

- A confidential helpline – to support staff who are experiencing any unacceptable behaviours (bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation). The helpline is available now.
- A mediation service – to resolve workplace conflict

- Climate assessments – a programme of activity is underway to regularly assess the situation in every area of the organisation by looking at the lived experiences of staff and identifying any issues.
- A specialist investigation service – to enable managers to access trained investigators, advice or signposting for more complex and serious cases involving bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.

The investigation service of TUBU is currently being developed and will launch later this year. As such, TUBU has not yet undertaken any investigations.

There is no place for any form of unacceptable behaviour in HMPPS. Such behaviour is contrary to its core values and will not be tolerated. All allegations of unacceptable behaviour are taken seriously, investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. The aim of TUBU is to help improve the working environment by providing additional support, insight and expertise to staff raising concerns. The future service will provide additional support to managers investigating these concerns and ensure that investigations are carried out fairly and consistently and any unacceptable behaviour is challenged and dealt with appropriately.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[176042]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many calls there have been to the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit (a) confidential helpline, (b) early resolution helpline and (c) PAM assist helpline in each month since those helplines were established.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[176043]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of calls to the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit have been from staff reporting acts of (a) bullying, (b) harassment, (c) victimisation and (d) discrimination since that Unit was launched.

Alex Chalk:

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) takes the welfare of staff extremely seriously, which is why it supports staff to access a range of helplines and resources. The Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit (TUBU) was established in August 2020 and works to support staff through a confidential helpline, mediation service and programme of assessments to surface and address unacceptable behaviour. In addition, a special investigation service is being developed to deal with the most serious cases involving bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.

Staff can also access support from HR professionals in relation to workplace conflict through the Civil Service Early Resolution Helpline (ERH). The Employee Assistance Programme PAM Assist helpline offers counselling, support and information including signposting to external sources of support. This support can relate to a wide range of work and personal issues including trauma, bereavement, bullying and harassment, Childcare/Elder care, debt, relationships, alcohol and drug misuse and many more.

There is no place for any form of unacceptable behaviour in HMPPS. Such behaviour is contrary to its core values and will not be tolerated. All allegations of unacceptable

behaviour are taken seriously, investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.

The volume of calls for each helpline per month received from HMPPS staff since the launch of the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviours Unit on 24 August 2020 is set out in the table below:

	TACKLING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS UNIT (FROM 24 AUGUST 2020)	EARLY RESOLUTION HELPLINE (FROM 5 OCT 2020)	PAM ASSIST (DATA PROVIDED FROM 1 AUGUST 2020)
August 2020	26	Not yet launched	314
September 2020	55	Not yet launched	303
October 2020	34	5	315
November 2020	36	3	306
December 2020	29	0	268
January 2021	17	4	295
February 2021	19	2	242
Totals	216	14	2043

The breakdown of calls to the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Helpline in relation to (a) bullying, (b) harassment, (c) victimisation and (d) discrimination is set out in the table below:

ISSUE RAISED IN CALL	VOLUME (24 AUG 2020 – 28 FEB 2021)	PERCENTAGE OF ALL CALLS
Bullying	89	41%
Harassment	29	11%
Victimisation	8	4%
Discrimination	31	14%

(Note – not all callers will disclose precise issue of concern, and other types of issue than the four categories above may be recorded, such as unfair treatment or decision)

■ Prison and Probation Service: Bullying and Harassment**Grahame Morris:****[174809]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of staff have reported that they are experiencing (a) bullying, (b) harassment, (c) victimisation, or (d) discrimination since the launch of the Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit; and if he will make a statement.

Grahame Morris:**[174810]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of HMPPS staff in the last latest staff survey (a) believed that they had been bullied or harassed at work during 2020, or (b) preferred not to say whether they been bullied or harassed at work during 2020.

Grahame Morris:**[174811]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of HMPPS staff in the last latest staff survey indicated that they had not reported an experience of bullying or harassment in 2020.

Alex Chalk:

All forms of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation, are not tolerated by HMPPS or the Ministry of Justice. Such behaviour is contrary to the organisations' core values and all allegations of unacceptable behaviour are taken seriously, investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary action is taken.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) Tackling Unacceptable Behaviour Unit (TUBU) began work in August 2020 and its investigation arm is due to launch later this year. There is no published data available regarding the proportion of staff who have reported experiencing bully, harassment, victimisation or discrimination since TUBU launched.

The MoJ's People Survey is completed in October and asks questions of staff based on their experiences during the preceding 12 months. As such their responses may not be specific to their experiences within 2020 as specified in the question but may also be relevant to experiences within the final part of 2019.

In the 2020 People Survey, 2,334 HMPPS respondents indicated that they had been bullied or harassed at work in the previous 12 months. This equates to 13% of HMPPS respondents to this question. There were 1,415 HMPPS respondents who answered that they preferred not to say whether they had been bullied or harassed at work in the previous 12 months. This equates to 8% of HMPPS respondents to this question.

Of the HMPPS respondents who said that they had experienced bullying and/or harassment, 1,053 indicated they had not reported an experience of bullying and harassment in those 12 months. This equates to 45% of HMPPS respondents who said they had experienced bullying and/or harassment.

The overall response rate for HMPPS was 35%.

■ Prison and Probation Service: Surveys

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[176044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service staff believed that their pay was reasonable compared to people doing a similar jobs in other organisations in the latest staff survey.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[176045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service staff agreed that when operational changes are made at work they were usually for the better in the latest staff survey.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[176046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service staff agreed that they have the opportunity to contribute their views before decisions are made that affect them in the latest staff survey.

Alex Chalk:

The Annual Civil Service People Survey looks at civil servants' attitudes to, and experience of working in government departments. In 2020, the survey ran across Government Departments, including Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), from 1 to 30 October. Ministry of Justice People Survey data for 2020 will be published on gov.uk in due course.

4,897 HMPPS staff (27% of respondents) believed that their pay was reasonable compared to people doing a similar job in other organisations in the latest survey.

We do not ask staff whether "when operational changes are made at work they were usually for the better". However, in response to a broader question regarding all changes, 5,430 staff (30% of respondents) believed that when changes are made in their organisation they were usually for the better. Additionally, 5,552 members of staff (30% of respondents) said they had the opportunity to contribute their views before decisions are made that affect them.

HMPPS are committed to taking forward the issues raised in the People Survey to improve employee experience and wellbeing.

■ Prison Officers

Grahame Morris:

[\[175812\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate his Department has made of the cumulative number of years of experience held by all prison officers in each year since 2010.

Alex Chalk:

As at 31st December each year the cumulative length of service, in years, held by all prison officers is given in the following table.

Table 1 – Band 3-5 Prison Officers ¹ in England and Wales cumulative length of service ², as at 31st December each year from 2010 to 2020 ³

DATE	NUMBER OF PRISON OFFICERS IN POST (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT)	CUMULATIVE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF ALL PRISON OFFICERS
31/12/2010	24,501	329,353
31/12/2011	23,054	326,563
31/12/2012	21,842	326,678
31/12/2013	18,731	287,921
31/12/2014	17,795	278,254
31/12/2015	18,235	272,086
31/12/2016	17,887	261,607
31/12/2017	19,925	253,665
31/12/2018	22,722	248,008
31/12/2019	22,154	246,375
31/12/2020	21,564	243,036

Notes to tables:

1. Band 3-5 Officers includes Band 3-4 / Prison Officers (incl. specialists), Band 4 / Supervising Officers, and Band 5 / Custodial Managers

2. The length of service in HMPPS is calculated from most recent hire date. Where staff have transferred in from another Government Department or have transferred in through HMPPS taking over a function, length of service is calculated from entry to HMPPS

3. As of 1st July 2019, HMP Birmingham has come back under public ownership. Figures for its staff are now included in the SIP figures.

■ Prison Sentences

Anne Marie Morris:

[175855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December to Question 126796 on Prison Sentence, for what reason IPP prisoners cannot be transferred to alternative sentences.

Chris Philp:

Transferring those prisoners still serving IPP sentences on to other types of sentence would raise issues of public protection, as it would result in the automatic release of a

large number of prisoners who have been assessed by the Parole Board to be unsafe for release. For example, for those who had passed their tariff expiry date, this would result in their immediate automatic early release with no supervision in the community on licence.

■ Rape: Convictions

Ms Harriet Harman: [174710]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) number and (b) proportion of rape trials ended in conviction in England and Wales in each of the last five years.

Ms Harriet Harman: [174711]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people convicted of rape in each of the last five years in England and Wales pleaded (a) guilty and (b) not guilty.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and outcomes for rape offences, up to December 2019, in the 'Outcomes by Offence' data tool, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938568/outcomes-by-offence-tool-2019.xlsx

Using the data tool above, type 'rape' in the 'Offence' filter and select all options (19C-H, using 'Select Multiple Items' tickbox) in order to see prosecutions and convictions for these offences.

It is not possible to produce a true proportion of trials that result in a conviction from the link above as the tables present the number of convictions at all courts in the year and the number of prosecutions at magistrates' courts in the same period. For offences where the case takes a long time (especially apparent for rape), that means the convictions in the latest year can relate to prosecutions from earlier time periods. CPS publish a defendant level conviction rate, where convictions and prosecutions relating to the same case are matched and recorded in the same year.

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/Prosecution-Crime-Types-Data-Tables-Year-Ending-September-2020.xlsx>

The Government recognises that the decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being charged and prosecuted in England and Wales is a cause for significant concern. That is why we are carrying out an end-to end review of how the Criminal Justice System responds to rape. Through this review we are working with operational partners from across the Criminal Justice system including the police, CPS and victims' groups to ensure we can improve the way rape cases are dealt with.

The Ministry of Justice has published information on pleas given at Crown Court for rape offences, up to December 2019, in the 'Crown Court' data tool, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888341/crown-court-tool-2019.xlsx

As above, type 'rape' in the 'Offence' filter and select all options (19C-H, using 'Select Multiple Items' tickbox). Use the 'Plea at Crown Court' filter to isolate figures for 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty' pleas given.

■ Rape: Criminal Proceedings

Alex Davies-Jones:

[175022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he plans to publish the end to end review on rape before the end of 2019-21 parliamentary session.

Chris Philp:

The Government recognises that the decline in the number of rape and serious sexual offences being charged and prosecuted in England and Wales is a cause for significant concern. That is why we are carrying out an end-to end review of how the Criminal Justice System responds to rape. Through this review we are working with operational partners from across the Criminal Justice system including the police, CPS and victims' groups to ensure we can improve the way rape cases are dealt with.

The Government intends to publish the report in the Spring.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ EU Grants and Loans: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[174903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much EU structural and investment funding Northern Ireland received in each of the last four years.

Mr Robin Walker:

The amount of European Structural and Investment Funds received by Northern Ireland can be found in the [United Kingdom Partnership Agreement](#). Published information on all European Structural and Investment Funds can be accessed from the European Structural and Investment Funds Home Page on [GOV.UK](#): <https://www.gov.uk/european-structural-investment-funds>.

Investment from EU Structural Funds will continue to be spent by local areas until 2023 and this government has committed to at least matching EU receipts through the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund, on average reaching around £1.5 billion a year across the UK.

In addition, to help local areas prepare over 2021/22 for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we have also announced the UK Community Renewal Fund to support our communities to pilot programmes and new approaches. Due to the way the funds operate, levels of investment from EU structural funds will be higher in all four nations in the coming financial year 2021/22 than they were in 2020/21. The

UK Community Renewal Fund is additional funding from the UK Government for 2021/22.

■ **IRA: Libya**

Louise Haigh:

[174897]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he met with victims of Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism prior to the Government's decision not to release the Shawcross Report.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and officials from the Northern Ireland Office regularly meet victims groups and other representatives from civil society to discuss a range of legacy issues.

The Government is committed to publishing details of ministers' meetings with external organisations on a quarterly basis. Publications for the Northern Ireland Office can be found on gov.uk.

Louise Haigh:

[174899]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what estimate he has made of the level of redress that family members of those bereaved in Libyan-sponsored IRA terrorism will be able to access through (a) the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme and (b) The Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme.

Mr Robin Walker:

We must pursue fairness and consistency in the provision of support to victims of terrorism - which is why publicly funded support has been made available to victims of the Troubles who are eligible for the Northern Ireland Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme and the Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme.

The UK Government welcomes the recent undertaking given to the Court that the Executive will make the necessary funding available to ensure eligible victims receive the payments to which they are legally entitled through the Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme.

We recognise that there is a wider issue around the suitability of arrangements to make payments to the bereaved in Northern Ireland, and the Secretary of State has encouraged the Executive to consider what more could be done to help.

Louise Haigh:

[174906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has (a) discussed with and (b) met with William Shawcross to discuss the contents of his report on Libyan-sponsored IRA terror.

Mr Robin Walker:

The then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Julian Smith, had a discussion with Mr Shawcross as part of the evidence gathering process which informed the content of the internal scoping report. Officials from the Northern Ireland Office also had a

number of engagements with Mr Shawcross and his team as part of the same process.

■ Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[174158]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the allocation of funding to Northern Ireland as part of the Levelling Up Fund.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government is committed to levelling up across the whole of the United Kingdom to ensure that no community is left behind, particularly as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am in regular communication with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government about a range of issues, including the Levelling Up Fund.

I have held a number of engagements with stakeholders on the Fund, including a webinar for local authorities alongside other UK Government Ministers on 5 March.

The Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets.

The Fund will set aside at least £800 million across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland over four years from 2021-2022 to 2024-2025. Further information on the Fund can be found in the [prospectus](#) and in [additional documents](#) published online.

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[174898]

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether he has made representations to the Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on the adequacy of (a) the Criminal Injuries Compensation scheme and b) the Troubles Permanent Disablement scheme for family members of the bereaved.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and his officials regularly engage with their counterparts in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office on a large variety of issues.

We recognise that there is a wider issue in Northern Ireland around the suitability of arrangements to make payments to the bereaved, and the Secretary of State has encouraged the Executive to consider what more could be done to help.

■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[\[175937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how much capacity funding will be allocated to Northern Ireland to prepare for the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Mr Robin Walker:

The UK Government is committed to levelling up across the whole of the UK to ensure that no community is left behind, particularly as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will create opportunity in places deemed most in need, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities, and for people who face labour market barriers.

In Northern Ireland, we will provide capacity funding to partners such as sector groups and key stakeholders to support them with their preparations in bidding for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Government will release details on eligibility for both this capacity funding, and the funding itself, later this year.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[175736\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 171542, whether he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on implementing the recommendations made by Baroness Cumberlege in First Do No Harm - The report of the IMMDS Review; and if he will make a statement.

Boris Johnson:

I refer the Hon Member to the Written Ministerial Statement of 11 January 2021 ([HCWS692](#)) made by my Hon Friend the Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health. The Government will respond in full to the report later this year.

TRANSPORT

■ Aircraft: Coronavirus

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[174021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the change in the level of use of private planes during the covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[174022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the use of private planes during the covid-19 pandemic does not enable people to break international travel restrictions.

Robert Courts:

Throughout 2020, monthly private flight movements have been lower than in the equivalent month of 2019 (except for September 2020).

The international travel regulations apply to all individuals and operators, including those that use private planes. As such, they are subject to the same requirements and enforcement, including by the Border Force and Civil Aviation Authority.

My Department has provided specific communications to the GA community on Covid-19 guidance and regulations, including through regular stakeholder meetings.

We have also worked closely with the CAA to collaborate on workshops, podcasts, specific publications and updates to help facilitate a safe return to flying.

■ Airlines: EU Countries**Mike Kane:**[\[175873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of the rate at which (a) the Civil Aviation Authority is issuing Article 250 permits to EU-based airlines to operate in the UK and (b) European aviation authorities are issuing permits to UK-based carriers operating in the EU.

Robert Courts:

My officials continue to work closely with the UK Civil Aviation Authority and EU Member States, to ensure permissions for UK and EU airlines are issued by both sides with minimal procedural delay. Significant progress has already been made in securing reciprocal arrangements with EU Member States whereby permission to operate non-scheduled services can be granted for a period of time, rather than for each individual operation. This should mean that air services between points in the UK and points in the EU – including urgent “go now” operations – can take place without procedural delay.

■ Airlines: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement**Mike Kane:**[\[175872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the barriers for UK airlines wishing to wet-lease within the EU since the introduction of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Robert Courts:

Under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), UK airlines may operate using aircraft wet-leased from UK or EU wet lease providers. This helps to maximise the operational flexibility of UK airlines – for instance allowing them to address technical difficulties or short-term capacity constraints. In order to wet lease from UK wet lease providers, EU airlines must first satisfy their EU Member State’s competent authority that this is justified on the basis of exceptional needs, seasonal capacity needs or operational difficulties.

■ Aviation: Crew

Claire Hanna:

[\[174998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions his Department has had with the EU on mutually recognised flight crew licenses.

Robert Courts:

There have been no recent discussions with the EU on the topic of flight crew licence recognition.

Following the end of the Transition Period, the UK and EU agreed a high-level Aviation Safety Agreement, with an annex on Airworthiness.

The Aviation Safety Agreement does include scope to agree further annexes such as on pilot licensing in the future, if both sides wish to do so. The government will keep this matter under review and hope to progress future discussions.

The Department will continue to engage with the EU and EASA on future areas of safety cooperation, where it can support industry.

■ Aviation: EU Countries

Mike Kane:

[\[175874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on the negotiation of Bilateral Air Services Agreements with EU member states.

Robert Courts:

Under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) the UK and individual EU Member States may negotiate bilateral exchanges of “5th Freedom” all-cargo rights and reach agreement on arrangements relating to the issuance of operational permissions. My officials are currently engaged in discussions with EU Member States on these arrangements.

■ Aviation: Northern Ireland

Claire Hanna:

[\[174999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions has he had with his EU counterparts on the transfer of UK issued licenses to EASA Licenses to allow Northern Ireland pilots to work in the EU under the terms of the NI Protocol.

Robert Courts:

There have been no discussions between the UK and EU on the transfer of UK issued licences to European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) licences under the terms of the NI Protocol.

The rights of individuals to live and work in the EU is subject to wider employment, immigration and visa policy.

■ Aviation: UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement**Mike Kane:** [\[175871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment his Department has made of effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on the UK's charter, cargo and freight aviation sectors.

Robert Courts:

Under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), UK airlines - whether passenger, cargo, scheduled or non-scheduled - can operate without restriction between points in the UK and points in the EU. Furthermore, the TCA recognises that, at their discretion, EU Member states may permit UK airlines to operate non-scheduled air services within and beyond the EU (so long as they are not a "disguised" form of scheduled service). The TCA also allows the UK and individual EU Member States to negotiate and agree a bilateral exchange of "5th Freedom" all-cargo rights. My officials are engaging closely with EU Member States and with industry on these matters.

■ Cycling: South East**Layla Moran:** [\[176016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding his Department has allocated to each tier 1 local authority in South East England for cycling in each of the last five years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

On 7 February 2020, the Department published a detailed breakdown of annual investment in cycling and walking from 2016/17 to 2018/19 alongside the first report on progress made towards delivering the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS). This includes information on how much funding each local authority received over that period. Copies of the report and other associated information are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/investment-schedule-in-cycling-and-walking-interventions>. An update including a detailed breakdown of annual investment in 2019/20 and 2020/21 will be published in due course. In the meantime, local authority allocations under the Active Travel Fund in 2020/21 are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-active-travel-fund-local-transport-authority-allocations/emergency-active-travel-fund-total-indicative-allocations>.

■ Driving Licences: Reciprocal Arrangements**Drew Hendry:** [\[175927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions his Department has had with European counterparts on reciprocal driver's licence exchange arrangements.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to establishing arrangements with Member States that facilitate private motoring with the minimum of bureaucracy. We have confirmed

agreement from all EU/EEA countries that UK motorists will continue to be able to drive in their territories on the basis of a UK Photocard licence, without the need for an additional International Driving Permit. All EU/EEA Member States, except for Italy, have also confirmed current arrangements for exchanging licences. We continue to explore options with Italy on this issue. Most of our agreements are permanent arrangements and a small number require formal agreements which will be concluded before the end of this year. Where these agreements are needed, the UK has secured interim arrangements with the relevant Member States.

■ Driving Tests

Tom Tugendhat:

[174895]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether learner drivers who had a driving test booked before 22 April 2021 will be given priority access following the delay in the return of car driving tests from 12 April 2020.

Rachel Maclean:

In line with the Prime Minister's road map announcement, car driving lessons will resume on 12 April providing data shows it is safe to move to step 2 of the road map. In response to a request by the Approved Driving Instructor National Associations Strategic Partnership, car driving tests have been scheduled to restart 10 days later on 22 April. This will give candidates the chance to access tuition to ensure they are properly prepared before they take their test.

There are currently over 400,000 people with a driving test booked. This includes some candidates who have had their tests cancelled and rescheduled on more than one occasion because of the pandemic. It would be unfair, and impractical, to move every one of those back to accommodate those with tests booked to take place before 22 April.

■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

Patricia Gibson:

[175909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the DVSA has plans to prioritise driving tests for critical workers in (a) Scotland and (b) the rest of the UK as covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Patricia Gibson:

[175910]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans DVSA has in place to deal with the backlog of driving tests due to covid-19 restrictions.

Rachel Maclean:

During the current lockdown, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is offering a limited theory test and practical test service in England and Wales to NHS health and social care workers, emergency services and local council workers who need to both drive as part of their job and respond to 'threats to life' as part of their job. Mobile emergency workers who have a valid compulsory basic training (CBT) certificate and wish to apply for a motorcycle licence would also be eligible.

Mobile emergency worker tests cannot be currently offered in Scotland due to Covid restrictions set by the Scottish Government.

The DVSA will continue to offer mobile emergency worker tests once the current lockdown restrictions have been lifted, and will keep that service under review.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has measures in place to increase practical driving tests when it is safe for testing to resume. These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays).

In addition, the DVSA has started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners to increase testing capacity and reduce the backlog as quickly as possible, whilst maintaining a COVID-secure service for customers and examiners.

■ East Coast Main Line

Karin Smyth:

[\[175914\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of re-purposing the eastern arm of the East Coast Main Line, such as for direct travel from Bristol to east of the Pennines, after the opening of HS2.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands is considering how best to deliver schemes such as HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail and Midlands Engine Rail in the North and Midlands.

In addition, under its current franchise agreement, CrossCountry, which operates InterCity services between south-west England, Bristol, the north of England and Scotland, is required to develop proposals for timetable and capacity improvements to deliver for expected future passenger demand over the next few years.

■ Electric Scooters: Pilot Schemes

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[175817\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to involve Local Access Forums in the evaluation of his Department's e-scooter trials.

Rachel Maclean:

The evaluation will include interviews with national and local organisations ensuring that a broad sample of expertise and perspectives are included in its findings. Additionally, the project is in regular contact with the implementing local authorities and the evaluation is interviewing a sample of representatives from these areas.

Local Access Forums (LAFs) are concerned with local issues and engage directly with local authorities who are best placed to deal with those concerns. The views of the LAFs will be represented through the local authority interviews and through our engagement with other organisations that span LAFs responsibilities.

■ Electric Vehicles

Lilian Greenwood:

[175820]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the number of electric (a) vans and (b) cars that will be funded through the new plug-in vehicle grant allocation.

Rachel Maclean:

Estimates of the number of zero emission cars and vans to receive plug-in vehicle grant funding are commercially sensitive to Government.

The Plug-in Car Grant rate has been reduced from £3,000 to £2,500 per car with the price cap reducing from £50,000 to £35,000, enabling the funding to last longer and making it available to more drivers. The increasing choice of new vehicles, growing demand from customers, and rapidly rising number of chargepoints means that we are re-focusing our vehicle grants on the more affordable zero emission vehicles – where most consumers will be looking and where taxpayers' money will make more of a difference.

We have also changed the Plug-in Van Grant eligibility criteria to focus only on vans with zero emission ranges of over 60 miles. We have provided over £100m in funding through the Plug-in Van Grant since its launch in 2012, supporting the purchase of over 15,000 ultra-low emission vans and trucks, the majority of which are zero emission vehicles. As the market for electric vans increases, the revised Plug-In Van Grant rates ensure we can continue to support the highest number of vehicles, while still offering a substantial discount on the upfront price.

We will continue to review both grant schemes as the market grows. Generous tax incentives, including favourable company car tax rates, which can save drivers over £2,000 a year, remain in place.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

John Healey:

[174020]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 10 February 2021 to Question HL12641 on Electric Vehicles: Charging Points, in which local authority areas the 3,800 chargepoints funded by the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme have been installed; and how many of the potential 7,200 charging device installations have been funded from his Department's doubling of funding to that scheme.

Rachel Maclean:

The doubling of funding for the ORCS to £20 million announced in May last year by the Transport Secretary will allow local authorities to install up to 7,200 charging devices, making charging at home and overnight easier for those without an off-street parking space.

The attached document details the local authorities which have received grant awards under the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme, to date. In financial year 2020/21 almost 2,000 chargepoints were approved under the On-Street

Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). ORCS is a demand-led fund open to all UK local authorities. As the Scheme moves into financial year 2021/22, amendments have been made, taking into account local authority feedback and the experience of previous years, in order to improve access to funding for as many local authorities as possible.

Attachments:

1. Charging Points - Local Authority Areas [Charging Points - Local Authority Areas.xlsx]

■ **Electric Vehicles: Sales**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[175821\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to support people to purchase used electric vehicles; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

The second-hand electric vehicle market will have an important role in the UK's transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). We already have various financial incentives to stimulate the new ZEV market and increase the supply of these vehicles feeding through to the second-hand market. Additionally, our funding for chargepoint infrastructure at homes, workplaces, residential streets and across the wider roads network is also supporting consumers to buy used ZEVs.

Fleet operator businesses buy over half of the new vehicles sold each year and are major suppliers to the used market, therefore encouraging them to go zero emission will spur the used ZEV market. As confirmed in March 2020, users of zero and ultra-low emission cars will continue to benefit from favourable company car tax rates (compared to conventionally fuelled vehicles) until 2024-25. In addition, buyers of both new and used ZEVs do not pay vehicle excise duty.

■ **Electric Vehicles: Vans**

Lilian Greenwood: [\[175819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he made prior to 18 March 2021 of the potential effect of a reduction in plug-in grant funding on electric van adoption.

Rachel Maclean:

Our assessment is that the changes to the van grant will mean funding will last longer and be available to more drivers, while still offering a substantial discount on upfront price. There are now over twenty models of electric vans (including HGVs) eligible for the van grant, with a wide variety of specifications and lower running costs than internal combustion engine vans. We expect the market to continue to grow. Zero emission vans are exempt from vehicle excise duty, and from 6 April 2021 zero emission company vans will be exempt from the van benefit charge.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Euston Station

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[175999\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether there is scope to accommodate the expansion of High Speed Two capacity at the Euston terminus in the future under the revised plans for that programme.

Andrew Stephenson:

Initial HS2 Ltd analysis indicates that moving to the revised HS2 Euston design maintains the station infrastructure capacity to run all of the services in the planned HS2 Phase 2b Train Service Specification as set out in the business case for HS2.

■ Hull Paragon Station: Public Lavatories

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[175744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of recent toilet improvements made at Hull Paragon Station.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department advised that the toilets are suitable for a transport interchange but due to their location, they are frequently used by other members of the public as well as passengers. The toilets have also become a target for vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Whilst TransPennine Express, which manages the station, covers the cost of repairs and has provided additional cleaning to meet the extra demand, this means that customers have reduced access to the facility whilst the toilets are being cleaned or repaired.

■ Military Aircraft: Freight

Mike Kane:

[\[175875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) safety and (b) environmental effect of the use of Antonov An-12 aircraft for cargo flights in and out of the UK.

Robert Courts:

The CAA has checked multiple An-12 aircraft in 2021 through ramp inspections to verify they comply with international safety standards and have the relevant permits and certificates. No safety concerns have been identified.

Aircraft are certified by their state of design against ICAO noise and emissions certification standards if they are to operate to, from, or within the UK. No separate assessment has been made by the UK of the An-12's environmental performance.

■ Ministers: Department for Transport

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[174761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will publish in full the Ministerial diary of the Minister of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Pendle, for the week commencing 13 February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

I was appointed as Minister of State for Transport on Thursday 13th February. I had no meetings with external organisations that week. I had introductory meetings with Officials within the Department.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[174762\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will publish in full the Ministerial diary of the Minister of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Pendle, for each week since the week commencing 17 February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

As part of my role as Minister of State for Transport, I regularly meet with departmental officials and external stakeholders. My meetings with many external organisations are routinely published on the GOV.UK website as part of transparency returns.

Dame Diana Johnson:[\[174763\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will publish a list of meetings the Minister of State for Transport, the hon. Member for Pendle, has had with hon. Members representing constituencies in the North of England since his appointment.

Andrew Stephenson:

I meet with MPs on a regular basis. Most recently, I held a MP surgery that all MPs were invited to on the 24th March. I am happy to engage with any MPs who request a meeting.

■ Railways: Concessions**Kerry McCarthy:**[\[175734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Rail to Refuge scheme run by train operators; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allocating funding to support that scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Rail to Refuge Scheme is a successful and effective scheme that assists survivors of domestic abuse. On average, 4 survivors of domestic violence are helped each day. In the first 40 weeks of financial year 2020/21 the scheme has assisted 776 Adults and 277 children to reach a place of safety. I endorse the scheme and am pleased that additional funding has been secured to support the scheme for the next 12 months.

■ Railways: Highways England**Tracy Brabin:**[\[174224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many historic railway estate structures Highways England is considering for infilling or demolition in (a) West Yorkshire and (b) England.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As part of Highways England's 5-year plan for its management of over 3,000 Historical Railways Estate structures it has developed a programme of works to maintain safety. These works include repair, strengthening and refurbishment of structures, which can also include infilling or demolition where necessary.

There is no activity planned in West Yorkshire.

This programme is under internal review; and infilling and demolition works are currently only planned on a very small number of structures.

Railways: Waste**Mike Amesbury:**[\[174254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of using rail infrastructure to remove waste from the Lostock Northwich Incinerator to help reduce the number of heavy goods vehicles journeys made for that purpose.

Rachel Maclean:

Whilst the means by which industrial facilities convey materials is a commercial decision, DfT recognises the merits of using rail ahead of HGVs and is incentivising modal shift from road haulage to rail freight through our £20m Mode Shift Revenue Support Scheme, which helps to remove around 900,000 HGV journeys from our roads each year.

Roads**Sir Christopher Chope:**[\[174723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Transport for London on its policy on restrictions on road space through the Streetspace scheme.

Rachel Maclean:

The responsibility for transport in London, including the Streetspace scheme, is devolved to the Mayor of London and Transport for London. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that local decisions about street infrastructure take account of the needs and opinions of local people. The Department is not responsible for policing what local authorities implement on their roads.

Transpennine Express Rail Franchise: Kingston upon Hull**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[175743\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Minister of State in his Department has plans to visit and meet with TransPennine Express operators at Hull Station.

Dame Diana Johnson: [175745]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if the Minister of State in his Department will visit operators at Liverpool Lime Street Station.

Dame Diana Johnson: [175746]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans the Minister of State in his Department has to visit station operators at Leeds Railway Station.

Dame Diana Johnson: [175747]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the Minister of State in his Department plans to visit station operators at Darlington Station.

Andrew Stephenson:

Ministers very much look forward to visiting a range of stations and locations in due course once circumstances allow

■ Transport for the North

Dame Diana Johnson: [174764]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will list the Transport for the North board meetings attended by the Minister of State for Transport.

Andrew Stephenson:

Neither of the Ministers of State for Transport have attended any Transport for the North Board meetings. The Department is represented at these meetings by Officials within the Department.

■ Transport for the North: Finance

Dame Diana Johnson: [174037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the oral contribution by the Minister of State for Transport, Official Report, column 448 and with reference to his statement that the 40 per cent reduction in Transport for the North's core funding will not take place until the next financial year, whether Transport for the North has been allocated £10 million in financial year 2020-21.

Andrew Stephenson:

I refer the Right Honourable Member to my oral contribution to the House, Official Report, column 447; Transport for the North received a core funding settlement from the Department of £7 million for the current financial year (2020/21) and £6 million for the next (2021/22).

I also refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 22 March 2021, to Question UIN 170563 <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-03-17/170563/>.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Ian Mearns:

[\[174100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to amend the reasonable excuses for international travel from the 29 March 2021 to include visits to see family members and long term partners in the UK.

Robert Courts:

The intention behind this question is unclear. Government does not set out reasonable excuses for individuals entering England. There are no plans to amend reasonable excuses for international travel from England to include visits to see family members and long term partners overseas where there are not otherwise legally permitted reasons for travel.

TREASURY

■ Boats: UK Trade with EU

Drew Hendry:

[\[175928\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 169891 on Boats: UK Trade with EU, what assessment he has made of extending the Returned Goods Relief timeframes for boats no longer able to commercially operate in the EU following the end of the transition period.

Jesse Norman:

Relief from import VAT and any customs duty is available under the Returned Goods Relief (RGR) for goods exported from the UK and re-imported within three years in an unaltered state. Goods which were transported from the UK to the EU, and which remained located in the EU at the end of the transition period, will be eligible for RGR, subject to meeting the conditions for the relief, if they are returned to Great Britain by 30 June 2022, regardless of the date they were transported to the EU. This extends the period during which such goods can return to Great Britain under RGR by a further six months in view of the continuing COVID-19 travel restrictions in the UK and in the EU. The extension of this grace period is included in the revised RGR legislation published on 22 March 2021:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reference-documents-for-the-customs-reliefs-from-a-liability-to-import-duty-and-miscellaneous-amendments-eu-exit-regulations-2020>.

For RGR to apply on import VAT relief, the exporter and the importer need to be the same person.

■ Duty Free Allowances: Regional Airports

Navendu Mishra:

[\[174988\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the introduction of duty-free arrival stores on (a) employment at Manchester Airport and other regional airports and (b) the economy local to those airports.

Kemi Badenoch:

Following a consultation, the Government announced on 11 September 2020 that duty-free sales would be extended to EU-bound passengers for the first time in over 20 years from 1 January 2021.

This is a significant boost to all airports and international rail terminals in England, Scotland and Wales, including Manchester, and smaller regional airports and rail hubs, which have not been able to offer duty-free to the EU before.

Duty-free on arrival did not form part of the Government's consultation on the potential approach to duty- and tax-free goods arising from the UK's new relationship with the EU, which took place in the Spring of 2020. The Government nonetheless acknowledged in the summary of responses to the consultation that some stakeholders had requested the introduction of duty-free on arrival. This also set out that duty-free on arrival was not a scheme that the Government previously offered and was therefore not considering implementing the scheme at that time.

Duty-free on arrival conflicts with international principles of taxation which suggest that goods should be taxed in the country where they are consumed. The introduction of such a scheme could also undermine the UK high street and public health objectives. As with all policy areas, the Government will keep its position under review.

■ Employment: Coventry

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[174863\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what fiscal steps his Department is taking to support job retention in (a) Coventry North East constituency and (b) Coventry during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jesse Norman:

As at 15 March 2021, the CJRS (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) has supported 20,600 employments in Coventry North East constituency and 56,600 employments in Coventry since its inception. As announced at Budget, to support businesses and employees through the next stage of the pandemic, the Government is extending the CJRS for all parts of the UK for a further five months from May until the end of September 2021.

■ Greensill**Nick Smith:****[175795]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he had (a) discussions and (b) text communication with former Prime Minister David Cameron in Government support to Greensill Capital.

John Glen:

I refer the honourable member to the recent publication by HM Treasury on this matter on gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-a-freedom-of-information-request-on-greensill>

■ Greensill: Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme**Dame Angela Eagle:****[174732]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions his Department had with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on the decision to make Greensill Capital an accredited lender under the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

John Glen:

There is a robust accreditation process in place for lenders seeking to lend through the coronavirus business lending schemes. This process is run independently by the British Business Bank (BBB), which is an arms-length body of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

HM Treasury's only role in the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) accreditation process is where lenders are seeking to make individuals loans of over £50 million, given the significant exposure such loans would represent to the taxpayer.

In order to lend at this level under CLBILS, lenders were required to complete an enhanced accreditation process via the BBB. This additional accreditation was generally restricted to lenders supervised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and approved for internal risk-based modelling, as the government (and the regulators) have confidence in the oversight of these lenders and their track record of business lending at this scale.

Once this additional accreditation process had been completed, if the BBB were prepared to accredit lenders to make loans over £50 million they would approach HM Treasury for a go/no-go decision on providing that lender with the enhanced accreditation. HM Treasury was not approached on this basis in relation to Greensill.

■ Households: Income

Colleen Fletcher:

[175890]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on (a) average household incomes and (b) trends in the level of mean household disposable income in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England.

John Glen:

The Government continues to monitor and publish trends in households' circumstances across the UK. The Household Below Average Income (HBAI) publication looks at household incomes in the UK, but the latest available figures only cover up to the financial year 2019/20 and so do not measure the time period in which COVID-19 has had an impact.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also produce estimates of household income for the whole of the UK. Whilst the latest data published is not broken down by region, it indicates that for the UK as a whole, real household disposable income in 2020 Q4 was 0.7% higher than the same quarter in 2019.

However, throughout the pandemic, the Government has sought to protect people's jobs and livelihoods across the UK, including in the Coventry North East constituency, Coventry, the West Midlands and England. This includes unprecedented measures such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS).

For the latest HMRC statistics on the use of the CJRS, see the table below (from published HMRC figures found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-statistics-march-2021>):

	CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENTS FURLOUGHED SINCE MARCH 2020 (BASED ON CLAIMS MADE BY 15 MARCH 2021)
Coventry North East	20,600
Coventry	56,600
West Midlands	999,600
England	9,419,400

For the latest figures on the use of the SEISS, see the table below (from published HMRC figures found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/self-employment-income-support-scheme-statistics-february-2021>):

	NUMBER OF SEISS 1 CLAIMS MADE UP TO 31 JANUARY 2021	NUMBER OF SEISS 2 CLAIMS MADE UP TO 31 JANUARY 2021	NUMBER OF SEISS 3 CLAIMS MADE UP TO 31 JANUARY 2021
Coventry North East	4,000	3,600	3,400
Coventry	10,100	9,300	8,700
West Midlands	202,000	182,000	170,000
England	2,254,000	2,034,000	1,903,000

Lastly, to illustrate the challenges faced by households during COVID-19, and how government interventions have supported households of different income levels, HM Treasury published distributional analysis alongside the Budget 2021 showing estimates of the change in household net incomes between February and November 2020. This can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/966207/DA_Document_Budget_2021.pdf

■ Housing: Insulation

Neil Coyle:

[174137]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of exempting from VAT the fire safety works required for leaseholders under surveys deemed necessary to inspect cladding and other materials after the Grenfell tragedy.

Jesse Norman:

The Government announced on 10 February 2021 that it would fully fund the cost of replacing unsafe cladding for all leaseholders in residential buildings 18 metres and over in England.

It was also announced that for low rise buildings between 11 metres and 18 metres, with a lower risk to safety, there will be new protection from the costs of cladding removal. This would be made through a long-term, low interest, Government-backed financing arrangement to pay for cladding removal, where it is needed.

In most cases, the standard rate of VAT will be applied to the removal and replacement of cladding. However, the cost of replacing cladding can be zero rated if it is tied to the initial construction of the building and the cladding is shown to be defective.

■ Immigration: Disclosure of Information

Afzal Khan:

[\[174258\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps HMRC has taken to share Highly Skilled Tier 1 (General) migrant data with the Home Office for indefinite leave to remain decisions.

Jesse Norman:

Where legally permitted and proportionate, HMRC undertake to share data with the Home Office (HO) under the relevant legislation and where requested by HO, which is governed by a single Partnership Agreement.

The Partnership Agreement sets out the framework under which HMRC and HO work together. Under this partnership agreement, HMRC may undertake to share data where there is a Data Usage Agreement (DUA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the purpose outlined within the agreements.

These documents are signed off by both departments and outline the approved legal gateway for the data share, the purpose of the data share, how the data will be used, what data is to be shared and how, data security obligations, and data retention policy.

HMRC have extensive senior governance in place to assure that DUAs adhere to legal requirements and are proportionate in their requests. All DUAs are assessed under relevant legislation and are reviewed under a regular schedule. Secure data transfer infrastructure is in place for data exchange, and data is only permitted to be used for the agreed purpose.

■ Leisure: Non-domestic Rates

Stephen McPartland:

[\[174117\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to extend the business rates holiday in response to the covid-19 outbreak for indoor leisure to March 2022.

Jesse Norman:

The Budget announced a three-month extension to the business rates holiday for eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors that was provided at Budget 2020. This means over 350,000 properties will pay no business rates for three months.

From 1 July 2021, 66% relief will be available subject to a cash cap that depends on whether businesses have been required to close or were able to open. This additional relief takes the total value of support in 2021-22 to £6 billion and means the vast majority of businesses will on average receive 75% relief across the year.

■ Leisure: VAT

Stephen McPartland:

[\[174116\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has plans to extend the 5 per cent VAT rate in response to the covid-19 outbreak for indoor leisure to March 2022.

Jesse Norman:

The temporary reduced rate of VAT (5 per cent) was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of about 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Admission to leisure centres is not included within the reduced rate, but where a leisure centre operates activity that falls within the reduced rate, e.g. an on-site café, that service will qualify.

As announced at Budget 2021, the Government has extended the temporary reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism and it will now end on 30 September 2021. In addition, to help businesses manage the transition back to the standard rate, a 12.5 per cent rate will then apply for a further six months, until 31 March 2022.

This relief already comes at a £7 billion cost to the Exchequer, and there are no plans to extend the scope of the reduced rate. While some businesses in some sectors are disappointed, a boundary for eligibility had to be drawn.

The Government has made available a comprehensive wider package of support which includes extensions to the furlough scheme; extensions to the COVID-19 loan schemes; grant support; a business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure business properties; mortgage holidays; enhanced Time to Pay for taxes; and VAT deferrals.

■ Members: Correspondence

Kevin Brennan:

[\[174736\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many items of written correspondence from Members of Parliament Treasury Ministers have (a) received and (b) replied to since April 1 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

Members of Parliament have written to HM Treasury 36,791 times between 1 April 2020 and 24 March 2021. This represents a sharp increase on 2019, whereby Members of Parliament wrote to HM Treasury 7,386 times.

Of the 36,791 pieces of written correspondence, 26,709 have been responded to and 6,584 have been transferred to other Government departments to answer. The remaining pieces of correspondence are ongoing or required no response.

■ Musical Instruments: Customs

Catherine West:

[174927]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if the Government will publish guidance on how (a) instruments carried in vehicles and (b) music-related equipment are to be considered by (i) UK and (ii) EU regulations for ATA carnet exemptions.

Jesse Norman:

ATA carnets can be used for commercial goods, professional equipment or goods going to trade fairs or exhibitions in participating countries, which are moved on a temporary basis to a new customs territory (i.e. they will not be sold and will return to the country of origin). This includes musical instruments and equipment.

The ATA Carnet system is an internationally agreed method of moving certain goods between customs territories temporarily (i.e. a passport for goods). An ATA Carnet simplifies the customs formalities by allowing a single document to be used for clearing goods through customs in the countries that are part of the ATA Carnet system. The ATA Carnet must be presented to customs for endorsement each time the goods enter or leave a customs territory. It is valid for one year and allows for movement of the goods shown on the Carnet as many times as required during the 12 months to any of the destinations applied for. The use of a Carnet is optional, depending on an individual/business's specific circumstances. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/taking-goods-out-uk-temporarily/get-an-ata-carnet>.

Temporary Admission is an alternative procedure to an ATA Carnet to import goods temporarily into the UK. Information on the Temporary Admission procedures in the UK can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-import-goods-temporarily-to-the-uk-or-eu>.

Portable musical instruments which are carried in a traveller's baggage or personal vehicle can also be "declared by conduct" if they attract a relief from import duty such as Returned Goods Relief (RGR). This means they can be declared to UK Customs by walking or driving through the 'green channel' at the port or airport. Returned Goods Relief (RGR) allows the re-importation of items that were originally in the UK without payment of import duty and VAT. To qualify for RGR the goods must have been in free circulation with all duties and taxes paid when they were exported from the UK. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-less-import-duty-and-vat-when-re-importing-goods-to-the-uk-and-eu>.

The EU will have similar processes to the UK. However, the management of EU import and export procedures is the responsibility of the customs authorities of the Member States so it is important that travellers/traders confirm the processes at their port of arrival and any conditions or procedures that may apply. Information can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs_en.

■ National Loans Fund: Wales

Ben Lake:

[\[175982\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans re-finance loans issued to development bodies in Wales prior to devolution by the National Loan Fund.

John Glen:

There are currently no plans to refinance loans issued from the National Loans Fund (NLF) to development bodies in Wales prior to devolution.

All loans made from, or financed by, the NLF are subject to important provisions of the National Loans Act 1968, which sets out that the Treasury may not lend at a loss from the NLF.

To refinance the loans issued from the NLF, the outstanding balances would be treated as being repaid in full and reissued on the same day. The repayment would be calculated as the present value at prevailing interest rates of all amounts due to the NLF under the original terms, to ensure that the NLF were left in the same position as if the original loans had run until maturity.

■ Non-domestic Rates: Tax Allowances

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[176021\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what official data on the effects of the pandemic on different sectors will be used to distribute business rates relief announced on 25 March 2021, and if he will place a copy of that data in the Library.

Anneliese Dodds:

[\[176022\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the news story, Business rates relief boosted with new £1.5 billion pot, published on 25 March 2021, what the planned timescale is for local authorities to set up local relief schemes to distribute business rates relief.

Jesse Norman:

The Government has announced a £1.5bn pot of additional business rates relief for businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that are not eligible for the retail, hospitality and leisure business rates holiday. The statement by the Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government of 25 March 2021 explained the relief will be allocated to local authorities based on the stock of properties in the area and the sector-specific economic impacts of COVID-19.

Formal guidance will follow in due course, setting out the specific considerations that Local Authorities (LAs) should have regard for when providing relief. Relief will be for LAs to award on a discretionary basis. Funding will be available once the legislation relating to MCC provisions has passed and LAs have established their own local relief schemes. The Government will support LAs to do this as quickly as possible, including through new burdens funding.

Anneliese Dodds:

[176023]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the news story, Business rates relief boosted with new £1.5 billion pot, published on 25 March 2021, how many of the 170,000 claims for material change in circumstances have been successful.

Jesse Norman:

None of the Material Change of Circumstances (MCC) cases relating to Covid-19 restrictions has been settled by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). All cases were still within the statutory time limits for resolving cases under the Check Challenge Appeal legislation.

■ Office for Tax Simplification

Bridget Phillipson:

[175840]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish a table of the advice he has requested and received from the Office for Tax Simplification under the provisions of section 185 of the Finance Act 2016 but in a manner not engaging the provisions for publication in section 186 of that Act.

Jesse Norman:

It is the practice of the OTS to publish the results of both Chancellor commissioned and own-initiative reviews, including any recommendations to Government, on their website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-tax-simplification>. A comprehensive index of OTS reviews and Government responses can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/index-of-ots-reports-and-government-responses>

■ Office of Tax Simplification: Reviews

Bridget Phillipson:

[175837]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who he plans to appoint to the advisory panel for the review of the Office of Tax Simplification; and (a) on what date and (b) by what process those individuals will be selected.

Bridget Phillipson:

[175838]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to announce the timeline for the review of the Office of Tax Simplification.

Bridget Phillipson:

[175839]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of explicitly including in the terms of reference for the review of the Office of Tax simplification an examination of the effectiveness of tax reliefs in the work of the Office of Tax Simplification.

Jesse Norman:

Work on the review has begun, with the final report expected in Autumn 2021. It will consider the work of the Office of Tax Simplification to date and engage with a wide

variety of interested stakeholders including an advisory panel containing independent, external members. The process of forming the panel is under development. More information on engaging with the review will be made available in due course.

■ **Pharmacy: Coronavirus**

Bill Esterson:

[\[174817\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent representations he has received from the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on advance payments to pharmacies during the covid-19 outbreak.

Steve Barclay:

The Treasury received representations from the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee concerning advance payments to pharmacies during the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2021.

The Government has put in place a comprehensive package of support for community pharmacy during the pandemic, including providing extra funding for Bank Holiday openings, advance cash payments, a new medicines delivery service for shielded patients and a contribution to social distancing for every pharmacy.

The Government has also put forward proposals for additional funding to meet extra costs incurred by pharmacies during the pandemic, and discussions between the Department of Health and Social Care and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) are ongoing.

■ **Public Expenditure: Census**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175822\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his timetable for reviewing the population estimates used in the Barnett formula has been affected by the changes in timing to the 2021 census in some parts of the UK.

Steve Barclay:

The population numbers used in the Barnett formula are the mid-year estimates published annually by the ONS, rather than just the estimates generated for the years when the census takes place. We will continue to use these annual estimates and they will reflect information from the census once this is available.

■ **Public Sector: Pay**

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175829\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people who deliver public services, including those working in public bodies and their subcontractors that deliver those services, and are paid from public funds at the national (a) living wage for those aged 23 and over, (b) minimum wage for those aged 21 or 22, (c) minimum wage for those aged 18 to 20, (d) minimum wage for those aged under 18

and (e) minimum wage at the apprentice rate as at 1 April 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175830\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the current number of people (a) in public bodies and (b) employed as subcontractors who deliver public services and being paid less than £10 per hour from the public purse who are (a) are aged 23 and over, (b) aged 21 or 22, (c) are 18 to 20, (d) aged under 18 and (e) apprentices; and if he will make a statement.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175831\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people (a) in public bodies and (b) employed as subcontractors who deliver public services and paid from the public purse who are (i) aged 23 and over and are paid less than £9 per hour, (ii) aged 21 or 22 and are paid less than £9 per hour, (iii) aged 18 to 20 and are paid less than £9 per hour and (iv) aged under 18 and are paid less than £9 per hour and (v) are apprentices and are paid less than £9 per hour as at 1 April 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175832\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of people (a) in public bodies and (b) employed as subcontractors who deliver public services and paid from the public purse who are (i) aged 23 and over and are paid less than £11 per hour, (ii) aged 21 or 22 and are paid less than £11 per hour, (iii) aged 18 to 20 and are paid less than £11 per hour (iv) are aged under 18 and are paid less than £11 per hour and (v) are apprentices and are paid less than £11 per hour as at 1 April 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175833\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of hours worked by people (a) in public bodies and (b) employed as subcontractors who deliver public services and paid from the public purse who are paid at the rates applicable for the (i) national living wage for those aged 23 and over, (ii) national minimum wage for those aged 21 or 22, (iii) national minimum wage for those aged 18 to 20, (iv) the national minimum wage for those aged under 18 and (v) national minimum wage at the apprentice rate as at 1 April 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175834\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of hours worked in the UK and paid at the rates applicable for the (a) national living wage for those aged 23 and over (in the 2020-21 financial year, 25 and over), (b) national minimum wage for those aged 21 or 22 (in the 2020-21 financial year, 21 to 24), (c) national minimum wage for those aged 18 to 20, (d) national minimum wage for those aged under 18 and (e) national minimum wage at the apprentice rate in the (i) 2020-21 and (ii) 2021-22 financial years; and if he will make a statement.

Steve Barclay:

Departments and workforces set levels of pay in compliance with National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage legislation. Remuneration for private sector employees are set independently of Government, although they must also comply with the relevant legislation.

Data is not held centrally on the pay distribution of all people who deliver public services.

Latest published survey data, see below, has the distribution of hourly pay for public sector workers, comprising of workers working in organisations defined as Public Corporation, Central Government or Local Authority.

Hourly pay - Gross (£) - For all employee jobs: United Kingdom, ASHE 2020 (provisional)

	PERCENTILES									
	10	20	25	30	40	60	70	75	80	90
Public sector	9.88	10.90	11.61	12.46	14.27	18.77	21.11	22.62	23.87	28.89

Link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandwork/nghours/datasets/publicandprivatesectorashtable13>

Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence. Estimates for 2020 include employees who have been furloughed under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

■ Retail Trade: VAT

Dr Rupa Huq:**[175951]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to review the effect of changes to VAT-free shopping on jobs across different sectors and parts of the country.

Kemi Badenoch:

On 11 September 2020, the Government announced the VAT and excise duty treatment of goods purchased by individuals for personal use and carried in their luggage arriving from or going overseas (passengers) following the transition period. The following rules were implemented on 1 January 2021:

- Passengers travelling from Great Britain to any destination outside the United Kingdom (UK) can purchase duty-free excise goods once they have passed security controls at ports, airports, and international rail stations.
- Personal allowances apply to passengers entering Great Britain from any destination outside of the UK, with alcohol allowances significantly increased.

- The VAT Retail Export Scheme (RES) in Great Britain has not been extended to EU residents and has been withdrawn for all passengers.
- The concessionary treatment on tax-free sales for non-excise goods has been removed across the UK.

The Government published a consultation which ran from 11 March to 20 May 2020. During this time the Government held a number of virtual meetings with industry stakeholders to hear their views and received 73 responses to the consultation. The Government has also met and discussed these changes with many stakeholders following the announcement of these policies.

The detailed rationale for these changes are included in the written ministerial statement and summary of responses to the recent consultation: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2020-09-11/hcws448> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-consultation-on-duty-free-and-tax-free-goods-carried-by-passengers>. A technical note has also been issued to stakeholders to expand on this document and to respond to issues raised by stakeholders.

On 25 November 2020 the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out their assessment of the fiscal impact of the withdrawal of the VAT RES.

Factoring in a higher-than-usual elasticity of 1.9 to account for spending on luxury goods, the OBR estimate that the withdrawal of the VAT RES will result in a significant direct Exchequer saving of around £400 million per year, once passenger numbers recover from the impacts of Covid-19. Based on the 1.2 million users of the scheme who received a refund in 2019, this includes an assumption that approximately 20,000 – 30,000 fewer tourists visit Great Britain a year. That is 0.07% of the 40 million visitors to the UK in 2019.

The OBR also looked at this package in the round when assessing the indirect impact on the economy – including the effects of extending duty-free sales – alongside the substantial support provided to the economy and retail industry.

■ Revenue and Customs: Disclosure of Information

Stephen Timms:

[175691]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what provisions are in place for HMRC to (a) receive and (b) share tax return data with the Home Office for immigration enforcement purposes.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC and the Home Office (HO) have a long-established relationship underpinned by a single Partnership Agreement. The Partnership Agreement sets out the framework under which HMRC and HO work together. Sitting under this Partnership Agreement are a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and Data Usage Agreements (DUAs) regarding the sharing of data for immigration enforcement purposes.

These documents are signed off by both departments and outline the approved legal gateway for the data share, the purpose of the data share, how the data will be used, what data is to be shared and how, data security obligations, and data retention policy.

HMRC have extensive senior governance in place to assure that Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) adhere to legal requirements and are proportionate in their requests. All DSAs are assessed under relevant legislation and are reviewed under a regular schedule. Secure data transfer infrastructure is in place for data exchange, and data is only permitted to be used for the agreed purpose.

■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

Gavin Robinson:

[\[174136\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of inviting applications for the fourth grant of the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme earlier than mid-April 2021.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[174189\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential merits of bringing forward the application window for the fourth Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant.

Jesse Norman:

The Government announced at Budget 2021 that the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) will continue until September, with a fourth and a final fifth grant.

The Government also announced a significant change in access to the SEISS. Basing the fourth and fifth grants on 2019-20 Self Assessment tax returns means more than 600,000 people are brought into scope who either became self-employed in 2019-20; or were ineligible for previous grants, but now may be eligible for the fourth grant on the basis of submitting their 2019-20 tax return.

Using these returns requires time to deliver, due to the increased population and new data. In order to allow HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) time to process 2019-20 tax returns it has not been possible to invite applications or open the claims service earlier.

Individuals must have submitted their 2019-20 tax return by 2 March to be considered for the SEISS. This date balances access for the vast majority of eligible self-employed individuals, with the duty to protect the taxpayer against fraud as the details of the SEISS grants became public.

HMRC will open the online claims service for the fourth SEISS grant from late April 2021 and expects to notify potentially eligible people of their personal claim date from mid-April.

The SEISS is just one part of a wider package of support for the self-employed, including Restart Grants, the Recovery Loan scheme, business rates relief, and other business support schemes.

Sir Charles Walker:

[174749]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to bring forward the date of payment of the next Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant; and if he will make a statement.

Jesse Norman:

The fourth Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant will be available to claim from late April.

Grants are now based on 2019-20 tax returns which is the most up to date information HMRC hold for self-employed individuals. As the deadline for 2019-20 tax returns has now passed, HMRC will use these tax returns for the fourth and fifth grants, provided they were submitted by 2 March.

The 2 March cut-off point comes after HMRC gave until 28 February for individuals to file these returns without incurring a late filing penalty. The effect of this is that the Government is now in a position to provide support to hundreds of thousands of newly eligible self-employed individuals.

Using these returns requires time to deliver, due to the increased population and new data. The Government publishes guidance on how to claim the SEISS grants on GOV.UK.

Sarah Olney:

[174929]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of backdating Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants to people who have experienced a significant decline in profits between 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is designed to provide broadly real-time support to eligible self-employed people who are affected by COVID-19.

Backdating previous grants would not meet the objective of providing real-time income support. It would also mean offering potentially significant sums almost a year on from the beginning of the pandemic. This would expose the Exchequer to a high risk of fraud.

The SEISS is just one part of a very substantial package of financial support the Government has made available to support people with the impact of COVID-19.

■ Tax Evasion: Prosecutions

Bridget Phillipson: [\[174103\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people were the subject of a criminal prosecution by HMRC in each calendar year from (a) 2005 to (b) 2020; and in respect of how many offences those prosecutions were so brought in each of those years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[174104\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many corporations were the subject of a criminal prosecution by HMRC in each calendar year from (a) 2005 to (b) 2020; and in respect of how many total offences those prosecutions were so brought in each of those years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[174105\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many unincorporated associations were the subject of a criminal prosecution by HMRC in each calendar year from (a) 2005 to (b) 2020; and in respect of how many total offences those prosecutions were so brought in each of those years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[174106\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many limited liability partnerships were the subject of a criminal prosecution by HMRC in each calendar year from (a) 2005 to (b) 2020; and in respect of how many total offences those prosecutions were so brought in each of those years.

Bridget Phillipson: [\[174107\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people were charged by HMRC with tax evasion in each calendar year from (a) 2005 to (b) 2020.

Jesse Norman:

HMRC are able to provide data for questions 174103 and 174107. The earliest year for which data is available is 2011-12; data as far back as 2005 is not available. In relation to questions 174104, 174105 and 174106, HMRC are unable to provide information, as this level of data is not held centrally.

The following table (Table 1) details those individuals subject to criminal prosecution by HMRC each year since records began in 2011/2012. In order to obtain the total prosecutions figures, convictions and acquittals are included.

HMRC do not hold a central count of the offences relating to individual prosecutions, and so HMRC have provided prosecution totals only for each respective year. Please note HMRC report on a financial year basis and as such they have provided the data in that format and not by calendar year.

The reduced number of prosecutions is the result of HMRC increasingly focusing their criminal investigations on the most severe fraud, where a visible deterrent is needed or where other compliance approaches are likely to be ineffective; often this

is at the top end of the highest-harm and most complex organised crime and serious frauds, where criminal interventions have the most impact.

HMRC's publicly stated policy is clear that they deal with serious fraud by using the most cost-effective civil interventions when appropriate. HMRC focus criminal investigations on those cases where the behaviour is very severe, where civil sanctions alone will not work and where a criminal prosecution will act as a strong deterrent to others. HMRC's focus is on reaching the right outcome for the UK, rather than chasing arbitrary targets for arrests and prosecutions.

It should also be noted that HMRC are not a prosecuting authority. HMRC prepare cases to the highest evidential standard and pass the case to the relevant prosecuting authority to make a decision on whether the case proceeds to court, or not.

Table 1:

PROSECUTIONS

Financial Year	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total	449	576	761	709	880	887	917	749	691

HMRC are unable to provide data in relation to questions 174104, 174105 and 174106 as they only hold prosecution details at individual level. The level of data requested would be held by the various case teams on a case by case basis, but HMRC do not hold this centrally.

The following table (Table 2) details the number of individuals charged with Tax Evasion by HMRC each year since their records began in 2011/2012. The figures include all regimes excluding Drugs, International Trade, Miscellaneous : Obstruction, Money Laundering/Money Laundering Regulations (ML/MLR), Other, Other Prohibitions & Restrictions (OPR) and Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) (or name variances thereof). Please note HMRC report on a financial year basis and as such they have provided the data in that format and not by calendar year.

However, as there will be cases recorded under those regimes which form part of HMRC's work to tackle tax evasion, HMRC are currently reviewing how they define and report on Tax Evasion, so HMRC have also provided the total number of charging decisions over the same period, to show the full picture.

Table 2:

POSITIVE CHARGING DECISIONS

Year	Total	Tax Evasion
2011/12	545	501
2012/13	770	739
2013/14	915	880
2014/15	1288	1254
2015/16	1135	1066
2016/17	1097	1067
2017/18	999	914
2018/19	831	757
2019/20	573	548

■ Treasury: Disclosure of Information**Bridget Phillipson:**[\[175828\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what guidance he has issued in the last year to Ministers in his Department on the disclosure of the identity of specific private individuals in respect of published records of Ministerial meetings; what guidance on that matter Ministers currently follow; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

Providing transparency guidance is the responsibility of the Cabinet Office which publishes guidance which the Treasury, like all government departments, implements. Transparency releases are published on a quarterly basis and are currently publicly available for Ministerial meetings up to and including September 2020, which is in line with normal reporting timelines on disclosures.

WALES**■ Wales Office: Advertising****Liz Saville Roberts:**[\[175964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department has spent on advertising in each month since January 2020; which campaigns were funded by that expenditure; and which media (a) outlets and (b) platforms were used for those campaigns.

Simon Hart:

Departmental advertising spend since January 2020 is shown below:

- Date: November 2020, Campaign: EU Transition, Platform/Outlet: Business News Wales print publication, Cost: £6,000;
- Date: November 2020, Campaign: EU Transition, Platform/Outlet: Reach PLC x 3, Cost: £73,840.33 (£30,000 + £30,000 + £13,840.33);
- Date: December 2020, Campaign: EU Transition, Platform/Outlet: Twitter, Cost: £241.94;
- Date: December 2020, Campaign: Covid-19 Business Support, Platform/Outlet: Twitter, Cost: £201.26;
- Date: December 2020, Campaign: EU Transition, Platform/Outlet: Reach PLC, Cost: £5,937.25;
- Date: December 2020, Campaign: Covid-19 business support, Platform/Outlet: Facebook, Cost: £500;
- Date: January 2021, Campaign: EU Transition, Platform/Outlet: Reach PLC, Cost: £9,602.70.

The above figures relate to direct Wales Office spend only and do not include spending in Wales on advertising by other UK Government departments.

Ben Lake:**[175984]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, how much his Department spent on social media advertising in each month since January 2020, and on which platforms that money was spent.

Simon Hart:

Departmental social media advertising spend since January 2020 is shown below:

- Date: December 2020, Campaign: EU Transition, Platform/Outlet: Twitter, Cost: £241.94;
- Date: December 2020, Campaign: Covid-19 business support, Platform/Outlet: Twitter, Cost: £201.26;
- Date: December 2020, Campaign: Covid-19 business support, Platform/Outlet: Facebook, Cost: £500.

The above figures relate to direct Wales Office spend only and do not include spending in Wales on advertising by other UK Government departments.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

Marsha De Cordova:

[176033]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to publish a response to the findings of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published the report of its findings on 31 March 2021. The report can be read on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/93421/Commission-on-Race-and-Ethnic-Disparities-report-31-March-2021.pdf).

The Government is considering the Commission's recommendations and will respond in due course.

■ Ethnic Groups: Equality

Charlotte Nichols:

[174979]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has to address prejudice and attitudes to inequality towards black and ethnic minorities in response to the findings of King's College's study, Unequal Britain: attitudes to inequality in light of Covid.

Kemi Badenoch:

I will look carefully at the findings of the King's College study, 'Unequal Britain: attitudes to inequality in light of Covid', as part of the government's commitments to levelling up and to tackling prejudice, racism and discrimination.

This work will also take account of the findings of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which has been carrying out a deeper examination of the causes of disparities and which [reported to the Prime Minister on 31 March](#).

■ Regional Planning and Development

Claire Hanna:

[174297]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with her Cabinet colleagues on ensuring that (a) women, (b) the BAME community and (c) people with disabilities are prioritised in the implementation of the Government's levelling up agenda.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Equality Hub, at the heart of Government in the Cabinet Office, has a key role in driving Government priorities on equality and opportunity. The Equality Hub is leading on several cross-cutting projects, which involves working closely with other departments and Ministerial-level discussions. This includes work related to women's economic empowerment, LGBT rights and the National Strategy for Disabled People, as well as work on the Government's response to the final report of the independent Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. We will also use the UK's role as President of the G7 and our independent Gender Equality Advisory Council to ramp up work on equality.

In December 2020, we announced the Equality Data Project, the Government's new approach to tackling inequality that supports our manifesto commitment to level up across the UK. This will consider issues like geography and social background, alongside other characteristics, to enable us to understand where individuals are being held back across the UK. The Equality Hub will share the evidence from this inquiry with other government departments to help inform their work.

We also announced in December that the sponsorship of, and secretariat to, the independent Social Mobility Commission would move to the Equality Hub in the Cabinet Office from 1 April 2021. This move reflects the importance of the Social Mobility Commission for our levelling up agenda and ensures that equality and fairness of all kinds are at the heart of government.

More broadly, all departments ensure that equality considerations are at the heart of their decision-making; this is key to the Government's commitment to delivering equality of opportunity for all as well as complying with legal requirements under the public sector equality duty. Officials in the Equality Hub provide advice to departments to assist with this.

■ Sexual Harassment: Employment

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[174960\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when her Department plans to respond to the Consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace, which closed on 2 October 2019.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[175021\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when her Department plans to publish a response to the Government's consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace, which closed on 2 October 2019.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government consultation on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace focussed on ensuring that laws to protect people from harassment at work are operating effectively.

We have considered the responses received and listened carefully to the experiences shared through this consultation. We will be setting out the Government's response shortly.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Conditions of Employment: Disability

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[175787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support disabled employees during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

A range of DWP initiatives are supporting disabled people to stay in work. These include Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. We have made it easier to access programmes which help disabled people to enter work, such as the Work and Health Programme and the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme.

DWP has also put in place measures to ensure that its own staff, including those who require reasonable adjustments, have been able to safely work from home during the Covid-19 outbreak, or from COVID-safe departmental locations where necessary or if that is their preference. These measures include arranging for specialist furniture and equipment to be delivered to individuals' homes; allowing individuals to purchase such items and then reimbursing them; and ensuring that DWP workplaces are COVID safe for those who use them.

■ Employment Schemes: Disability**Mr Virendra Sharma:**[\[175786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of companies signed up to the Disability Confident scheme; and what assessment she has made of the effect of that scheme on employment rates for disabled people.

Justin Tomlinson:

In 2017 the Government set a goal to see 1 million more disabled people in employment over the next 10 years. In the first three years of the goal (between Jan-Mar 2017 and Jan-Mar 2020) the number of disabled people in employment increased by 800,000. The rate of disabled people in employment also increased, by 4.4 percentage points to 53.4%, in the same period.

The Disability Confident scheme is a learning journey that aims to provide employers with the knowledge, skills, and resources that they need to attract, recruit, retain and develop disabled people in the workplace. No employer is too small or new to start the journey and even the most experienced employer will still find new techniques and best practice that can help them. As of 28th February 2021 over 19,900 employers had signed up to the scheme. Disability Confident is only part of a wider range of services that will support disabled employees into work and stay in work.

■ Employment: Bolton**Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[174070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to assist young people aged 16 to 25 to find work in Bolton.

Mims Davies:

Our 13-week Youth Employment Programme delivers wrap-around support for many of the Plan for Jobs initiatives, and helps young people to take up work-related

training or a job. This includes our Kickstart Scheme, which has seen over 150,000 young people starting work, a traineeship, an apprenticeship and Sector-based Work Academy Programmes. The Youth Employment Programme is live and our dedicated Work Coaches are delivering the programme to young people.

The Jobcentre team in Bolton have partnered with a number of local employers and organisations to provide a varied network of support for young people aged 16-25 in the Bolton area, including Mentoring Circles, Sector Work Academy Programmes, Kickstart Opportunities, a Work Academy with the University of Bolton, and provision for young people that are not currently in education or employment with Bolton College and Connexions.

In addition, Bolton has two Youth Hubs, based in Westhoughton and Farnworth, providing outreach support for young people, and our Jobcentre Youth Employability Coaches are providing flexible support to young people with significant complex needs and barriers to help them move into employment and offering six weeks of in-work support when they start work.

■ **Employment: Disability**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[174911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2021 to Question 169900 on Employment: Disability, whether the minutes of those meetings are publicly available.

Justin Tomlinson:

This is an informal meeting. No minutes are recorded, therefore these are not publically available. Any actions arising are shared within the membership of the group.

■ **Employment: Learning Disability**

Ellie Reeves:

[\[174939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and (b) recent steps his Department has taken to ensure that people with learning disabilities can still access employment opportunities during the covid-19 outbreak.

Justin Tomlinson:

DWP has a range of initiatives to support disabled people, including people with learning disabilities, to stay in and enter work. These include the Work and Health Programme, one-to-one support and training through the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have provided specialist employment support remotely, and made programmes easier to access.

Disability Employment Advisers support DWP colleagues by developing their skills to understand the interaction between individuals, their health and disability and employment, to help them to provide more personalised support, tailored to each claimant's individual needs. They proactively share knowledge and information with work coaches about health and disability, national and local provision, services, training and employment opportunities.

Ellie Reeves:

[\[174940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent employment support her Department is providing to people with learning disabilities to find jobs they are able to apply for and secure employment.

Justin Tomlinson:

DWP has a range of initiatives to support disabled people, including people with learning disabilities, to stay in and enter work. These include the Work and Health Programme, one-to-one support and training through the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, we have provided specialist employment support remotely, and made programmes easier to access.

Disability Employment Advisers support DWP colleagues by developing their skills to understand the interaction between individuals, their health and disability and employment, to help them to provide more personalised support, tailored to each claimant's individual needs. They proactively share knowledge and information with work coaches about health and disability, national and local provision, services, training and employment opportunities.

■ Health and Safety Executive: Inspections

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[174118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many workplace spot checks relating to covid-19 compliance have been completed by the Health and Safety Executive in each week in the last 12 months.

Mims Davies:

The following shows a count of completed Spot Check Assessments in each week between 22/03/2020 and 24/03/2021. The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Covid Spot Check Programme started in May 2020, so there are no completed Spot Checks for Mar/Apr 2020.

WEEK COMMENCING	COMPLETED SPOT CHECKS
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2020**May**

18/05/2020	17
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25/05/2020	50
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Jun

01/06/2020	192
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08/06/2020	234
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15/06/2020	434
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22/06/2020	534
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29/06/2020	563
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Jul

06/07/2020	1005
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13/07/2020	938
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20/07/2020	929
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27/07/2020	592
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Aug

03/08/2020	875
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10/08/2020	1009
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17/08/2020	1329
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24/08/2020	1481
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31/08/2020	1462
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Sep

07/09/2020	2189
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14/09/2020	2575
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21/09/2020	2819
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28/09/2020	2838
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WEEK COMMENCING	COMPLETED SPOT CHECKS
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Oct

05/10/2020	3943
12/10/2020	3641
19/10/2020	3356
26/10/2020	4224

Nov

02/11/2020	4887
09/11/2020	4132
16/11/2020	5067
23/11/2020	4715
30/11/2020	6276

Dec

07/12/2020	4728
14/12/2020	5310
21/12/2020	3004
28/12/2020	980

2020 Total	76328
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2021**Jan**

04/01/2021	5293
11/01/2021	5352
18/01/2021	6327
25/01/2021	7791

Feb

01/02/2021	8921
08/02/2021	8838

WEEK COMMENCING	COMPLETED SPOT CHECKS
15/02/2021	9151
22/02/2021	10405
Mar	
01/03/2021	9125
08/03/2021	9606
15/03/2021	8672
22/03/2021*	3662
2021 Total	93143
Grand Total	169471

* partial week (22/03 – 24/03)

Jonathan Reynolds:

[174119]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many covid-19 workplace spot checks have been completed in schools by the Health and Safety Executive in each month of the last 12 months.

Mims Davies:

The following table shows the number of completed Spot Check Assessments by month over the last year where the Spot Check was part of a targeted campaign on Schools or the SIC code starts with 85. (SIC Code group Education = 85). HSE's Covid Spot Check Programme for schools started in the new August 2020 term. The table does not include additional HSE Spot Check Activity where checks were done in line with the Spot Check approach but not targeted as part of the Spot Check Programme.

	SPOT CHECK PROGRAMME
2020	
Aug	367
Sep	3216
Oct	545
Nov	514
Dec	245
2020 Total	4887

SPOT CHECK PROGRAMME	
2021*	
Jan	30
Feb	49
Mar	92
2021 Total	171
Grand Total	5058

* Schools were closed from Jan-March 2021 due to the national lockdown.

■ Hearing Impairment: Internet

Navendu Mishra:

[174980]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what guidance is in place to ensure businesses and organisations make online resources and content accessible to deaf people.

Justin Tomlinson:

Online access to businesses and organisations for Deaf and hearing impaired people is covered by the Equality Act 2010 which requires that service providers make reasonable adjustments to ensure that their information is available in accessible formats. Guidance relating to EA2010 is widely available and can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-guidance>.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Oxfordshire

Layla Moran:

[176018]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of (a) successful and (b) overall applications made to the Kickstart Scheme in Oxfordshire.

Mims Davies:

As of 18th March there was over 15,000 applications to the Department of Work and Pensions' Kickstart Scheme nationally.

We are not able to publish a breakdown of this information below regional level.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Vacancies**Seema Malhotra:** [\[174133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 March 2021 to Question 169973, on Kickstart Scheme, if she will provide a breakdown of the 50,000 Kickstart vacancies by sector.

Mims Davies:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [167248](#).

■ Members: Correspondence**Sir Christopher Chope:** [\[174003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to reply to the email of 5 February 2021 from the hon. Member for Christchurch.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to my hon. Friend on behalf of the Secretary of State on 29 March 2021.

■ Pensioners: Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[174862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the financial effect of the covid-19 outbreak on pensioners in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Guy Opperman:

Government Ministers have continuously worked together to co-ordinate the economic response to the pandemic all across the UK.

The Social Security (Up-rating of Benefits) Act 2020 ensured that pensioner incomes will increase in 2021/22. In 2021/22 the full yearly basic State Pension will be over £2,050 a year higher, in cash terms, than in 2010.

■ Pensions: Coronavirus**Mike Amesbury:** [\[174959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will bring forward legislative proposal to ensure that employers affected by the covid-19 outbreak cannot retain employee pension deductions as cashflow rather than pay into the relevant pension scheme.

Guy Opperman:

No. Employers are not permitted to hold pension contributions as cash flow.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Beth Winter:

[\[174289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the projected cost of reassessments for personal independence payment claimants is in the 2020-2021 financial year.

Justin Tomlinson:

The direct DWP staffing costs of administering PIP reassessments in 20/21 is forecast to be £5.2m. This figure does not include any costs for overheads, caseworkers or subsequent further action (e.g. appeals).

Beth Winter:

[\[174290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independence payments claimants had their award ended without an extension from 1 March 2020 to 1 March 2021.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Dave Doogan:

[\[174964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will extend personal independence payment claims by six months in line with the extension granted for the universal credit uplift.

Justin Tomlinson:

Throughout the Covid-19 outbreak, we have been committed to making sure people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment in a timely manner. To ensure continuity of payments to our customers, in the early stage of the pandemic we extended existing awards with a review date 9 months to ensure that a review could take place before the end of the award. Reviews are an integral part of PIP to ensure that our customers are receiving the correct level of award.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Appeals

Beth Winter:

[\[174291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of personal independence payment claimants have had their claim accepted at appeal following an initial rejection in (a) Cynon Valley, (b) Wales, and (c) the UK in 2020.

Justin Tomlinson:

The table below gives the number of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants who had an initial disallowance decision changed at appeal in 2020.

	APPEALS LAPSED	APPEALS OVERTURNED AT TRIBUNAL HEARING
Cynon Valley	60	90
Wales	1,060	1,780
Great Britain	12,930	23,860

Due to the time taken for an appeal to be lodged and then cleared after the initial decision, information for appeals as a percentage of initial decisions made in 2020 is not shown.

The Northern Irish Assembly has devolved responsibility for social security benefits. The responsibility for statistics in Northern Ireland lies with the Department for Communities: <http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk>

Notes:

- Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
- This data covers initial decisions following a PIP assessment only (New Claims or DLA Reassessments), and does not include applications which end before that (for example, due to failure to return required paperwork or attend an assessment) or decisions made at an Award Review or Change of Circumstance.
- Appeal lapsed is where DWP changed the decision (in the customer's favour) after an appeal was lodged but before it was heard at a tribunal hearing.
- Some decisions which are changed at the Mandatory Reconsideration (MR) stage, and where the claimant continues to appeal for a higher PIP award, are then changed again at tribunal appeal. Therefore, these figures may include a number of initial disallowances which were awarded at MR but where the claimant continued to appeal for a higher award.

■ Personal Independence Payment: Terminal Illnesses

Beth Winter:

[174288]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of personal independence payment claimants with incurable illnesses were (a) invited for a reassessment and (b) successful in their reassessment since March 2020.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is an extra costs benefit based on assessment of disability-related needs rather than medical condition. Reviews of PIP are a key part of the benefit and ensure that not only do awards remain correct where needs may change but that we also maintain contact with the claimant. Importantly, the length of an award is based on an individual's needs, rather than their condition or disability, and can vary from nine months to an on-going award, with a light touch review at the ten-year point.

As such, it's not possible to provide data specifically on Personal Independence Payment claimants with incurable illnesses. Data on Award Review clearances broken down by disability is published covering June 2016 - January 2021 (the latest available data). This can be found in table 6B(iv) in the following published statistical tables:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969159/tables-pip-statistics-to-january-2021.xlsx

■ Social Security Benefits: Rents

Colleen Fletcher:

[175891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of benefit claimants in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England are in rent arrears; and what steps her Department is taking to support benefit claimants in those areas in rent arrears.

Will Quince:

We do not hold this information.

For 2020/21 we are projected to have spent almost £30 billion to support renters with their housing costs. This includes a boost of almost £1 billion to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in response to Covid-19, which provided 1.5 million households in the private rented sector with around £600 more in housing support over the year. In 2021/22 all LHA rates will be maintained at their increased level, meaning claimants will continue to benefit from the significant increase in rates

For those claimants struggling with their single monthly rent payment and as a result are at risk of financial harm there are alternative payment arrangements.

For those who require additional support with housing costs Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available. For 2021/22 £140m is being made available for DHPs. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in DHP funding.

■ Support for Mortgage Interest

Yvette Cooper:

[175714]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she has reviewed the eligibility criteria for Support for Mortgage Interest payments during the covid-19 pandemic.

Guy Opperman:

The Department has not reviewed the eligibility criteria for Support for Mortgage Interest payments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

■ Unemployment

Colleen Fletcher:

[174861]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the factors that contribute to long-term unemployment; what assessment she

has made of the effect of long-term unemployment on (a) families, (b) communities and (c) the economy; and what steps her Department is taking to tackle long-term unemployment and its effects.

Mims Davies:

DWP is committed to supporting everyone who has been affected by the unprecedented impact of Covid 19 on the economy and the labour market. Unemployment is at 5% (3 months to January 2021) and the Universal Credit Intensive Work Search Regime (IWSR) caseload has risen to almost 2.4 million (February 2021). We have seen historically that where unemployment rises, we can also expect long-term unemployment to increase.

DWP recognises the negative impacts of long-term unemployment for individuals, families, communities and the economy. At the 2020 Spending Review, the Chancellor confirmed A Plan for Jobs, which placed DWP at the heart of providing significantly expanded employment support to people becoming newly unemployed and those falling in to long-term unemployment, investing £33bn in measures to create, support and protect jobs.

This included £2bn for the Kickstart scheme, £2.9bn for the Restart scheme, funding to increase the number of Jobcentre Work Coaches by 13,500 and a range of other measures focussed on boosting work search and skills (Job Entry Targeted Support; Job Finding Support; Sector Based Work Academy Programme).

The Restart Scheme will give Universal Credit claimants who have been out of work for at least 12 months enhanced support to find jobs in their local area. Restart will offer intensive and tailored guidance to this group of claimants, working with local employers and partners, to help support claimants in removing any barriers that prevent them from re-entering work.

■ **Unemployment: Coventry**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[174860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department offers to people aged (a) 16-24 and (b) over 25 in (i) Coventry North East constituency and (ii) Coventry who have been out of work for (A) more than 6 months and (B) more than 12 months.

Mims Davies:

Through our Plan for Jobs, the Department is providing broad ranging support for all jobseekers. Currently, support includes the Kickstart scheme, Job Finding Support, Sector Based Work Academy Programmes and Job Entry Targeted Support. In addition, the Work and Health Programme, and Intensive Personalised Employment Support, is available to support disabled people and people with long term health conditions, to enter and stay in work.

To support the long term unemployed, £2.9 billion is being invested in the Restart Programme, which is due to go live from summer 2021. The Restart Programme will support individuals who have been unemployed for 12 months and over and through

regular, personalised support providers will work with participants to identify the best way to support them into sustained employment.

The Jobcentre team in Coventry work with many local training providers and the Coventry City Council Jobshop to support the 'Building Better Opportunities' programmes for the longer term unemployed and those further from the labour market. They have worked with Coventry City Council to develop a Youth Hub which provides outreach support for young people in Coventry, and are working with them to fund 'Ambition' work coaches from community hubs across Coventry to support young people with significant complex needs and barriers.

In addition, the Jobcentre team have partnered with local employers and organisations to deliver a number of successful Sector Based Work Academy Programmes, across multiple sectors, which are available to all claimants irrespective of age or length of unemployment

■ Unemployment: Older People

Yvette Cooper:

[\[175715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of unemployed people aged over 60 who are unable to claim universal credit but (a) have not reached the state pension age and (b) have a low household income.

Will Quince:

No such estimate has been made.

Yvette Cooper:

[\[175716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment her Department has made of (a) trends in unemployment among people aged over 60 and (b) the effect of that matter on their household incomes if they have not yet reached the state pension age and are ineligible for welfare benefit payments.

Mims Davies:

The unemployment rate for 60-64 year olds in the year to September 2020 was 3.5% (or 75,800 people), an increase from 3.1% (or 67,100 people) in the year to September 2019. This remains a lower rate than the year to September 2010 when it was 3.8%.

No assessment has been made as to the effect of that matter on their household incomes if they have not yet reached the State Pension age and are ineligible for welfare benefit payments.

Official statistics on household income, including households containing pensioners, are available from the Family Resources Survey (

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/family-resources-survey--2>

■ Universal Credit: Grants**Stephen Timms:**[\[174714\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to oral evidence given by the Minister for Welfare Delivery on 9 March 2021 to the Work and Pensions Committee and the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, how her Department reached the conclusion that introducing a non-repayable grant for new universal credit claimants would cost about £2 billion to £2.5 billion per annum; and if she will publish the details of those costings.

Stephen Timms:[\[174715\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to oral evidence given by the Minister for Welfare Delivery on 9 March 2021 to the Work and Pensions Committee and the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, how her Department concluded that introducing non-repayable grants in universal credit would take two years or longer; and what assessment she has made of the barriers to introducing those grants more quickly.

Will Quince:

This estimate was derived from the Spring 2020 forecasts, which are based on the Department's inflow forecasts, with an assumed take-up rate of 100%. There are no plans to introduce a non-repayable grant.

New Claims Advances are the claimant's benefit paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit (UC) payment upfront. With a UC Advance, claimants receive an additional UC payment, resulting in 13 payments in a year rather than 12. From 12 April 2021, claimants have the option to spread twenty-five UC payments over twenty-four months, giving them more flexibility over the payments of their UC award. This will also allow claimants to retain more of their award, giving additional financial security.

The Department's deductions policy strikes a fair balance between a claimant's need to meet their financial obligations and their ability to ensure they can meet their day-to-day needs. Since October 2019, UC deductions are a maximum of 30% of a claimant's standard allowance down from 40% previously. We also recognise the importance of safeguarding the welfare of claimants who have incurred debt, so last resort deductions over the 30% cap can be applied to protect vulnerable claimants from eviction and/or having their fuel supply disconnected, by providing a repayment method for arrears of these essential services.

The main aim of the deductions policy in Universal Credit is to safeguard the welfare of claimants who have incurred debt in a cost effective and efficient way. It provides protection for claimants from the consequences of homelessness, imprisonment or having vital utilities disconnected. Regulations protect claimants from excessive deductions and there are no plans to suspend them.

■ Work Capability Assessment

David Linden:

[\[176012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants moved from the Limited Capability for Work group to the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity group in 2020 following a reassessment triggered by the submission of new medical evidence.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

David Linden:

[\[176013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will award claimants moving from the Limited Capability for Work (LCW) group to the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) group backdated payments from the date on which new medical evidence is submitted rather than from the date on which a decision is made, in line with awards given to people placed in the LCWRA group following their first work capability assessment.

David Linden:

[\[176014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what equality impact assessment her Department has made on its decision to award payments from the date on which a decision is made for claimants moving from the Limited Capability for Work (LCW) group to the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) group.

Justin Tomlinson:

Limited Capability for Work (LCW) and Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) apply both in Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Universal Credit (UC). The law in relation to the dates from which determination of LCW or LCWRA applies is set out in Regulations made in 2013 (see SI2013/381). In relation to LCWRA specifically, the law says that the date from which the additional amount for having LCWRA will become payable, will be either the date of the decision maker's decision or the date of the claimant's application, whichever is appropriate. Those who have, or are treated as having, LCWRA from the start of their claim, will get the additional amount from week 14 for ESA or the 4th assessment period for UC. That date is not dependent on the medical evidence received.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Overseas Operations Bill: MOD Support to Service Personnel

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS905\]](#)

The Overseas Operations Bill was introduced to provide greater legal protections to armed forces personnel and veterans serving on military operations overseas. The Bill will provide a better legal framework for dealing with allegations arising from any future overseas operations, recognising the unique burden and pressures placed on our personnel.

As part of the debate on this Bill, there has rightly been a focus on the support which MOD provides to those personnel who may find themselves subject to investigations and prosecutions. We are grateful to Right Honourable and Honourable members of both Houses for the interest they have taken in this issue and their commitment to ensuring service personnel and veterans who are impacted by historical allegations are properly supported.

As a matter of MOD policy, service personnel are entitled to legal guidance at public expense where they face criminal allegations that relate to actions taken during their service, and where they were performing their duties. This principle is at the heart of the MOD's approach to supporting our people and is enshrined in the relevant Defence Instruction Notices. It is a responsibility that MOD takes extremely seriously, and we keep our policies under review to ensure that they are appropriate and tailored.

Since the early days of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Armed Forces have learned lessons on better resourcing and professionalising support to those involved in inquiries or investigations arising from operations, and the mechanisms for providing this support have been transformed in recent years. The way in which this is delivered and by whom will depend on the specific circumstances of the case, the point which has been reached in the proceedings and, most importantly, the needs of the individual concerned.

Any individual who is investigated by the Service Police is entitled to legal representation as well as the support of an Assisting Officer who can offer advice on the process and procedure and signpost welfare resources. The individual's Commanding Officer and Chain of Command have overall responsibility for the person's welfare and for ensuring access to the requisite support.

Individuals who are interviewed as suspects under caution will be entitled to free and independent legal advice for this stage of the investigation. Subsequently, legal funding for service personnel and veterans facing criminal allegations can either be provided through the Armed Forces Legal Aid Scheme (AFLAS) or through the Chain of Command.

Where the Chain of Command accepts funding responsibility this is means-test exempt and therefore no personal contribution will be required. The Armed Forces Criminal Legal

Aid Authority (AFCLAA) will act as a conduit for the provision of publicly funded legal representation on behalf of the chain of command, including all aspects of financial and case management. However, if available evidence suggests the individual was doing something clearly outside the scope of their duty, then it would not be appropriate for that person to receive this Chain of Command funding.

All other serving personnel and veterans facing criminal proceedings prosecuted through the service justice system, and who are not covered by the Chain of Command funding, may apply for legal aid through AFCLAA and may be required to make a personal contribution, determined by means testing, if funded through the Armed Forces Legal Aid Scheme. This is in line with the civilian legal aid scheme.

There is an important exemption from the means testing requirement, which has been waived in criminal cases arising from Iraq or Afghanistan operations heard in the Service Court. Separately, legal advice and support is also available whenever people are required to give evidence at inquests and inquiries and in litigation and this is coordinated by MOD.

We also recognise that for service personnel and veterans who are involved in these processes, legal guidance by itself is not enough. This is why we have developed a comprehensive package of welfare support to ensure we deliver on our commitment to offer ongoing support to veterans.

As part of delivering on this commitment, the Army Operational Legacy Branch (AOLB) was established in 2020 in order to coordinate the Army's support to those involved in legacy cases. Fundamental to this is ensuring that welfare and legal support is provided to all service personnel and veterans involved in operational legacy processes. The AOLB provides a central point of contact and optimises the welfare network already in place through the Arms and Service Directorates and the network of Regimental Headquarters and Regimental Associations. Veterans UK are also closely engaged in providing support to veterans and, where required, the Veterans Welfare Service will allocate a welfare manager to support individual veterans. Although the AOLB has been established to provide an Army focus to legacy issues, the support it provides is extended to the other services.

This is provided in addition to the range of welfare and mental health support that is routinely offered to all our people. The potential impact of operations on a service person's mental health is well recognised and there are policy and procedures in place to help manage and mitigate these impacts as far as possible. The MOD recognises that any operational deployment can result in the development of a medical or psychiatric condition and that service personnel may require help before, during and after deployment. All Armed Forces personnel are supported by dedicated and comprehensive mental health resources. Defence Mental Health Services are configured to provide community-based mental health care in line with national best practice.

In terms of support for those who have left the forces, veterans are able to access all NHS provided mental health services wherever they live in the country. As health is devolved and services have been developed according to local populations needs,

service specification varies. This can mean bespoke veteran pathways or ensuring an awareness of veterans' needs. All veterans will be seen on clinical need. What is important is that best practice is shared between the home nations and there are several forums in place to provide this.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs works closely with the MOD and departments across government, the devolved administrations, charities and academia to ensure the needs of veterans are met.

EDUCATION

■ Further Education Capital Transformation Fund: Next Phase

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Apprenticeships and Skills (Gillian Keegan): [\[HCWS906\]](#)

The FE Capital Transformation Programme delivers the government's £1.5 billion commitment to upgrade the FE college and designated institutions' estate in England. It builds on the £200 million Further Education Capital Allocation paid in September 2020 to support FE college and designated institutions to undertake immediate remedial works and provide a boost to the economy and the education system.

There are two elements to the FE Capital Transformation Programme. The first element was announced on 21st January 2021, when we launched the open bidding fund to which all FE colleges and designated institutions can bid for larger projects to tackle their condition need and upgrade their estate. We are now announcing the second element today: we will be working in partnership with sixteen colleges, with some of the highest condition need in the country. High quality buildings and facilities will aid colleges in supporting their students to gain the skills they need to progress and help the economy to grow. The sixteen college sites, which are spread across England, and with which we are working to develop plans are:

- Beacon Centre, Blackburn College;
- Lansdowne Site, Bournemouth & Poole College;
- Brooksby Melton College, SMB Group;
- Ashington Campus, Education Partnership North East (Northumberland College);
- St Austell Campus, Cornwall College;
- Houghall Campus, East Durham College;
- Rochdale site, Hopwood Hall College;
- Isle of Wight College;
- Great Yarmouth Campus, East Coast College;
- Stafford site, Newcastle & Stafford College Group;
- North Lindsey College, DN College Group;

- Merrist Wood College, Activate Learning;
- Strode College;
- Parsons Walk, Wigan & Leigh College;
- Yeovil College;
- Stanmore College.

The FE Capital Transformation Programme means that colleges will be able to make strategic investment decisions which will lead to a transformation of the FE college estate, providing excellent places to learn.

This investment should be seen in the wider context of our reforms to further education. The White Paper '[Skills for Jobs Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth](#)' sets out our vision of enabling everyone to get the high-quality skills employers need in a way that suits them. The reforms set out plans to transform technical education, boost UK productivity, build back better from the Coronavirus pandemic, and create a more prosperous country for all. This is an exciting moment for technical education and training and an opportunity for real change.

■ High Needs Provision Capital Update

The Minister of State for School Standards (Nick Gibb):

[[HCWS909](#)]

On 9th April, the Department for Education announced £280 million of capital funding to support local authorities to create new places and improve existing provision for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision (AP). This investment will support our manifesto commitment to deliver more school places for children with complex special educational needs and will help ensure that every child has the opportunity to receive a world-class education, whatever their background.

The funding announced today is for places required for September 2022 and will allow local authorities to invest strategically to ensure they deliver a good quality and appropriate place for every child who needs one. It is on top of the £365 million we invested between 2018 and 2021 to support Local Authorities to deliver new places for children with Education, Health and Care Plans, and the additional places we are creating through our continued investment in new Special and AP Free Schools.

Full details of this announcement, including allocations broken down by local authority and the methodology used to distribute funding, have been published on the Department for Education section on the GOV.UK website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-provision-capital-allocations>.

■ Higher Education Update

The Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan):

[[HCWS912](#)]

The government recognises the disruption that COVID-19 has caused for many students and their families because they have not yet been able to return to their university.

Last academic term we advised that all students on practical and creative courses could return to in-person teaching from 8 March and committed to reviewing further returns by the end of the Easter holidays.

Today my department has announced that remaining students will be advised to return to in-person teaching alongside Step 3 of the Roadmap, when restrictions on social contact will be eased further and the majority of indoor settings can reopen. This will take place no earlier than 17 May, following a further review of the data against the four tests. As was announced in February, students and higher education providers will be given a week's notice of any further easing of restrictions as it affects them in accordance with the timing of Step 3. Until then all students should continue to learn remotely and remain where they are living, wherever possible.

Universities have a strong track record of delivering excellent remote learning, students in Higher Education are well equipped to study and meet their learning outcomes remotely. The government remains clear that the quality and quantity of taught hours must be maintained and that all learning must be accessible.

The government and I recognise just how difficult and disruptive the last year has been for students. However, the Roadmap is designed to maintain a cautious approach to the easing of restrictions, to ensure that we can maintain progress towards full reopening. By Step 3, more of the population will be vaccinated, and there is also more time to increase testing to reduce risk further.

The movement of students across the country poses a risk for the transmission of the virus – particularly because of the higher prevalence and rates of transmission of new variants. Students who have returned to higher education settings should not move back and forward between their permanent home and student home during term time unless they meet one of the exemptions.

Our advice remains that some students, such as those with inadequate study space and/or mental health and wellbeing issues, may need to return to their term-time address despite their teaching still being online. We have asked providers to consider opening facilities to support those who have returned to their term-time accommodation alongside those who have resumed in-person teaching and learning; this is to safeguard students' wellbeing and to prevent isolation and mental ill health.

We are supporting universities to provide regular, twice-weekly, asymptomatic testing for all students residing in their term-time accommodation, or accessing university facilities, and to all staff. In May 2021, we will be making home test kits available to universities to supply to their staff and students as appropriate. In addition, staff and students can make use of the universal testing offer by ordering home tests online or visiting a pharmacy. Students returning to university should undertake three supervised tests at an on-site test facility. They should then test twice a week, either using home test kits or at an on-site facility. This is in line with the expectation in most other education settings and will help break chains of transmission of the virus. We strongly encourage all universities to ensure that all students and staff get tested regularly and report their result when testing at home.

I realise that a delay to a return to university may cause some students to face additional costs. With this in mind, I have now announced that we will be making a further £15m of funding available for student hardship this academic year. This is in addition to the £70m of funding already distributed in the previous financial year. As with the £70m, international and postgraduate students will be eligible for this funding along with domestic undergraduates. We will work with the Office for Students to allocate these funds and will set out the details of this shortly.

I recognise that these unprecedented circumstances are also affecting student and staff mental health and wellbeing, and I am committed to addressing these concerns. The Mental Health in Education Action Group, which I convened with the Minister for Children and Families, Vicky Ford, will continue to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff, alongside the HE Taskforce Mental Health and Wellbeing subgroup. We have continued to ask universities to prioritise mental health support and have worked with the Office for Students to provide Student Space, which is a mental health and wellbeing platform designed to work alongside existing services, to support students throughout the pandemic. I have asked the OfS to look at extending the platform and I am delighted they have done so for the 2020/21 academic year. This resource, which is funded by the OfS, provides dedicated one-to-one phone, text and web chat facilities as well as a collaborative online platform. In addition to this, the Office for Students has recently published its consultation on the distribution of the £15m for student mental health support in the coming academic year, focusing on supporting transitions to university.

We are continuing to explore other ways to provide further support for students and particularly appreciate how vital it is that we support graduates and new students as they move into their next stage. We are working in parallel with Universities UK, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services, the Institute of Student Employers, the Office for Students, and the wider sector to understand what we can do to complement their planned support. We know that providers are best placed to lead on this and have assured them that we will work with them to signpost students to useful resources, share good practice, and communicate effectively with schools, colleges, and employers.

More broadly, the Government is doing all it can to help people who are at the start of their career journey. The Department for Work and Pensions has successfully recruited over 13,500 new work coaches as of the end of March 2021. This will ensure that high-quality work search support is available to those who need it. We are also investing additional funding in the National Careers Service up to March 2022. This investment will support delivery of individual careers advice for those whose jobs/learning have been affected by the pandemic (by end of FY21/22). We have also added additional courses to the Skills Toolkit to develop 'work readiness' skills that employers report they value in their new recruits.

I want to assure all students, staff and parents that student welfare continues to be a priority and I will continue to work closely with the sector to ensure that our additional hardship funding and our transition support reaches those who need it most. As always, I

want to thank students for their resilience and university staff and student unions for their determination to ensure that students are supported at this challenging time.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Vaccine Deployment

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment)
(Nadhim Zahawi):** [\[HCWS911\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable members to bring to their attention the contingent liabilities relating to the contracts signed between Her Majesty's Government (HMG) and COVID-19 vaccine suppliers for the Phase 2 deployment of vaccines.

Today, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published its final advice about the next phase of the Covid-19 vaccine deployment. In line with their interim advice, they have recommended an age-based strategy for prioritisation as the best way to further reduce mortality and hospitalisations.

JCVI has advised that rapid vaccine deployment is the most important means to maximise public health benefits against severe outcomes from COVID-19. There is good evidence that the risks of hospitalisation and critical care admissions from COVID-19 increase with age, and that in occupations where the risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 is potentially higher, persons of older age are also those at highest risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. It is for these reasons that the Committee has recommended that the offer of vaccination be age-based, starting with the oldest adults first, and proceeding in the following order to facilitate rapid deployment:

- All those aged 40-49 years
- All those aged 30-39 years
- All those aged 18-29 years

Throughout the vaccination programme the independent regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA), has published data on the effects and side effects of the vaccine. They have independently assessed that all three vaccines in use in the UK are safe and effective. The European Medicines Agency and the World Health Organisation have reached the same conclusion. Having considered this data, which has been published, and in order to make the vaccine programme as safe as it possibly can be, the JCVI advises that it is preferable for adults aged under 30 years without underlying health conditions that put them at a higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease, to be offered an alternative vaccine, if available.

JCVI has weighed the relative balance of benefits and risks, and advise that the benefits of prompt vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine far outweigh the risk of adverse events for individuals 30 years of age and over and those who have underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19 disease. The

Government has accepted this advice in full, and the rollout will put this advice into operation.

With the deployment of Phase 2, I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine supply via this statement and attached Departmental Minute.

It has been and remains the Government's strategy to manage COVID-19 until an effective vaccine/s can be deployed at scale. Putting in place appropriate indemnities for vaccine suppliers has helped to secure access to vaccines much sooner than may have been the case otherwise

Given the exceptional circumstances we are in, and the terms on which developers are willing to supply a COVID-19 vaccine, we along with other nations have taken a broad approach to indemnification proportionate to the situation we are in.

Even though the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, at no point and at no stage of development has safety been bypassed. The independent MHRA's approval for use of the currently deployed vaccines clearly demonstrates that these vaccines have satisfied, in full, all the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality. We are providing indemnities in the unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

I will update the House in a similar manner as and when other COVID-19 vaccines are deployed.

Attachments:

1. Departmental Minute [DEPARTMENTAL MINUTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE1.docx]

■ **Vaccine Update (Moderna)**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for COVID Vaccine Deployment) (Nadhim Zahawi):

[\[HCWS910\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable members to bring to their attention the contingent liabilities relating to the contract signed between Her Majesty's Government (HMG) and Moderna for their COVID-19 vaccine.

On 1 April 2021, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) granted a Conditional Market Authorisation (CMA) for use of the COVID-19 vaccine being manufactured by Moderna. With deployment of this vaccine beginning on 7 April 2021, I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to this vaccine via this statement and the attached Departmental Minute.

The agreement to provide an indemnity as part of the contract between HMG and Moderna creates a contingent liability on the COVID-19 vaccination programme. It has been and remains the Government's strategy to manage COVID-19 until an effective vaccine/s can be deployed at scale. Putting in place appropriate indemnities to be given

to vaccine suppliers has helped to secure access to vaccines much sooner than may have been the case otherwise

Given the exceptional circumstances we are in, and the terms on which developers are willing to supply a COVID-19 vaccine, we along with other nations have taken a broad approach to indemnification proportionate to the situation we are in.

Even though the COVID-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, at no point and at no stage of development has safety been bypassed. The independent MHRA's approval for use of the Moderna vaccine clearly demonstrates that this vaccine has satisfied, in full, all the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality. We are providing indemnities in the unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

Given the pace of vaccine development and our ambition to deploy the vaccine as soon as it has been authorised, it has not been possible to provide you with the normal 14 sitting days to consider this issue of contingent liabilities. Therefore, with immediate effect, all vaccination services are now able to extend their vaccination offer to those aged 45-49 years.

I will update the House in a similar manner as and when other COVID-19 vaccines are deployed.

Attachments:

1. Departmental Minute [DEPARTMENTAL MINUTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE.docx]

TREASURY

■ **Bilateral loan to Ireland**

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen):

[\[HCWS907\]](#)

I would like to update Parliament on the loan to Ireland.

In December 2010, the UK agreed to provide a bilateral loan of £3.2 billion as part of a €67.5 billion international assistance package for Ireland. The loan was disbursed in 8 tranches, and the final tranche was drawn down on 26 September 2013. Ireland has made interest payments on the loan every six months since the first disbursement.

On 26 March, in line with the agreed repayment schedule, HM Treasury received a total payment of £406,428,318.19 from Ireland. This comprises the repayment of £403,370,000 in principal and £3,058,318.19 in accrued interest.

HM Treasury has also provided a further Report to Parliament in relation to the loan as required under the Loans to Ireland Act 2010. The Report relates to the period from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. It reports fully on the two final principal repayments received by HM Treasury during this period. The loan has been repaid in full and on time.

A written ministerial statement on the previous statutory report regarding the loan to Ireland was issued to Parliament on 5 October 2020, Official Report, column 18WS.

■ **Contingencies Fund Advance**

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman):

[\[HCWS908\]](#)

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will incur new expenditure in connection with the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021-22.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £765,000,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Main Estimate for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £765,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Further requests to the Contingencies Fund may be made as necessary to fund Covid-19 activity delivered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.