



Daily Report

Thursday, 15 April 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 April 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:59 P.M., 15 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

Abena Oppong-Asare: [179639]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many Additional Restrictions grants have been issued by each local authority in England.

Paul Scully:

The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) is a discretionary scheme aimed at supporting businesses, including those that have not been mandated to close but have had their trade adversely affected by the nationalised restrictions. At Budget on 3 March, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an additional £425 million will be made available via the ARG, meaning that more than £2 billion has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020.

All data on Government allocations and Local Authority payments of the ARG is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

Abena Oppong-Asare: [179640]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect on businesses of the differences in criteria used by local authorities to determine applications for the Additional Restrictions Grant.

Paul Scully:

The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) provides Local Authorities with discretionary funding to enable them to support businesses including those not mandated to close, but which have had their trade affected by the restrictions that have been put in place to tackle Covid-19 and save lives.

The flexibility of the ARG allows Local Authorities to provide support that suits their local area, to determine how much funding to provide to businesses and exactly which businesses to target. The scheme aims to support businesses when most needed, and Local Authorities should use this funding as quickly as possible. We are working closely with Local Authorities to ensure that grants are delivered swiftly to businesses in scope of this funding.

All data on Government allocations and Local Authority payments of the ARG is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>.

■ Carbon Capture and Storage: North West

Mick Whitley:

[R] [\[179560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that industry in the North West has access to carbon capture and storage infrastructure needed to meet regional and national decarbonisation targets by 2026.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution made clear, we are committed to two carbon capture clusters by the mid-2020s and for a further two clusters by 2030. These are expected to be in areas of heavy industry such as the North East, the Humber, North West, Scotland, and Wales. In February we published a consultation on a potential approach to sequencing the deployment of clusters; we have gathered and considered stakeholder feedback and intend to launch Phase-1 of that process shortly. In order to support this deployment, the Government has announced a £1 billion CCS Infrastructure Fund, alongside £240 million to fund low-carbon hydrogen, and is developing business models across power, industry and hydrogen to encourage private investment.

■ Consumer Goods: Electrical Safety

Gavin Robinson:

[\[179149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to take steps to help prevent the sale of white goods that have been recalled by the manufacturer on online marketplaces.

Gavin Robinson:

[\[179150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of recognising online marketplaces as actors in the supply chain.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to ensuring that only safe consumer products can be sold in the UK, including through online marketplaces. Product safety legislation places obligations on distributors to act with due care to ensure products they are selling are safe and this includes online retailers selling goods via marketplaces.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) continues to engage with major online marketplaces to ensure that they are playing their part in protecting UK consumers from unsafe products. This includes developing a new voluntary commitment for online marketplaces to agree actions they will take to reduce the risks from unsafe products, including white goods subject to recall, being sold online, enabling them to publicly demonstrate their commitment to the safety of their consumers in the UK.

In order to ensure that the UK's Product Safety framework is flexible and fit for the future, the OPSS is conducting a review. The review will ensure we have a framework that delivers safety for consumers while supporting businesses to innovate and grow and will consider the impact on product safety of non-traditional business models, including third-party sales conducted via online marketplaces.

The OPSS is currently running a Call for Evidence that is open until 3 June to ensure a wide range of views and evidence are gathered:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/uk-product-safety-review-call-for-evidence>.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[179138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to import the plant-based covid-19 vaccine produced by Medicago in Canada; and whether his Department has plans to make a vegan-friendly covid-19 vaccine available in the UK.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government continues to take a portfolio-based approach to Covid-19 vaccine procurement, which monitors the landscape of vaccines in development in the UK and internationally. Although we continue to investigate further potential vaccine candidates worldwide, we are currently not able to give any further information on these candidates owing to commercial sensitivity. If we enter into further agreements, we will publish details of those in the usual manner.

■ Electronic Commerce: Fraud

Jonathan Edwards:

[178633]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with (a) Facebook, (b) Twitter, (c) Instagram and (d) other social media platforms on increasing protections for consumers shopping online from fraudulent commercial activity.

Paul Scully:

There is a robust legislative framework to protect consumers. This includes providing consumers the right to a refund within 14 days for most online purchases, for any reason. The Government keeps this legal framework under review to ensure consumers remain adequately protected.

Consumers should report any problems to the Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133, www.citizensadvice.org/. The helpline offers free advice to consumers on their rights and can refer on complaints to Trading Standards for further appropriate enforcement action.

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Justin Madders:

[\[179190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 26 March 2021 to Question 167238 on Employment: Coronavirus, if he will publish the (a) number and (b) value of fixed penalty notices that have been issued to employers for knowingly allowing a person who is required to self-isolate to work anywhere other than where they are self-isolating since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

My answer of 26th March set out the employer offence of allowing a worker to attend a place of work (other than the place of self-isolation) when they have been advised of the need to self-isolate. It also set out the Government's overall approach to ensuring compliance and guidance on employment rights and self-isolation.

We will publish information on the number of fixed penalty notices which have been issued in due course. We do not centrally collect data on the value of fixed penalty notices.

■ GKN: Closures

Valerie Vaz:

[\[179089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the effect of the closure of GKN Automotive, Erdington on job losses; and if he will make a statement.

Valerie Vaz:

[\[179090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support employees of GKN Automotive, Erdington facing redundancy.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The proposed closure of the GKN Automotive plant in Erdington in Birmingham, putting over 500 jobs at risk, is deeply worrying for the employees and their families. While this is a commercial matter. Ministers and officials have met with the management of GKN Automotive, Unite the Union, and the local constituency MP. The purpose was to gain a more detailed understanding of the reasoning behind the proposed closure, and to explore options for securing a future for the site, to safeguard the jobs of the employees.

The statutory consultation process is ongoing, providing an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions and present alternative proposals. The government is monitoring developments.

In the event of the plant being closed, the government stands ready to support those impacted back into work. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus lead on this. They have doubled the number of frontline Work Coaches across the network of jobcentres to ensure people have access to bespoke advice and guidance.

The Government is working in partnership with the automotive sector to exploit the opportunities from the transition to zero emission vehicles. Nearly £500m has been committed through the Automotive Transformation Fund to build an internationally competitive electric vehicle supply chain, which will create jobs in our industrial heartlands.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

Helen Hayes:

[\[179303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate his Department has made of the proportion of applications to the Green Homes Grant Scheme which have been (a) withdrawn before a final decision and (b) rejected.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

As of 12 April, the Green Homes Grant Vouchers scheme has received 113,746 applications, with 12,057 applications cancelled or rejected.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme: Croydon Central**

Sarah Jones:

[\[179381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many home owners have applied successfully to the Green Home Grants scheme from Croydon Central constituency, to date.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[Official statistics](#) for the Green Homes Grant (Voucher) Scheme were released on 18 March. From this release, 64 applications were received from households in the Croydon Central Parliamentary Constituency, up to the end of February.

The next statistical release will be published on 22 April.

■ **Local Growth Deals: Northern Ireland**

Louise Haigh:

[\[179255\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much funding his Department has allocated to Northern Ireland for local growth deals in each year since the inception of those deals.

Paul Scully:

To date, the UK Government has committed up to £617 million for City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland: £350m for Belfast City Region; £105m for Derry City and Strabane; £126m for Mid South West NI; and £36m for Causeway Coast and Glens.

Funding for City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is provided and transferred by HM Treasury to the Devolved Administrations (DA), before being transferred to the local area. The transfer of funding is contingent upon Full Business Cases for specific projects within a Deal area being completed and approved by the UK Government (UKG) and the DA. Full Business Cases are usually completed after a Full Deal has been agreed and signed.

Although BEIS does not directly fund Deals, officials in the Department review business cases where an intervention is within the department's policy remit on behalf of the UK Government to ensure projects are viable, sustainable and provide Value for Money.

■ **Maritime Enterprise Working Group**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[178864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Maritime Enterprise Working Group is a permanent structure.

Amanda Solloway:

The Maritime Enterprise Working Group (MEWG) was set up, following the publication of the National Shipbuilding Strategy in 2017, to provide a forum for the UK's professional marine engineering, science, manufacturing and technology community for addressing issues of common concern to secure a truly competitive, sustainable and globally successful marine engineering and shipbuilding industry.

On 16 March 2021, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence and Shipbuilding Tsar announced that we are currently conducting a refresh of the National Shipbuilding Strategy which will be published this summer. As part of this, we will consider whether to adapt or strengthen the existing structures to enable strong partnership working between Government and industry going forward.

■ **Offices: Coronavirus**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[178679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of financial support available to serviced office providers during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government has introduced an unprecedented package of support for businesses including grants for those businesses that are required to close or which are severely affected by the restrictions put in place to tackle Covid-19.

For those businesses who have not been mandated to close under the National Restrictions, support may be available through the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant. 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. Local Authorities can use their local expertise to target businesses to support in their local area. Local Authorities are responsible for the administration for the Grant Scheme.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced an additional £425m will be made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant meaning that more than £2bn has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020.

Businesses and entrepreneurs that have not been able to access support, or who are unsure about the support that may be available, can also contact their nearest Business Growth Hub. Government has supported the establishment of a network of 38 of these hubs, led by each Local Enterprise Partnership area in England. Expert advisers can offer businesses of all sizes free, tailored 1-1 guidance on areas such as planning, building resilience, and funding. The hubs can also signpost further resources such as webinars and networking opportunities. LEP and Growth Hub contact details are listed online: www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/. Firms based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales can access similar business support through the devolved governments.

The Government's free Business Support Helpline FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098 also provides impartial advice and can often signpost firms to further specialised sources of information. The Government publishes online all information detailing the support available to businesses who have been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. This can be found online: www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support.

■ Personal Care Services: Coronavirus

Mr William Wragg:

[179198]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Department's guidance for close contact services in England is consistent with the latest evidence on covid-19 transmissibility; and what the evidential basis for advising against the provision of newspapers and magazines for clients is, as referenced in section 5.2 of that guidance.

Paul Scully:

We continue to keep the Safer Working guidance under constant review and will update the guidance in line with new scientific evidence as it arises. Public Health England (PHE) and the Health and Safety Executive have advised that there is currently no scientific evidence to support changing the Safer Working guidance in light of the new variants.

PHE guidance states that Covid-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact. Surfaces and belongings can also be contaminated with Covid-19 when people with the infection cough or sneeze or touch them. The risk of spread is greatest when people are close to each other, especially in poorly ventilated indoor spaces and when people spend a lot of time together in the same room.

Given that client waiting areas are high traffic with frequent contact on common surface areas, we recommend not providing shared reading materials to reduce transmission risk via surface contact. Individuals can bring their own reading materials that they have purchased but we advise businesses to not provide sharing copies due to the frequent change of hands.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[179641\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will provide further guidance to businesses in the personal care sector on the meaning of the advice to consider providing shorter, more basic treatments as part of the covid-19 secure guidance.

Paul Scully:

The Safer Working [guidance](#) on close contact services was updated on 30 March ahead of reopening on Step 2. Extended treatments have not been banned. Since July 2020, the guidance has made clear that the personal care sector should keep appointments shorter as best practice and consider how the length of the appointment could be minimised to reduce the risk of transmission. We expect the personal care sector to continue to use their discretion and experience.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[179642\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he undertook an equalities impact assessment before publishing the guidance to businesses in the personal care sector on providing shorter, more basic treatments as part of the covid-19 secure guidance.

Paul Scully:

The Safer Working guidance was developed by BEIS with input from firms, unions, industry bodies and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and in consultation with Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive. An equalities impact assessment was undertaken when the guidance was first published in May 2020. It has been kept under constant review and updated regularly.

Since July 2020, the guidance has made clear that the personal care sector should keep appointments shorter as best practice and consider how the length of the appointment could be minimised to reduce the risk of transmission. We expect the personal care sector to continue to use their discretion and experience.

■ Professions: Qualifications

Sarah Olney:

[\[179330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to negotiate the automatic mutual recognition of professional qualifications with the EU for (a) architects and (b) other professions.

Paul Scully:

The recognition of professional qualifications is important for individuals wishing to practise their chosen profession outside the jurisdiction in which they qualified. It is for this reason that UK negotiators worked hard to secure a best-in-class Free Trade Agreement with the EU, which includes a framework for regulators and professional bodies to agree the recognition of professional qualifications for specific professions. It is important that regulators are able to maintain professional standards. In

negotiating recognition arrangements such as mutual recognition agreements, it is for UK regulators and professional bodies to decide what arrangements – including, potentially, on automatic recognition - they want to agree with their EU counterparts.

The Government is supporting the Architects Regulation Board (ARB) as they explore recognition arrangements under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement with their European counterparts through the forum of the Architects' Council of Europe. The ARB also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland in December 2020.

The Government has also established a dedicated team to support regulators and professional bodies to enter recognition arrangements with their international counterparts. The team is working with regulators and professional bodies across the UK's professions and sectors to progress this work.

■ Radioactive Materials: Transport

Patricia Gibson:

[\[179204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent changes her Department has made to regulations on the safe transport of nuclear flasks.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The most recent amendments to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods Regulations and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment 2009 made by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy implemented emergency preparedness and response requirements in Council Directive 2013/59/EURATOM.

Nuclear and radiation safety is a top priority for Government and our arrangements are kept under regular review. We have a well-respected regulatory system which reflects international best practice. All operators are answerable to a robust and independent regulator – the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). If the ONR considered that any nuclear site or nuclear transport was not safe or secure it would not be allowed to operate.

Patricia Gibson:

[\[179205\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent changes her Department has made to the regulations on the carriage of nuclear materials.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The most recent amendments to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods Regulations and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment 2009 made by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy relating to the transportation of class 7 (radioactive) goods came into effect in April 2020 (The Carriage of Dangerous Goods (Amendment) Regulations 2019 No. 598). The changes implemented emergency preparedness and response requirements in Council Directive 2013/59/EURATOM.

■ Small Businesses: Coronavirus

Florence Eshalomi:

[179734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to small businesses that are unable to access business grant schemes during the covid-19 outbreak because they share premises with a larger business and are not therefore registered as business ratepayers.

Paul Scully:

For those business who fall outside of the business rates system support may be available through the Additional Restrictions Grant. The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) continues to enable Local Authorities to put in place discretionary business support and target businesses who may not be eligible to receive Grant Support under the mandatory schemes. Local Authorities are responsible for the administration for the Additional Restrictions Grant.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced an additional £425m will be made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant meaning that more than £2bn has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020. Local Authorities are responsible for the administration of the Grant Scheme.

Businesses and entrepreneurs that have not been able to access support, or who are unsure about the support that may be available, can also contact their nearest Business Growth Hub. Government has supported the establishment of a network of 38 of these hubs, led by each Local Enterprise Partnership area in England. Expert advisers can offer businesses of all sizes free, tailored 1-1 guidance on areas such as planning, building resilience, and funding. The hubs can also signpost further resources such as webinars and networking opportunities. LEP and Growth Hub contact details are listed online: www.lepnetwork.net/local-growth-hub-contacts/. Firms based in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales can access similar business support through the devolved governments.

The Government's free Business Support Helpline FREEPHONE 0800 998 1098 also provides impartial advice and can often signpost firms to further specialised sources of information.

■ Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

Helen Hayes:

[179304]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will interact with the Green Homes Grant Scheme; and whether unspent funding announced as part of that scheme has been redirected to that new fund.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment in financial year 21/22 for both the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme with £300 million of new funding and up

to £100 million of recycled funding from the Green Homes Grant Vouchers, depending on take up.

■ **Taxis: Coronavirus**

Nadia Whittome: [179729]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will introduce a specific grant for taxi drivers whose incomes have suffered as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

Grant support for Taxi Drivers may be available through the Additional Restrictions Grant, a discretionary scheme administered by Local Authorities. 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. Local Authorities can use their local expertise to target businesses to support in their local area.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced an additional £425m will be made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant meaning that more than £2bn has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020.

Guidance for the scheme can be found at GOV.UK:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971482/additional-restrictions-grant-la-guidance.pdf.

■ **Taxis: Small Business Grants Fund**

Nadia Whittome: [179728]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he has plans to make small business grants available to taxi drivers.

Paul Scully:

The Restart Grant and Local Restrictions Support Grant Schemes provides support for those businesses who have been mandated to close under National Restrictions. Grant support for Taxi Drivers may be available through the Additional Restrictions Grant. Local Authorities have discretion to provide support that suits their local area including to support those businesses not required to close but which have had their trade severely affected by the restrictions.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced an additional £425m will be made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant meaning that more than £2bn has been made available to Local Authorities since November 2020.

■ **Tidal Power**

Virginia Crosbie: [178607]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of tidal power to the energy base

load; and what funding the Government has allocated from the public purse to (a) Morlais on Ynys Môn and (b) other tidal energy projects.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Morlais project is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government and has received funding through the North Wales Growth Deal. Since 2003, various bodies across Government have provided innovation funding of £175m to the wave and tidal sectors.

CABINET OFFICE

■ 10 Downing Street: Iron and Steel

Jessica Morden:

[\[178959\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 1 April 2021 to Question 169810, on 10 Downing Street: Iron and Steel, what records his Department holds on the use of UK-produced steel in the construction of the briefing room facilities in 9 Downing Street.

Julia Lopez:

This information is not centrally held by the Cabinet Office.

■ Absent Voting: Proof of Identity

Cat Smith:

[\[179209\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the Government's plans to introduce voter identification, whether voters that are applying for absentee ballots will be required to provide a copy of their photo identification along with their application.

Julia Lopez:

This Government is determined to strengthen the integrity of our electoral system and give the public confidence that our elections are modern, fair and secure.

Electors will be required to show an approved form of photographic ID before casting their vote in a polling station across Great Britain at national UK-wide elections, and at local elections in England.

The Government does not have plans, as part of the national rollout of Voter ID, to require applicants to supply photo identification along with their application for a postal or proxy vote.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Kate Osborne:

[\[178550\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to provide a live British Sign Language interpreter at each daily covid-19 briefing.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to PQ [166585](#) answered on 15 March 2021.

■ **Coronavirus: Health Education**

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[179357\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what covid-19 related public awareness campaigns the Government has funded and promoted over the last 12 months.

Greg Smith:

[\[179594\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how much the Government has spent on advertising covid-19 restrictions.

Julia Lopez:

I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to [PQ 33512](#) on 23 March 2020, and to [PQ 40655](#) on 27 April 2020.

■ **Exports**

Jessica Morden:

[\[178733\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to publish UK export figures for February 2021.

Julia Lopez:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA response PQ178733 [UKSA's final response to PQ 178733.pdf]

■ **Voting Methods: Visual Impairment**

Cat Smith:

[\[179208\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to publish findings from his Department's pilot schemes of audio voting devices.

Julia Lopez:

As detailed in response to previous questions on the topic, the Government is conducting localised testing with the RNIB to inform policy development and to improve the voting process for blind and partially sighted people. These are not 'pilot schemes' under section 10 of the Representation of the People Act 2000.

DEFENCE■ **A400M Aircraft****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[180420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the RAF's A400M is capable of supporting special forces parachute operations.

James Heappey:

It has been the longstanding position of successive Governments not to comment on the capabilities of the UK special forces, as to do so would put personnel and operations at risk.

■ **Armed Forces: Coronavirus****Stephen Morgan:**[\[179461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many and what proportion of service personnel that are due to be deployed as part of the UK's Carrier Strike Group have received a covid-19 vaccination.

James Heappey:

Service personnel, including those deploying on the UK's Carrier Strike Group, will not be disadvantaged by their operational deployments. All deploying personnel will be offered vaccinations either in the UK or during their deployment in line with the national vaccination programme.

■ **Armed Forces: Housing****Stephen Morgan:**[\[179455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish Amey's (a) target and (b) actual maintenance appointment waiting times in respect of armed forces personnel accommodation for each of the last three years.

Jeremy Quin:

Amey's response repair targets for each category/priority is as follows:

CATEGORY	EXPECTATION	TARGET TO MEET
Emergency	Make safe within 3 hours	100%
Critical	Make safe and restore functionality within 12 hours	95%
Urgent	Full permanent repair carried out within 5 working days	95%
Routine	Full permanent repair carried out within 15 working days	95%
Wind and Weatherproof	Made secure within 20 working	95%

CATEGORY	EXPECTATION	TARGET TO MEET
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days

Amey performance for the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 is shown in the following tables:

2018

CATEGORY	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Emergency	96.43%	96.77%	99.25%	97.50%	99.03%	98.88%	100%	98.25%	98.54%	100%	100%	100%
Critical	98.58%	97.44%	97.71%	98.51%	98.53%	97.71%	98.26%	98.11%	97.86%	98.45%	98.25%	98.74%
Urgent	90.44%	93.10%	93.52%	93.11%	94.01%	94.40%	93.63%	94.60%	94.35%	93.88%	92.50%	91.90%
Routine	93.19%	94.08%	94.14%	94.65%	94.71%	96.07%	95.00%	94.43%	94.59%	94.69%	94.95%	94.48%
Wind and Weatherproof	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	No Data	100%	100%

2019

CATEGORY	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Emergency	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	77.78%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100.00%
Critical	98.89%	98.17%	97.45%	98.62%	97.51%	97.97%	98.02%	96.98%	97.54%	97.62%	97.78%	98.06%
Urgent	91.12%	94.43%	95.27%	94.70%	94.37%	95.63%	94.61%	93.99%	92.99%	93.47%	91.36%	90.10%
Routine	94.27%	94.96%	95.70%	94.28%	95.91%	95.89%	95.79%	95.41%	95.08%	94.32%	92.88%	93.51%
Wind and Weatherproof Data	No Data	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	No Data	100%	80%	100%	100%	No Data

2020

CATEGORY	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Emergency	85.71%	76.32%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	80.00%	62.50%	94.74%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Critical	98.78%	98.67%	97.74%	97.95%	97.22%	97.68%	98.23%	98.27%	97.46%	99.62%	99.55%	98.91%
Urgent	92.70%	94.20%	90.07%	95.31%	95.37%	95.48%	95.91%	94.12%	94.07%	93.26%	94.15%	93.50%

CATEGORY	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Routine	93.35 %	94.41 %	89.26%	94.75%	95.75%	96.77 %	95.79 %	95.87 %	94.92%	94.60%	94.79%	94.97%
Wind and Weatherproof	100%	100%	100%	No Data	100%	100%	100%	100%	No Data	100%	100%	No Data

If a target time is missed by Amey, it is recorded as a late response, however details on exactly how long the waiting time was are not held.

■ Armed Forces: Officers

Derek Twigg:

[\[178566\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 170542 on armed forces: officers, (a) when and (b) for what reasons his Department stopped collecting information identifying the (i) state and (ii) private school background of successful applicants for scholarships.

Johnny Mercer:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is not aware of any historical policy to record the school status of recipients of scholarships and bursaries. Such awards have always been made on the basis of merit alone and, as such, there continues to be no business reason for the MOD to create a central record of school status.

■ Armed Forces: Pensions

Carol Monaghan:

[\[179218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether there are circumstances in which an armed forces pension would not be paid to a veteran in the event that they are residing outside the UK.

Johnny Mercer:

There are no circumstances in which payment of an Armed Forces Pension to an entitled individual would be withheld due to that pension scheme member residing outside the UK.

If a member chooses to reside outside the UK, where possible, the paymaster will make arrangements for pensions to be paid directly into an overseas bank account. However, the member is liable for all bank charges and potential adverse currency conversion rates.

Where the paymaster does not have arrangements in place with banks in a particular country, the member is paid by pound sterling cheque and must make their own arrangements to deposit the funds.

■ Armed Forces: Private Education

Stephen Morgan:

[\[178721\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much Continuity of Education Allowance has been claimed in each of the last five years; and if he will provide a breakdown of the ranks that have claimed that allowance.

Johnny Mercer:

The aim of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) is to assist Service personnel to achieve continuity of education for their children that would otherwise be denied in the state-maintained day school sector due to the mobility of their family because of consecutive assignments both in the UK and overseas. CEA is available to all Service personnel, irrespective of rank, subject to them satisfying the qualifying criteria.

Service personnel may select from a wide variety of schools across the UK from within the independent and state-maintained sectors. To qualify for the purposes of CEA, a school must: offer full boarding facilities; be registered with the appropriate UK education department; be subject to Ofsted inspection and, in the case of independent schools, be a member of an organisation affiliated to the Independent Schools Council or the Scottish Council for Independent Schools. Each claimant is required to contribute at least 10 per cent of the fees at independent schools.

During the last five Financial Years (FY, 2015-16 to 2019-20) the cost of CEA to Defence was as follows:

FY	£MILLION
2015-16	81
2016-17	77
2017-18	80
2018-19	80
2019-20	83

The number of Service personnel who claimed CEA during the last five FYs, by rank, was as follows:

	NATO RANK	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS (FY)			
2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
OF1	6	4	6	11	8
OF2	373	324	313	290	271
OF3	618	578	526	441	424

	NATO RANK	NUMBER OF CLAIMANTS (FY)			
OF4	679	632	610	529	535
OF5	353	321	282	244	232
OF6	117	119	97	97	92
OF7	35	23	20	22	24
OF8	9	13	11	8	7
OF9	1	2	3	-	-
OR2	38	32	37	31	30
OR3	50	60	75	87	73
OR4	256	259	284	255	268
OR6	366	369	412	381	367
OR7	362	351	363	332	345
OR8	260	220	199	200	209
OR9	148	151	134	122	97
TOTAL	3,671	3,458	3,372	3,050	2,982

Note : a key to NATO Rank Codes and UK equivalencies can be found in the attached document.

Attachments:

1. NATO Rank Codes and UK equivalencies [NATO Rank Codes and UK equivalencies.docx]

■ **Armed Forces: Scotland**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[175388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of service personnel who will be stationed in Scotland by 2025.

James Heappey:

Defence remains committed to maintaining a strong Armed Forces presence in Scotland. Following the publication of the Defence Command Paper last month, the Armed Forces will take time to reshape. Further detail on Armed Forces structures, including in Scotland, will be announced later in the year.

■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles: Procurement

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[178866\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate his Department has made of the in-service date of Ajax armoured vehicles.

Jeremy Quin:

The Army currently plans on an AJAX Initial Operating Capability of 30 Jun 2021.

■ Army: Young People

Jamie Stone: [\[179358\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps the British Army is taking in response to the proposal made in the 2019 Junior Entry Review to create new terms of service aligning the minimum commitment lengths of recruits aged under 18 with those of recruits who join over the age of 18.

James Heappey:

Following the publication of the Integrated Review, the Army is taking time to refine and test its designs, capabilities and structures. As the Army moves towards workforce balance, the implementation of bespoke Terms of Service for U18 entrants may be considered within the context of wider analysis on engagements and length of service.

■ Electronic Warfare

John Healey: [\[178800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he is planning to not announce the headquarters of the national cyber force during local government election purdah.

James Heappey:

We have announced that the National Cyber Force HQ will be in the North of England, with the exact location to be confirmed in due course. Further details will not be announced during the pre-election period.

■ Hercules Aircraft

Dave Doogan: [\[179551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the tail numbers and corresponding airframe hours of each of the UK's C130 transport aircraft.

Jeremy Quin:

The tail numbers and corresponding airframe hours accrued for the UK's C-130 Hercules fleet are given in the table below:

TAIL NUMBER	AIRFRAME HOURS ¹
ZH865	13,860
ZH866	10,070
ZH867	13,980
ZH868	12,950
ZH869	13,860
ZH870	13,690
ZH871	9,240
ZH872	13,910
ZH874	14,240
ZH875	13,740
ZH877	13,740
ZH878	12,830
ZH879	13,140
ZH889	11,270

1. Rounded to the nearest 10

■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

Chris Loder:

[179558]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the purpose is of the operations undertaken by the Light Dragoons Regiment in Mali.

James Heappey:

UK Armed Forces, led by the Light Dragoons, joined the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA, in December 2020. UK troops are fulfilling tasks mandated by the UN Security Council as a unit under UN command. In response to the Mission's capability requirements, the UK task group is delivering a specialist reconnaissance capability for MINUSMA, improving the mission's situational awareness and overall performance, particularly its ability to protect civilians. The UK contingent is enabling intelligence-led operations in support of the mission's mandate, offering crucial support to the mission to better understand threats and to shape the mission's response. The UK deployment to MINUSMA reflects our continued commitment to, and leadership in, multilateralism, and international peace and security. It also forms

part of HMG's wider efforts in Mali and the Sahel, alongside diplomatic and development activity in support of regional stability.

■ Marines

Luke Pollard: [\[174961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to reduce the total head count of the Royal Marines; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Pollard: [\[174962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Royal Marines commando units are planned to be reduced in his Department's planned head count reduction for the Royal Marines.

Luke Pollard: [\[174963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what effect the Defence Review will have on recruitment levels for the Royal Marines.

James Heappey:

No decisions have been made on the future size of the Royal Marines. As the Royal Marines transition into the Future Commando Force and turn to new upgraded and autonomous capabilities, there is the potential for the workforce structure to change in the future.

■ Military Bases: Fire and Rescue Services

John Healey: [\[175704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which Minister in his Department approved the recommendation, as set out in the Capita review of fire risks at Faslane and Coulport naval bases, to reduce fire response services crew by 15 per cent, and if he will place a copy of that report in the Library.

Jeremy Quin:

Defence Fire and Rescue has responsibility for oversight of the Defence Fire and Rescue Project contract outsourced to Capita. Capita Fire and Rescue's (CFR's) specific proposals to reduce the level of cover at Faslane and Coulport, following their recent review of fire risks, do not require approval at Ministerial level. The workforce change proposals were endorsed by the Naval Base Commander of HMNB Clyde, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have been extensively consulted. The reduction in firefighter resources from a six person 24/7 watch to a five person 24/7 watch will not impact CFR's ability to respond to an incident effectively.

■ Ministry of Defence: Intellectual Property

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[178862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Intellectual Property technologies have been made available to the private sector through (a) Ploughshare Innovations and (b) Easy Access IP in the last five years.

Jeremy Quin:

Over the last five years Ploughshare Innovations have available 102 separate technologies commercially and of these Ploughshare have successfully licensed 28 to industry, either in the form of a spin-out company, option licence or licence agreement. With respect to Easy Access IP, over the last five years 22 technologies have been made available via the Dstl Easy Access IP website and four of these have been successfully licensed to Industry.

Rifles Regiment**Chris Loder:**[\[179557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, what plans he has for The Rifles, the successor regiment of the Devonshire and Dorset Regiment.

James Heappey:

The Secretary of State set out his vision for the Armed Forces when he launched the Defence Command Paper "Defence in a Competitive Age" on 22 March 2021. As he made clear, a transformation such as this requires significant reorganisation of force structures.

The Army will therefore in the next several months refine and test the designs, capabilities and structure of Army units before more detailed announcements can be made. Future announcements will include the Reserve Forces 2030 review, which builds on the work already done on utilising our reserves to make sure the whole force is better integrated and more productive.

I can however in the interim confirm that, as the Defence Secretary said, 4th Battalion The Rifles, currently a Specialised Infantry Battalion, will be one of the four battalions which seeds the new Ranger Regiment, carrying through its historic character and ethos to the benefit of the new unit.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT**Agricultural Shows****Daniel Kawczynski:**[\[178962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether agricultural shows will be able to take place in 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

Agricultural shows are amongst the outdoor events permitted at Step 2 (since 12 April) if they meet the conditions set out in the Government's COVID-Secure guidance for the visitor economy. These events must be organised by a business, charity or public body; event organisers must follow all relevant COVID-Secure guidance; organisers and attendees must adhere to all legal requirements; and all reasonable action must be taken to mitigate the risk to public health.

We have also published organised events guidance for local authorities to provide them with a framework for allowing events at each stage of the roadmap. Local authorities can allow or prohibit organised events in their local area, but decisions should be made in discussion with event organisers on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to both the risks and the mitigations in place as well as the economic and social benefits that events offer to local communities. Any objections to a particular event by a local authority should be based on clear evidence that points to inadequate alignment with guidance or government restrictions, or to the absence of a comprehensive risk assessment.

As part of our efforts to get larger events back in full operation, we will launch the Events Research Programme to explore when and how all events can proceed with reduced social distancing requirements.

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

■ **Busking**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[179242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether busking is permitted under covid-19 rules.

Caroline Dinéage:

Indoor and outdoor performance events with a socially distanced audience are permitted from Step 3 of the Government's Roadmap (not before 17 May). Busking is permitted from Step 3.

Busking may involve attendees converging on and congregating in a site for a specific performance or activity, and may risk audiences gathering in an uncontrolled environment.

We will continue to work with stakeholders on reopening the live music sector, in line with the timetable set out in the Roadmap.

■ **Computers and Video Games: Sales**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[144646\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of existing regulations to tackle the use of automated bots to bulk purchase gaming consoles and computer components upon release, circumventing retailer policies against bulk purchasing and enabling immediate resale at prices higher than the Manufacturer's Recommended Retail Price.

Caroline Dinéage:

We know that bulk purchasing for the purpose of reselling at profit through automated bots is a concern for some members of the games industry and their customers. Officials have discussed reports of games console scalping with the trade association

for the video games industry, Ukie, who have been considering for example whether there is any additional advice games companies could provide to consumers.

The UK has an extensive framework of consumer protection law to ensure people get a fair deal when buying goods and services. For example, the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 protect consumers when they make online purchases of goods, services or digital content from business traders. This includes rights of redress should there be a problem with a product, rules around clear labelling and pre-contractual information, and protection from unfair contractual terms.

However, these rules do not generally extend to guaranteeing the price for the product, nor its availability. Traders are generally able to set their own prices, so long as the price is clear and not misleading and the firm is not abusing a dominant position.

More broadly, as a government we want the UK to be a society in which technology works to the benefit of all citizens. For this to be the case, we must ensure we have the right rules in place to unlock these benefits while also protecting people from harm. That's why we will pursue a pro-tech approach to regulating digital technologies, which will promote competition and innovation and build public trust through greater safety and security for users of digital tech.

■ Cricket: Schools

Navendu Mishra:

[176088]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department takes to work with the Department for Education to promote cricket in state-funded schools.

Nigel Huddleston:

My department works closely with the Department for Education on school sport provision. Schools are free to organise and deliver a flexible, diverse and challenging Physical Education curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils, which can include cricket. Both departments regularly engage with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

The ECB is actively engaged with 5,500 state schools, working with a quarter of all primary schools and 15,000 teachers. The ECB engages over half a million school children every year, including work through their charity partner Chance to Shine.

The ECB were represented at a school sport roundtable in March, jointly hosted by the Secretary of State for Education and the Culture Secretary. This roundtable launched our ongoing work to bring together a sports sector offer to support schools through an active summer recovery term, and on into the summer holidays, in order to get children and young people active again.

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Bill Esterson:

[\[179081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what the appeals process is for businesses that have been turned down for a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund; and whether there will be further rounds during which businesses that have been unsuccessful can reapply.

Caroline Dinenage:

Following the first and second rounds of funding, over £1.2 billion has been allocated across recovery, capital and repayable finance from the £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund, reaching over 5000 individual organisations and sites. We are confident the independent delivery bodies will have scrutinised all organisations against the strict criteria set for this fund. An organisation that applied for a CRF grant and would like to make a complaint about the service it has received from the relevant delivery body or the way the delivery body has handled its application can contact the delivery body directly, as detailed in the applicant guidance.

An additional £300 million investment is being made available to continue to support the cultural sectors in 2021/22 to bridge to a position of sustainability as audiences and visitors begin to return. Further details on this funding will be published in due course. We will keep support for the sector under constant review and will continue work to determine the appropriate and most effective response for the sector within the public health context.

Bill Esterson:

[\[179082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason the bid for a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund from MSP, Bridle Way, Liverpool, was rejected.

Caroline Dinenage:

We are confident the independent delivery bodies will have scrutinised all organisations against the strict criteria set for this fund, but cannot comment on the detail of individual applications.

We know that some applicants will be disappointed with the outcome and both the Arts Council and DCMS will continue to do all we can to support creativity and culture in England. Arts Council have published resources on their website both for organisations and individuals which include alternative sources of support.

■ Events Industry: Coronavirus

Dr Luke Evans:

[\[178553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support the reopening of the events and exhibition sector in line with the easing of covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department is taking a number of steps to support the reopening of the events and exhibition sector.

We seek to reopen business events and conferences in Step 3, subject to a capacity cap. Attendees at outdoor business events will be capped at 50% capacity, up to 4,000 people. Attendees at indoor business events will be capped at 50% capacity, up to 1,000 people.

Step 3 will take place no earlier than 17 May, and at least five weeks after Step 2, following a further review of the data and the four tests.

As part of our efforts to get such events back in full operation, we have launched the Events Research Programme to explore when and how large events can return with reduced social distancing requirements.

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

Facebook: Data Protection**Chi Onwurah:****[179113]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with the Information Commissioner's Office on the Facebook data leak of 2019; how many UK Facebook users were informed of that leak; and whether UK users data remains compromised.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Information Commissioner's Office referred the 2019 data leak to Facebook's EU supervisory authority, the Data Protection Commission in Ireland, who announced in April 2019 that they were opening a Statutory Inquiry into the breach.

The Information Commissioner's Office continues to work with and support its Irish counterpart to ensure that the data of UK citizens is protected.

The government has made it clear that all organisations, especially large global tech firms who process vast amounts of personal data, must comply with the UK's data protection legislation, which poses strict obligations on organisations to ensure that UK citizens' data is processed safely, securely and transparently. Organisations which fail to comply with the legislation may be investigated by the Information Commissioner's Office and subject to increased fines.

The National Cyber Security Centre recommends that members of the public who are concerned that their email and/or phone number may have been leaked in the 2019 breach and any other data breaches should check the website <https://haveibeenpwned.com/> This website has been supported by the National Cyber Security Centre in the past. Further advice on what action to take in the event of a data breach, can be found at: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/data-breaches>

■ Football Index

Carolyn Harris: [\[178693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will hold an independent public inquiry into the circumstances of the collapse of Football Index.

Carolyn Harris: [\[178695\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what directions have been given to (a) regulators and (b) executive agencies in respect of the collapse of Football Index.

Paul Blomfield: [\[179069\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of launching an inquiry into the collapse of Football Index.

Paul Blomfield: [\[179070\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the recent collapse of Football Index, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of creating a Gambling Ombudsman.

Patricia Gibson: [\[179203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans does he have to launch an independent public inquiry into the collapse of Football Index.

Carolyn Harris: [\[179264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government was made aware of the challenges facing Football Index before the collapse of that company.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The government is taking the collapse of Football Index and the concerns of those affected by it very seriously, and the Secretary of State and I have met the Gambling Commission to receive urgent updates. We are particularly keen to understand both how this situation came about and what lessons we can learn from these events. Further details will be provided in due course.

DCMS officials were made aware of the challenges facing Football Index in March 2021 shortly before the Gambling Commission suspended the licence of BetIndex Ltd, the operator of Football Index. The Gambling Commission's regulatory investigation is ongoing. While we have been in close contact with the Commission as it continues its investigation, its role as set out in the Gambling Act is to conduct investigations fully independent of Government. It is not for the government to direct independent regulatory bodies on individual cases.

Our Review of the Gambling Act 2005 is considering a range of questions around the regulation of gambling, including the powers and resources of the Commission and whether any changes to the legislation are required to make it fit for the digital age.

The review will also consider whether an alternative system of consumer redress, such as an ombudsman, is needed. Our call for evidence closed on 31 March and we are carefully considering the responses received.

■ Leisure: Facilities

Ian Mearns:

[\[178741\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a scheme similar to the Eat Out to Help Out scheme to encourage people to access health and fitness facilities to support public health and businesses in that sector.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are crucial for our mental and physical health. That's why we continued to make sure that people can exercise throughout the national restrictions, and why we ensured that grassroots sport was front of the queue when easing those restrictions.

On Monday 22 February, the Prime Minister announced a roadmap out of the current lockdown in England. The government has introduced a step approach to the return of outdoor and indoor sport areas across England. From 8 March, sport can take place in school for all children, or as part of wraparound activities if children are attending in order to enable their parents to work, seek work, attend education, seek medical care, or attend a support group. Organised outdoor sport restarted on 29 March and indoor leisure facilities including gyms re-opened for indoor use on 12 April.

The Government has provided unprecedented support to the sport sector to ensure these facilities are able to open. Beyond elite level sport, on the 22nd October 2020, the government announced a £100 million support fund for local authority leisure centres. Sport England are also providing £220 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic, including their £35 million Community Emergency Fund. Sport England's new strategy, 'Uniting the Movement', dedicated an additional £50 million to support grassroots sports clubs and organisations.

■ Sport: Equality

Alison McGovern:

[\[179101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he is taking to support the Sport England Tackling Inequalities Fund to help tackle inequality in sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government is committed to tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. Our strategy 'Sporting Future' sets out a clear ambition to increase levels of physical activity amongst under-represented groups, working closely with the sector to achieve this. The Tackling Inequalities Fund is an important part of the £270 million

support package that Sport England, DCMS's arm's length body for grassroots sport in England, has committed to directly support community sport clubs and exercise centres through COVID-19.

The £20 million Tackling Inequalities Fund aims to reduce the disproportionately negative impact of the pandemic on physical activity levels for four groups: lower socio-economic groups, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, disabled people, and people with long-term health conditions. Currently, £13.5 million has been awarded to partners, funding over 2,800 projects being delivered through 43 Active Partnerships and 30 national partners across the country.

Sport England's recently launched new ten year strategy, Uniting the Movement, also reinforces their commitment to diversifying participation and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. DCMS will continue to work closely with Sport England to ensure that inequalities are addressed and tackled in sport and physical activity.

Alison McGovern:

[179102]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of access to green spaces on the equality of access to sport.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are incredibly important for our physical and mental health, and are a vital weapon against coronavirus. That's why we have made sure that people can exercise throughout the national restrictions.

We know that high quality multi-use local green spaces can play a key role as sporting venues and as alternative settings for sport and healthy activity. Last month Sport England published its new strategy Uniting the Movement which sets out their 10 year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. A key part of the strategy is creating and protecting the local places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active including encouraging walking and cycling.

Last year, Public Health England published Improving Access to Greenspace. The report highlights the strong evidence that regular physical activity supports both individual and community outcomes such as increasing educational attainment, improving self-esteem and reducing social isolation and that greenspace can support higher levels of physical activity.

■ **Tourism: Coronavirus**

Alex Sobel:

[179489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Tourism Recovery Plan on the review of Destination Management Organisations.

Nigel Huddleston:

The independent review of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) is an important element of the Tourism Recovery Plan. Both pieces of work will be important for setting out the tourism sector's recovery from the pandemic.

The independent review of DMOs in England will examine how best to structure and support DMOs at a local and regional level in order to deliver the Government's tourism policy priorities and support economic growth.

The lead reviewer, Nick de Bois, is conducting the review over Spring 2021, before evaluating his findings and submitting a written report, including his recommendations, to the DCMS Secretary of State by Summer 2021. The review launched in March.

■ Wrecks: Conservation**Tim Loughton:**[\[178756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what (a) steps his Department is taking, (b) discussions he has had with (i) Cabinet colleagues and (ii) Historic England on arranging the (A) investigation, (B) protection and (c) management of Galloper wreck site in the UK Marine Area as an international important heritage asset.

Tim Loughton:[\[178757\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to his Department's Guidance on how existing policies and legislation apply to historic military wreck sites, published with the Ministry of Defence in April 2014, whether it remains the Government policy to ensure historic military wrecks are offered appropriate protection and management.

Tim Loughton:[\[178758\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what requirements Historic England sets for developers on funding the (a) reporting and (b) assessment of (i) wrecks discovered at the Galloper Offshore Wind Farm site and (ii) other historically significant wrecks; and what assessment he has made of the potential risks to historical assets on that site from unregulated salvage attempts.

Tim Loughton:[\[178759\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, for what reason the Government does not provide full funding for the investigation of historically significant shipwrecks in the UK Marine Area; and how much funding has been provided by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands for that purpose in each of the last three years.

Caroline Dinenage:

I indicated to my honourable friend in my response to his letter of 8th February that my officials have discussed the Galloper wreck site with their counterparts at the Ministry of Defence and Historic England. Consequently, the Government is

monitoring the site and understands that vessel traffic monitoring occurs as part of conventional site security.

I am also content that steps have been taken to facilitate management of the site through the action taken by Galloper Wind Farm Ltd to engage with other maritime authorities - including the Royal Navy, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.

Though Historic England has no remit to impose requirements on future development proposals relating to the Galloper wreck site, the Marine Management Organisation routinely consults it on applications for marine licences. DCMS are not routinely part of such discussions, however Historic England do provide information and advice on request.

Regarding the guidance published by DCMS and the Ministry of Defence in 2014 on how existing policies and legislation apply to historic military wreck sites ('Protection and Management of Historic Military Wrecks outside UK Territorial Waters'), I can confirm that this remains in place. I can also confirm that DCMS would give due consideration to any proposals by developers or other parties to undertake detailed investigations of the Galloper site. However, Government funding to undertake these investigations would need to be considered alongside other priorities.

EDUCATION

■ Adult Education: Finance

Rachael Maskell: [\[179244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Education and Skills Funding Agency 2020 to 2021 end of year reconciliation for adult education budget and advanced learner loans bursary grant funded providers, if he will (a) remove or (b) further lower the reconciliation threshold.

Rachael Maskell: [\[179245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the disruption to higher education as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, what plans his Department has to review the Education and Skills Funding Agency's proposals to clawback adult skills funding from colleges in the event that they miss their 2020-21 academic year targets by more than 10 per cent.

Gillian Keegan:

We are lowering the reconciliation threshold of Education and Skills Funding Agency grant funded Adult Education Budget (AEB) - adult skills including non-formula funded community learning and 19-24 Traineeships - and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary fund providers for 2020 to 2021, from 97% and 100% respectively to 90%.

The allocations for COVID-19 Skills Offer, including funding for the new level 3 adult offer, are ringfenced and the reconciliation threshold for under-delivery of this provision will remain at 97%.

Our primary aim is to support providers to continue to deliver as much quality provision as possible, including above the 90% threshold, whether that be face-face where permitted, online or otherwise remotely, and including subcontracting (for AEB-funded provision only) where that is in line with our subcontracting conditions set out in the rules and contracts.

We acknowledge the situation is still difficult for providers but equally we know that many providers have been able to deliver remotely during lockdown very successfully and the return to face-to-face learning should enhance further providers' ability to deliver.

This 90% threshold is the final position for the 2020-21 academic year and will not be subject to change. There will not be a business case process. In areas where the AEB has been devolved, Mayoral Combined Authorities and the Greater London Authority are responsible for considering any provider flexibilities in their areas.

■ **Agency Social Workers: Pay**

Layla Moran:

[\[179469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the range of rates paid to agencies by local authorities was for children's social care workers in (a) the South-East and (b) England in each of the last five years.

Vicky Ford:

The Department for Education holds the policy responsibility for children's social care, while local authorities hold the duty to deliver children's social care services, employ child and family social workers and make decisions about social worker remuneration. The department does not collect nor hold data from local authorities on child and family social worker pay, including on agency pay rates.

■ **Assessments: Coronavirus**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[178722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using calculated grades to award Access to Higher Education qualifications in line with those calculated grades being used for the award of other qualifications as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

We want all students to progress to the next stage of their lives, including students taking the Access to Higher Education qualification. Calculated grades are not being used for awarding any qualifications this year and given the wide range and diverse nature of qualifications, one approach to awarding cannot be taken for all qualifications.

Assessments for Access to Higher Education qualifications are continuing where possible and will continued to be marked and graded by tutors. However, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education recognises that in some exceptional

circumstances the assessments may need to be adapted to meet the needs of students and are allowing the diploma to be awarded using alternative evidence.

■ Children: Disability

Fleur Anderson:

[179619]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of implementing a covid-19 recovery plan for disabled children and their families.

Vicky Ford:

We are committed to helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to make up learning lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

We have plans for COVID-19 recovery, which we are continuing to develop. As part of this, both special schools and alternative provision (AP) settings will be able to access funding to provide summer schools and the National Tutoring Programme, and we recognise the additional costs associated with offering provision to pupils in specialist settings. This means that eligible pupils in special schools, special units in mainstream primary and secondary schools and AP settings will attract a higher rate of the new one-off Recovery Premium funding worth £302 million, as well as funding for summer schools. We have consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings in our Recovery Premiums to schools by providing additional uplifts both in 2020 and in 2021.

Young people with SEND aged 19 to 24 who have an education, health and care plan will be eligible for support via the 16 to 19 tuition fund, where they meet the fund criteria. Providers are asked to have regard to the needs of students with SEND when prioritising students that would benefit most for small group tuition. Furthermore, the proposals to support early language and literacy catch-up will benefit all children, including those with SEND.

£200 million will be available to all secondary schools, including specialist settings, to deliver face-to-face summer schools. Schools will be able to target provision based on pupils' needs. The size and shape of the summer schools will be decided by school leaders who know best what a most effective summer school will look like for their pupils, allowing them to tailor support for pupils, including those with SEND.

Sir Kevan Collins has also been appointed as the Education Recovery Commissioner. He is considering how schools and the system can more effectively target resources and support at pupils in greatest need.

The department will continue to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent COVID-19 recovery plans on all pupils, including those with SEND, to ensure that it targets support across the system most effectively.

■ Education: Disadvantaged

Kate Green:

[\[179105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when the National Centre for Social Research's Opportunity areas place-based evaluation will be completed; and if his Department will publish the findings of that evaluation.

Michelle Donelan:

The National Centre for Social Research's national qualitative process evaluation was commissioned by the department in October 2020 to cover the first 4 years of the Opportunity Areas programme, up to August 2021. The procurement of this evaluation was delayed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This evaluation is exploring the delivery and progress made through this place-based approach. It will ensure that benefits, challenges and learnings are documented. A report of the findings is due to be published in spring 2022.

■ Education: Finance

Mr Toby Perkins:

[\[179014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the impact that the introduction of an outcomes based funding model will have on educational opportunities for (a) 16-24 year olds, and (b) those aged 24 and above, who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), or have additional needs.

Gillian Keegan:

The Skills for Jobs white paper sets out the government's vision to simplify and streamline funding for further education to ensure everyone – including those who are not in education, employment or training or have additional needs – is able to access high value provision that is relevant to labour market needs and job opportunities. These changes will enable colleges and other skills providers to deliver the skills programmes and qualifications to support progression into further learning and respond to employer demand, supporting people to use their learning to enter the labour market, upskill and/or change careers.

This will be an integral part of our lifetime skills guarantee. By taking a focus on learner outcomes, we will incentivise colleges and skills providers to review their provision to ensure it leads to meaningful progression and employment for their learners, including the important focus on those learners with complex needs or learning difficulties.

A key part of this system will be supporting the collaboration between colleges and skills providers through local skills improvement plans. The department is testing detailed elements with the sector and will be setting out proposals in a full consultation later this year.

■ Education: Registration

Kate Green: [\[178588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to bring forward legislative proposals to require all full-time educational settings to be registered.

Kate Green: [\[178590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish a response to the consultation on Regulating independent educational institutions.

Nick Gibb:

The consultation on Regulating Independent Educational Institutions was launched on 14 February 2020 and withdrawn on 7 May 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The consultation was relaunched on 13 October 2020 and closed on 27 November 2020.

Once we have completed the analysis of the responses, we will set out the Government response, including our legislative proposals, in due course.

■ Erasmus+ Programme: Voluntary Work

Paul Blomfield: [\[178559\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to replace the youth international volunteering opportunities that were part of Erasmus+ and are not covered in the Turing Scheme.

Michelle Donelan:

International opportunities for young people (outside of formal education settings such as schools, colleges and universities) are being considered as part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport-led Youth Review. The review was commissioned by Her Majesty's Treasury at the 2020 Spending Review. Future funding is subject to decisions at the next Spending Review.

The Turing Scheme is an international education mobility scheme, providing funding for around 35,000 students in universities, colleges and schools to study or gain work experience overseas, starting in September 2021. The Turing scheme is truly global, with every country in the world eligible to partner with UK educational providers. The new scheme will seek to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds and areas which did not previously have many students benefiting from Erasmus+, making life-changing opportunities accessible to everyone across the country.

■ Further Education: Expenditure

Rachel Hopkins: [\[179740\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average per pupil funding was for 16 to 19 year olds in (a) further education colleges and (b) other colleges and schools in each of the last five years.

Gillian Keegan:

The table below uses the published 16-19 funding allocations to derive the average funding per student for further education (FE) colleges, and all other types of providers, from 2016/17 and the subsequent four academic years.

AVERAGE TOTAL PROGRAMME FUNDING PER STUDENT £

Provider type	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
FE colleges	£4,623	£4,627	£4,653	£4,674	£5,111
Other providers	£4,386	£4,370	£4,390	£4,392	£4,840

■ **Lifetime Skills Guarantee: Loans****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[179019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the flexible loan entitlement announced in January 2021 as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee will include maintenance support.

Gillian Keegan:

We are considering how maintenance loans and student support grants would be available for any study funded through the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE). We will consult on the detail and scope of the LLE later this year.

■ **National Tutoring Programme****Robert Halfon:**[\[179028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2021 to Question 142897 on National Tutoring Programme, what the procurement arrangements are for the second phase of the National Tutoring Programme.

Nick Gibb:

The Department began procurement proceedings for the second phase of the National Tutoring Programme on 25 February 2021, under the Open Procurement route to market to appoint a single Prime Delivery Partner responsible for delivering both Tutoring Partners and Academic Mentors. A contract is expected to be awarded in early May.

■ **Pre-school Education: Finance****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[179403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will take steps to help ensure that no maintained nursery school closes in Slough constituency as a result of reductions in the

Maintained Nursery School supplementary funding; and what steps he is taking to provide financial support to maintained nursery schools at risk of closure.

Vicky Ford:

Maintained nursery schools (MNSs) are an important part of the early years sector and provide valuable services, especially in disadvantaged areas. This government remains committed to the long-term funding of MNSs. Early years providers, including MNSs, have continued to receive early education entitlements funding during the COVID-19 outbreak.

For the financial year 2021-22, we have increased the hourly funding rates for all local authorities by 8p an hour for the two-year-old entitlement and, for the vast majority of areas, by 6p an hour for the three- and four-year-old entitlement. This funding rate increase is paid for all the hours of childcare delivered by all types of providers in the local authority's area, including MNSs. In addition to the hourly funding rate increase, we have also re-confirmed circa £60 million, nationally, in supplementary funding for MNSs for the financial year 2021-22, to allow local authorities to preserve MNS funding levels.

Details of funding paid to local authorities can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-funding-2021-2022>.

The supplementary funding is demand-led, so the amount of funding local authorities will receive will follow the number of three- and four-year-olds taking up the universal 15 hours at MNSs in their area.

There is a presumption against the closure of maintained nursery schools, and any alternative provision must be of equal quality, preserve expertise and be more accessible for parents. The guidance that sets this out can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/851585/Opening_and_closing_maintained_schools1012.pdf.

This does not mean that MNSs can never close, and it is important to note that this decision is for a local authority to take, but it means that there are safeguards in place where closure cannot be avoided.

Like private nurseries, MNSs typically rely on private income for a proportion of their income, unlike most state-funded schools. Therefore, we have ensured that access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) is also available to MNSs, in line with published guidance. On 3 March 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced that the CJRS will be extended until the end of September 2021. As long as the staff meet the other criteria for the scheme, schools and early years providers are able to furlough their staff if they have experienced a drop in either their income from parents or government. MNSs were also able to access free school meals vouchers via Edenred.

■ Primary Education: Sports

Barry Gardiner:

[178763]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will extend the Primary PE and Sports Premium beyond the 2020-21 academic year to enable children who have been in lockdown to catch up with the level of physical skills attainment appropriate to their age.

Nick Gibb:

Physical education (PE) and school sport plays an important role in supporting children and young people to be physically active, particularly during the current COVID-19 restrictions. The Department is working with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Health and Social Care on how to support better PE, sport and physical activity provision for all children and young people. This is part of our continuing work to deliver our joint school sport and activity action plan, published in 2019.

The Department is considering arrangements for the primary PE and sport premium for the 2021-22 academic year and will confirm the position as soon as possible.

■ Pupil Premium

Wes Streeting:

[179293]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish a copy of the financial assessment that was made ahead of his Department's decision to base pupil premium allocations for the 2021-22 academic year on the October 2020 school census and not the January 2021 school census.

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.

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>.

■ Pupil Premium: Southwark**Neil Coyle:****[179153]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department's decision to change the pupil premium eligibility date from January 2021 to October 2020 will lead to a £1.2 million reduction in funding for schools in the London Borough of Southwark.

Nick Gibb:

The January 2021 census will be used to determine pupil premium eligibility for alternative provision and pupil referral units for the 2021/22 financial year. 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 the 2020/21 financial year, which is expected to increase pupil premium funding from £2.4 billion in the 2020/21 financial year to more than £2.5 billion in the 2021/22 financial year 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 2021/22 financial year in June 2021. This will provide information on the specific amounts that regions, local authorities, and schools are receiving through the pupil premium for the 2021/22 financial year.

The Department publishes information on pupil premium allocations and the number of pupils eligible annually. The most recent publicly available figures can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021>.

■ Remote Education: Disability**Olivia Blake:****[179707]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will bring forward statutory guidelines on (a) the lines of responsibility and (b) standards for remote learning for disabled students.

Nick Gibb:

From 8 March 2021, attendance is mandatory for all pupils of compulsory school age. Schools affected by the remote education temporary continuity direction are still required to provide remote education for pupils where their attendance would be contrary to Government guidance or legislation around COVID-19. Current remote education guidance, including guidance for pupils with special educational needs and disability (SEND), can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance?utm_source=remote_education#remote-education. Where it is needed,

schools are expected to deliver 3 to 5 hours of remote education. This includes either

recorded or live direct teaching alongside time for pupils to work independently to complete assignments that have been set.

For pupils with SEND, and those in alternative provision schools, their teachers are best placed to know how their needs can be most effectively met to ensure they continue to make progress if they are not in face to face education.

Schools should work collaboratively with families so that pupils with SEND can successfully access remote education alongside their peers. If a pupil is disabled, the school must consider its duty to make reasonable adjustments.

All further education (FE) institutions should give particular consideration on how best to support vulnerable and disadvantaged students and students with special educational needs who may not be able to access remote education without support. If a pupil is disabled, a FE college must consider its duty to make reasonable adjustments. To support schools and FE colleges in delivering remote education, including for pupils with SEND, a comprehensive package of support continues to be available via the Get Help with Remote Education page on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>. As has been the case throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, Ofsted will inspect schools of any grade if it has any significant concerns about a school's provision, including in relation to the quality of education being provided. Where parents have concerns about the quality of education being provided, including remote education, they should discuss these first with the classroom teacher and if necessary, the head teacher. If, having gone through the school's complaints process, they remain concerned, they can approach Ofsted.

■ Schools: Admissions

Emma Hardy: [\[179414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children have been removed from school rolls and not moved to another school in each of the last five years.

Emma Hardy: [\[179415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children are known to be home educated in each of the last five years; and how many of those children had special educational needs.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held centrally and cannot be derived from current data sources. The Department also does not currently collect data on numbers of home educated children.

A pupil's name can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds

prescribed in Regulation 8, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

Parents are not under a duty to register if they are home educating their children and, therefore, there is not a robust basis on which the Department can reliably collect statistics on home education.

The number of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan who are electively home educated was first collected in 2020. In January 2020, there were 2,983 children and young people with an EHC plan who were electively home educated. Further information on this data is available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/education-health-and-care-plans>.

■ Schools: Asbestos

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[178978]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether the School Rebuilding Programme will prioritise the replacement of CLASP schools to ensure teachers and schoolchildren are safe from the health effects of asbestos.

Nick Gibb:

The Department for Education takes the issue of asbestos in schools very seriously and is committed to supporting schools, local authorities and academy trusts to fulfil their duty to manage asbestos safely. Expert advice from the Health and Safety Executive is that if asbestos is unlikely to be damaged or disturbed then it is best managed in situ. We are clear that if asbestos does pose a safety risk and cannot be effectively managed in situ, then it should be removed from schools.

Since 2015, the Department has allocated over £9.5 billion, including an additional £560 million in 2020-21, to those responsible for school buildings for essential maintenance and improvements, including removing or encapsulation when it is the safest course of action to do so.

In February, we announced the first 50 schools to benefit from the new School Rebuilding Programme as part of a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade. School Rebuilding Programme investment is targeted based on a buildings condition. A full explanation of the methodology used to prioritise the first 50 schools has been published at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>.

We intend to consult later this year on the approach to prioritising schools for the longer-term programme.

Kate Osborne:

[179600]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to prioritise the replacement of Consortium of Local authorities Special Programme (CLASP) schools in the School Rebuilding Programme to ensure that teachers and schoolchildren are safe from asbestos.

Nick Gibb:

The Department takes the issue of asbestos in schools very seriously, and is committed to supporting schools, local authorities, and academy trusts to fulfil their duty to manage asbestos safely. Expert advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is that if asbestos is unlikely to be damaged or disturbed then it is best managed in situ. We are clear that if asbestos does pose a safety risk and cannot be effectively managed in situ, then it should be removed from schools.

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme>.

The Department intends to consult later this year on the approach to prioritising schools for the longer term programme.

■ **Schools: Expenditure****Rachel Hopkins:****[179739]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the average per pupil funding was for 11 to 16 year olds in England in each of the last five years.

Nick Gibb:

The Department produces published statistics on school revenue funding annually. The latest publication, from January 2021, is available online and covers the financial years 2010-11 through to 2021-22: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics#dataBlock-10b3bbd5-58b1-401d-9aaf-9daaa184a6df-tables>.

The publication shows the average per pupil funding, in cash and real terms, to schools for 5 to 16 year olds. There is no separate breakdown available for 11 to 16 year olds.

	PER PUPIL FUNDING, CASH TERMS, £	PER PUPIL FUNDING, 2020-21 TERMS, £
2010-11	£5,180	£6,510
2011-12	£5,270	£6,520
2012-13	£5,360	£6,510

	PER PUPIL FUNDING, CASH TERMS, £	PER PUPIL FUNDING, 2020-21 TERMS, £
2013-14	£5,460	£6,520
2014-15	£5,560	£6,540
2015-16	£5,600	£6,540
2016-17	£5,590	£6,370
2017-18	£5,590	£6,260
2018-19	£5,730	£6,270
2019-20	£5,920	£6,320
2020-21	£6,280	£6,280
2021-22	£6,490	£6,680

■ Schools: Mental Health Services

Robert Halfon:

[178705]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many (a) schools and (b) colleges have a designated lead for mental health.

Vicky Ford:

The Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care jointly published 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health: A Green Paper' in 2017, and a subsequent consultation response in 2018, setting out the government's commitments to improve mental health support in and around schools and colleges. We remain committed to these proposals, including incentivising and supporting all schools and colleges to have an effective senior mental health lead by offering training free of charge to every school and college in England by 2025.

The government has prioritised providing bespoke training and support to meet the immediate challenges that all schools and colleges face in supporting the wellbeing of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak through our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme, delaying delivery of senior lead training.

The proportion of schools and colleges reporting they have a mental health lead has gone up, to over three quarters in 2018 (82% of schools, 91% of further education colleges) from under half of schools in 2016 (49% of schools, 69% of colleges), although these findings are based on different sources (the winter 2018 'School Snapshot Survey' and the summer 2018 'Post-16 institutions and providers omnibus'). The 'School Snapshot Survey' and the 'Post-16 institutions and providers omnibus' are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school->

[snapshot-survey-winter-2018](#) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-institutions-and-providers-omnibus-wave-6-survey>.

We have recently assessed the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the training needs of senior mental health leads. We have started to engage the training provider market, and key education, health and local authority stakeholders with a view to offering senior lead training from the beginning of autumn 2021.

Our intended option, subject to feasibility, is to provide schools and colleges with a grant and appropriate support to identify and purchase high quality training that meets their needs. This training is intended to provide individuals with the additional knowledge and skills needed to develop or introduce a positive whole-school or college approach to wellbeing and mental health, helping ensure pupils and students needing help with their mental health receive the appropriate support.

■ Schools: Repairs and Maintenance

Bill Esterson: [\[178666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what criteria are used to assess the eligibility of schools for the School Rebuilding Programme.

Bill Esterson: [\[179080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the letter dated 15 March 2021 from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System to the hon. Member for Sefton Central, if he will publish details of the criteria for bids for funding for the rebuilding of schools with high levels of need.

Nick Gibb:

In February 2021, the Department announced the first 50 schools to benefit from the new School Rebuilding Programme as part of a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade.

School Rebuilding Programme investment is targeted on the basis of buildings' conditions. A full explanation of the methodology used to prioritise the first 50 schools, and details of the process for prioritising the next 50, has been published at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-rebuilding-programme/school-rebuilding-programme>.

We intend to consult later this year on the approach to prioritising schools for the longer-term programme. Further details will be set out at that time and we would welcome the views of the school sector and other interested parties.

■ Special Educational Needs

Theresa Villiers: [\[174755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will issue guidance to local councils on maintaining the appropriate bandings for children with Education Health and Care Plans, consistent with each child's level of need.

Vicky Ford:

Local authorities are statutorily responsible for securing the special educational provision specified in a child or young person's education, health and care (EHC) plan.

The department's published high needs operational guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-needs-funding-arrangements-2021-to-2022>.

It states that: "While we expect commissioning local authorities to work constructively with institutions to agree the levels of top-up funding required, local authorities where the student is ordinarily resident bear the ultimate responsibility for decisions on top-up funding, as they are accountable for spending from their high needs budgets...

Where a local authority makes a large number of placements at an institution or range of institutions, a system for the local authority and institutions to agree levels of top-up funding in advance can be a very efficient way of allocating this funding.

However, the final allocation of funding must be sufficient to secure the agreed provision specified in any EHC plan."

■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus**Dan Jarvis:****[178605]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support he is providing to schools during the covid-19 outbreak to support children with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Vicky Ford:

The COVID-19 outbreak has been extremely challenging for many families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and schools who support them. Mainstream and special schools, special post 16-providers and alternative provision remained open to vulnerable children and young people throughout the third national lockdown, including those with education, health and care plans. Due to this, many specialist settings continued to offer face-to-face provision for the vast majority of, if not all of, their pupils and students.

To support those settings, we published guidance, which we regularly update, to provide additional information and support for delivering education in these settings.

In June last year, we introduced a COVID-19 catch-up premium worth £650 million to support schools to make up for lost teaching time. Head teachers decide how this premium is spent (for example, on educational psychologists, speech and language therapy and access to technology). Schools can prioritise funding support for SEND.

On 24 February, the government announced a new £700 million package for a range of additional measures to give early years settings, schools, providers of 16-19 education – including specialist settings – the tools they need to target support for all students.

Specific targeted support for children and young people with SEND includes a new one-off Recovery Premium for state primary and secondary schools, building on the Pupil Premium, which will be provided to schools to use as they see best to support disadvantaged students. This funding can be used to lay on additional clubs or activities or for other evidence-based approaches for supporting the most disadvantaged pupils, including those with SEND, from September.

To support schools with delivering remote education, the department made £4.84 million available for the Oak National Academy, both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20 and the 2020-21 academic year, to provide video lessons in a broad range of subjects. Specialist content for pupils with SEND is available. Additionally, the Oak National Academy offers therapy-based lessons and resources across occupational, physical, sensory and speech and language therapy, which can be accessed at this link: <https://classroom.thenational.academy/specialist>.

We have also funded the National Star College to launch their SEND Hub, providing advice and guidance on ways to ensure the curriculum is accessible and inclusive for all.

Finally, through our funding of the Whole School SEND consortium in the financial year 2021-22, we have provided resources for families and schools and training for teachers to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in the last contract year. The funding in the financial year 2021-22 will bring the total funding for this contract to over £8 million.

■ Special Educational Needs: Inspections

Emma Hardy:

[179416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and which local areas have been required to produce a written statement of action after a local area SEND inspection in each year since 2016; which of those areas have been re-visited by (a) Ofsted and (b) Care Quality Commission inspectors; and what the outcome was for each such area.

Vicky Ford:

From May 2016, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) began inspecting local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling their new duties for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability (SEND). All 151 local areas in England will be inspected over a period of 5 years.

The purpose of the inspections is to provide reassurance to families that local areas are being held to account and to support local areas to improve their services and deliver better outcomes for children and young people. They also provide evidence for local areas to receive appropriate external support and intervention.

Following the inspection, local areas are not graded, but are given a narrative evaluation report that highlights areas of strength and areas where improvements need to be made. Where there are significant weaknesses, the local area will be required to produce and publish a Written Statement of Action (WSOA).

Ofsted and CQC are revisiting those local areas with a WSoA to assess the progress made against each of the actions in the WSoA since the original inspection. Local areas are usually revisited within 18 months of their WSoA having been accepted as fit for purpose by Ofsted and CQC.

Where a local area is considered to have made sufficient progress against its WSoA, monitoring visits from the Department for Education and NHS England will cease.

As of 13 April 2021, 117 local areas have been inspected and their reports published under the Ofsted and CQC SEND inspection framework. Of these, 60 local areas have been asked to produce a WSoA. Out of the 22 local areas revisited to assess progress made against each of the actions in the WSoA since the original inspection, 9 have made sufficient progress against all their significant areas of concern. There are currently 34 outstanding local authority SEND inspections and Ofsted/CQC plan to restart full area SEND inspections from June 2021 at the earliest. Inspections will be of areas that have not yet been inspected under the current framework. There are 38 outstanding Revisits. Ofsted and CQC will start revisiting areas where they had significant concerns about SEND provision from April 2021.

Where sufficient progress has not been made against all areas of the WSoA following a revisit, the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England will determine the next steps on a case-by-case basis. This could include my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, using powers of intervention. As a minimum, local area leaders will be required to submit an action plan, co-produced with partners, showing how the local area will report on progress and impact, and how partners (including families) will be kept fully informed of progress. A formal joint Department for Education and NHS England progress review meeting will be held with the local area within 6 months of the revisit report. The department's SEND advisers and NHS England leads continue to work closely with local authority and health services to support them in making the necessary improvements to services.

The local areas asked to produce a WSoA following a local area SEND inspection are listed here:

- Bedford Borough
- Birmingham
- Brent
- Bristol
- Bury
- Central Bedfordshire
- Cheshire East
- Cumbria
- Derby City

- Devon
- Dorset
- Dudley
- Durham
- Essex
- Hartlepool
- Hull, Kingston upon
- Kent
- Kingston upon Thames
- Lancashire
- Leicester City
- Leicestershire
- Liverpool
- Luton
- Medway
- Merton
- Middlesbrough
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- Norfolk
- North East Lincolnshire
- North Somerset
- Northumberland
- Oldham
- Oxfordshire
- Peterborough
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Rochdale
- Sandwell
- Sefton
- Sheffield
- Shropshire
- Somerset

- South Gloucestershire
- South Tyneside
- Southend-on-Sea
- Staffordshire
- Stockport
- Stockton-On-Tees
- Suffolk
- Surrey
- Sutton
- Swindon
- Thurrock
- Wakefield
- Walsall
- Waltham Forest
- Wandsworth
- Windsor and Maidenhead
- Wokingham
- Worcestershire
- York

The table below indicates the outcome of local areas revisited by Ofsted/CQC.

LOCAL AUTHORITY	REVISIT OUTCOME
Bedford Borough	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Brent	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Bury	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Dorset	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Durham	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Hartlepool	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses

LOCAL AUTHORITY	REVISIT OUTCOME
Hull, Kingston upon	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Lancashire	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Medway	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Middlesbrough	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Oldham	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Oxfordshire	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Rochdale	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Sandwell	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Sefton	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
South Gloucestershire	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Suffolk	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Surrey	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Sutton	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Wakefield	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Waltham Forest	Sufficient progress made against all weaknesses
Windsor and Maidenhead	Not sufficient progress made against all weaknesses

During the COVID-19 outbreak, inspections were suspended, however it is vital that these children and young people, whose wellbeing and care may have also been significantly affected by the disruption to services caused by the outbreak, continue to receive support. Therefore, I commissioned CQC and Ofsted to work collaboratively with local areas through a series of interim visits, which began in October 2020 and finished in March 2021. These visits gave an insight into how well the system is working, support local areas to meet the needs of children and young people at this difficult time, and allowed Ofsted to share good practice.

CQC and Ofsted have been commissioned by the Department for Education, with the support of DHSC, to develop a new area SEND inspection framework to launch after the existing inspection cycle has finished. Learning from the published assessment of the current approach, this will include a greater focus on the experience of children and young people with SEND, and their families, and give more prominence to the quality integration and commissioning of education, health and care services. The new framework will take into account the COVID-19 outbreak's impact on services and on children, young people and families.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Sir David Amess: [\[178750\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Stephen Timms: [\[178770\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date university students will be able to return to their campus and resume face-to-face teaching.

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[178915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching as lockdown restrictions are eased during the covid-19 outbreak.

Daniel Kawczynski: [\[178963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Caroline Lucas: [\[179000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from which date all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching; what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the provision of home covid-19 testing for university students using the type of testing system that is used by secondary school pupils; and if he will make a statement.

Ian Murray: [\[179023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when university students will be permitted to return to campuses in the UK; and what discussions he is having with universities on the safe return of students as soon as possible.

Robert Halfon: [\[179029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Ian Mearns: [\[179035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[179053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the Government's plans are for the return of university students; and if he will make a statement.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[179054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when in-person teaching and learning for students at university will resume.

Lilian Greenwood: [\[179055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which step of the Government's covid-19 roadmap will allow all university students to return to their term-time addresses.

Paul Blomfield: [\[179076\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching during the covid-19 outbreak.

Chi Onwurah: [\[179112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish his plans for the return of university students to their term-time addresses.

Cat Smith: [\[179212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which step of the Government's covid-19 roadmap will allow all university students to return to their term-time addresses.

Cat Smith: [\[179213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when students will be able to resume in-person teaching and learning at university as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Cat Smith: [\[179214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the Government's plans are for the return of university students during the covid-19 outbreak.

Vicky Foxcroft: [\[179286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Clive Lewis: [\[179292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[179310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date will all university students be permitted to return to receive in-person teaching in response to the easing of covid-19 restrictions.

Emma Hardy: [\[179410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date all students will be able to return to their university campus and resume in-person teaching during the covid-19 outbreak.

Layla Moran: [\[179474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Ben Bradley: [\[179493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, on what date all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching during the covid-19 outbreak.

Luke Pollard: [\[179536\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date all university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Mick Whitley: [\[179565\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the guidance issued by the Government entitled COVID-19 Response: Spring 2021, on what date his Department plans to (a) announce and (b) conclude the review into the return of students in higher education that do not need to take part in practical teaching and do not require access to specialist facilities or equipment as part of their studies.

Fleur Anderson: [\[179622\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Anthony Browne: [\[179636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from which date all university students and staff will return to campus in order to resume in-person teaching.

Paula Barker:

[\[179659\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when students who have not yet resumed in-person teaching and learning at university will be able to do so during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paula Barker:

[\[179660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, which step of the Government's covid-19 roadmap will allow all university students to return to their term-time addresses.

Alexander Stafford:

[\[179716\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, from what date university students will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching.

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[180462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to confirm the date from which university students in England will be able to return to campus and resume in-person teaching with appropriate covid-secure measures in place.

Michelle Donelan:

Following the review into when the remaining higher education students can return to in-person teaching and learning, the government has announced that the remaining students should return to in-person teaching no earlier than 17 May 2021, alongside Step 3 of the roadmap. Students and institutions will be given at least a week's notice of any further return in accordance with the timing of Step 3 of the roadmap.

The government roadmap is designed to maintain a cautious approach to the easing of restrictions to reduce public health risks and ensure that we can maintain progress towards full reopening. However, the government recognises the difficulties and disruption that this may cause for many students and their families and that is why the government is making a further £15 million of additional student hardship funding available for this academic year 2020/21. In total we have made an additional £85 million of funding available for student hardship.

We are supporting universities to provide regular twice weekly asymptomatic testing for all students and staff on-site and, from May, at home. This will help break chains of transmission of the virus.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Dave Doogan:

[\[179550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the (a) selection criteria and (b) scoring mechanism for that criteria used by his Department when selecting which operators to licence to supply seasonal agricultural labour from abroad as part of the seasonal agricultural workers scheme.

Victoria Prentis:

Selecting the additional operators for the extended Seasonal Workers Pilot is a two-stage process. Defra conducted the first stage, which was the Request for Information (RFI) exercise inviting responses by 29 January 2021. Information on the selection criteria and scoring mechanisms is published online here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/seasonal-workers-pilot-request-for-information/seasonal-workers-pilot-request-for-information> .

Defra has now completed the RFI exercise and in doing so proposed two additional operators to the Home Office, who are now conducting the second-stage of approval and licensing.

■ Animal Products: Imports**Nadia Whittome:****[179731]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the Government's policy is on the importation of (a) foie gras, (b) fur and (c) other products the production of which is banned in the UK on grounds of cruelty; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

We have some of the highest welfare standards in the world, and that is both a source of pride and a clear reflection of UK attitudes towards animals.

The Government has made clear that the production of foie gras from ducks or geese who have been force fed raises serious welfare concerns. The production of foie gras by force feeding is already banned in the UK, as it is incompatible with our domestic welfare standards.

Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 and since 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. There are restrictions on some skin and fur products which may never be legally imported into the UK. These include fur and products from cats and dogs, and seal skins and products from commercial hunts.

The Government is considering any further steps it could take in relation to foie gras, fur, and other such products now that the Transition Period has ended.

Nadia Whittome:**[179732]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the Government's policy is on the import of (a) animal fur which is farmed and slaughtered in conditions which do not meet the UK's animal welfare standards and (b) other similarly produced animal products.

Victoria Prentis:

Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 and since 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. There are restrictions on some skin and fur products which may never be legally imported into the UK. These include fur and products from cats and dogs, and seal skins and products from commercial hunts. We have established controls on fur from endangered species protected by the Convention on

International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and we do not allow imports of fur from wild animals caught using methods which are non-compliant with international humane trapping standards.

We have some of the highest welfare standards in the world, and that is both a source of pride and a clear reflection of UK attitudes towards animals. The Government is considering any further steps it could take in relation to the import of animal fur, and other similarly produced animal products, which are farmed and slaughtered in conditions which do not meet the UK's animal welfare standards.

■ Environment Protection

Theresa Villiers: [178620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote the 2021 Great British Spring Clean campaign.

Theresa Villiers: [178624]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Government's Roadmap out of lockdown, whether reaching the end of step one of that roadmap on 29 March 2021 means that voluntary litter-picks can take place where social distancing is observed.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government continues to use its influence to support national clear-up days, which help to empower and engage communities in tackling litter and to change attitudes towards littering.

I recently spoke at the launch of Keep Britain Tidy's 2021 Great British Spring Clean, encouraging as many people and businesses as possible to participate in the Great British Spring Clean, and committed to volunteer during the event. By doing so, we are setting the tone for the summer ahead, by showing that litter is not acceptable, and that people care deeply about protecting their local environment.

We have published specific advice on our gov.uk website which states that voluntary litter picking can be carried out, and that groups must follow government guidance on staying safe outside the home. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste#litter-picking-during-coronavirus>

Volunteers are always advised to use safety equipment, including thick gloves, litter-pickers and heavy-duty bags.

■ Fish: Conservation

Virginia Crosbie: [179701]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on fish stocks of limiting the size of fishing vessels in the (a) UK's Marine Protected Areas and (b) 6-12 nautical mile fishing zone.

Victoria Prentis:

Marine protection is a devolved matter and the information below relates to England only.

No such assessments have been made as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) commonly protect seabed habitats and are generally not the best method of protecting commercial fish stocks, which need to be protected across their range and not just within the boundaries of an MPA. In addition, the impact a fishing vessel has on a site is determined by how damaging the fishing method is, rather than the size of the vessel.

Vessels fishing in the 6-12nm tend to be smaller and more local day boats. Their catches are limited by quotas, effort limits or local rules. Larger vessels have more flexibility about where they can fish and tend to go further off-shore. There are restrictions on gear types and engine size in the zone, for example restricting the size of beam trawlers, and these apply to UK and EU vessels.

■ Fish: Consumption**Alex Davies-Jones:**[\[179687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Marine Stewardship Council's certification and verification process when classifying fish for consumption; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

Our ambition is world-class fisheries management to achieve sustainable fisheries, safeguarding stocks and the environment for the long-term. We also support the development of traceable supply chains, where businesses and users can ascertain the legality and sustainability of their products.

We have not made an assessment of the MSC's certification and verification process and it would not be appropriate to do so. However, the Environmental Audit Committee's 'Sustainable Seas' report of 2019 offers a balanced and insightful enquiry into the Marine Stewardship Council. The recommendation that the report makes with regards to a transparent and independently evaluated review is important, not least to ensure public confidence in the MSC. Transparent and effective reviews of the MSC will also ensure that it is constantly keeping up with the best available fisheries governance.

■ Fisheries and Minerals: Norway**Emma Hardy:**[\[179413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Norwegian counterpart on fishing quotas in the Svalbard Special Protection Zone; and what steps the Government is taking as a signatory to the Treaty of Paris to preserve rights to (a) fish and (b) minerals in that zone.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK's long held position regarding the application of the Treaty of Paris to the maritime zones of Svalbard is well known to Norway. Under the Treaty, access to the resources of the maritime zones of Svalbard are to be managed by Norway in a non-discriminatory manner.

The Government is continuing to discuss the issues with Norway, and would like to provide longer-term certainty for industry on their fishing rights.

■ Fisheries: Humberside**Karl Turner:**[\[179057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the economic effect of a potential loss of access to Arctic cod on (a) jobs and (b) investment in Humberside.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK remains in discussion with Norway on 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 and associated industries.

The Government will continue to work with all our fishing fleets and processors, so that they can take advantage of future opportunities.

■ Fishing Vessels: Marine Protected Areas**Dr Alan Whitehead:**[\[178751\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether, following the decision to ban electric pulse fishing in UK waters, the Government plans to make further use of its powers under the Fisheries Act 2020 to restrict fishing vessel licenses from the most destructive industrial vessels in offshore Marine Protected Areas.

Dr Alan Whitehead:[\[178752\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the compatibility of pelagic supertrawlers in UK offshore Marine Protected Areas with the Government's commitment to protecting 30 per cent of oceans by 2030 as a member of the Global Ocean Alliance.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine protection is a devolved matter and the information below relates to England only.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has developed an ambitious three-year programme to manage fishing activity in English offshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). We recognise the urgency to establish management measures to protect the marine environment and proposals for the first four MPAs have been published for consultation. The consultation closed on 28 March and the MMO is currently reviewing the responses.

The Government is currently reviewing its policy on large pelagic trawlers. However, these vessels target fish within the water column and are unlikely to damage the seabed habitats, such as reef and sediment habitats, for which most MPAs are designated. The MMO will assess the impact of all fishing types and consider if management measures are required. Not all fishing activities in MPAs will require management, only those likely to damage the designated features, as assessed on a site by site basis.

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[178753]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the economic benefits to UK coastal communities of banning (a) bottom trawlers and (b) pelagic supertrawlers that are over 100 metres in length from the UK's marine protected areas.

Rebecca Pow:

Marine protection is a devolved matter and the information below relates to England only.

For Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in England, an assessment of impacts is prepared when sites are designated. The assessment assesses the costs and benefits of designating a site but does not include specific details on the benefits to coastal communities. It is difficult to quantify such benefits accurately.

The costs and benefits would only apply where an activity has been restricted. The appropriate regulator will assess sites and propose appropriate management of fishing activity where required. Management may not be required for all fishing gears because only those which are likely to damage the protected features of a site need to be managed. Large pelagic trawlers target fish within the water column and are unlikely to damage the seabed habitats, such as reef and sediment habitats, for which most MPAs are designated.

The Government is currently reviewing its policy on large pelagic trawlers operating in UK waters. Any action needs to be evidence-based and in line with the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

■ Fly-tipping

Colleen Fletcher:

[179159]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to tackle fly-tipping in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry and (c) England; what (i) economic and (ii) other support he is providing to (A) local police forces and (B) local authorities to help tackle fly-tipping; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on trends in the level of fly-tipping in (1) Coventry North East constituency, (2) Coventry and (3) England.

Rebecca Pow:

Fly-tipping is a crime which blights local communities and the environment, and we are committed to tackling this unacceptable behaviour.

The role of central Government is to enable and support local action by providing a clear legal framework of rights, responsibilities and powers and setting national standards. Local authorities are responsible for keeping relevant public land (as defined in the Environmental Protection Act 1990) clear of litter and refuse. We expect local authorities to investigate all incidents of fly-tipping, prosecute fly-tippers when there is sufficient evidence and recover clearance costs where possible.

Whilst the police may support multi-agency investigations into serious and organised incidents of waste crime, including fly-tipping, fly-tipping investigation and enforcement is the responsibility of local authorities, and the Environment Agency in certain circumstances.

Local authorities have flexibility in deciding how to allocate funding based on their local priorities. This year, Core Spending Power in England will rise by up to 4.6% in cash terms, from £49.0 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22.

For Coventry, this corresponds to an increase of up to £13.88 million, or 5.09%. This real-terms increase recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain critical services.

The Settlement is unringfenced to ensure local areas can prioritise based on their own understanding of the needs of their local communities.

In recent years we have bolstered local authorities' powers to tackle fly-tipping, such as by introducing the power to issue fixed penalty notices and to stop and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. Our 2018 Resources and Waste Strategy set out our strategic approach to prevent, detect and deter waste crime. We committed to strengthen sentences for fly-tipping and to develop a fly-tipping toolkit to help local authorities and others work in partnership to tackle this crime. We also committed to increasing penalties for fly-tipping in our manifesto.

Budget 2020 allocated up to £2 million to support innovative solutions to tackle fly-tipping. We launched an invitation to tender on 9 March 2021 for a research project considering the drivers, deterrents and impacts of fly-tipping. We are exploring additional funding opportunities and priorities, including considering the role of digital solutions.

We are also preparing a number of legislative reforms to tackle waste crime, which will help to tackle fly-tipping. We are taking forward the commitment in the Resources and Waste Strategy to develop proposals for the reform of the waste carrier, broker, and dealer regime. We are working with industry and the regulator and we intend to consult later this year. We also intend to consult on the introduction of mandatory electronic waste tracking. This will help to ensure that waste is dealt with appropriately and to reduce the incidence of waste crime and fly-tipping.

The Environment Bill also includes several measures to help tackle waste crime. The Bill will ensure agencies and authorities can work more effectively to combat waste crime through better access to evidence and improved powers of entry. These new

powers will help ensure waste criminals, such as illegitimate waste operators reliant on fly-tipping for income, are held accountable for their actions.

The Government has not made any assessment of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on trends of fly-tipping. However, Defra publishes annual fly-tipping statistics for England, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fly-tipping-in-england>. Data for the period April 2020 to March 2021 will be published in due course.

■ Fly-tipping and Litter

Theresa Villiers:

[178902]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of introducing auditable tracking for products and packaging to assist with the enforcement of rules on litter and flytipping.

Rebecca Pow:

The Litter Strategy sets out how we intend to work with the relevant industries to tackle certain types of problematic litter, such as fast food packaging, and our Resources and Waste Strategy set our strategic approach to prevent, detect and deter waste crime, including fly-tipping.

The Resources and Waste Strategy commits us to introducing mandatory electronic waste tracking, subject to consultation. This will help to ensure that waste is dealt with appropriately and will reduce the incidence of waste crime and fly-tipping.

No formal assessment has been made of the potential merits of introducing auditable tracking for packaging. However, exploratory discussions suggest that the burden on businesses and enforcement bodies, along with data protection issues, would mean the costs could outweigh the benefits of such a policy.

We are exploring other measures to tackle littered packaging. Our recently published consultation on extended producer responsibility for packaging proposes that producers who make or handle consumer-facing packaging should fund the full net-costs associated with the packaging they place on the market once it becomes waste, including litter-related costs. We have also recently launched our consultation on the deposit return scheme, which will incentivise proper disposal of in-scope material by consumers. We will continue to engage with producers as these measures come forward.

In recent years, to support local authorities in their enforcement, Defra has bolstered local authorities' powers to tackle fly-tipping, such as by introducing the power to issue fixed penalty notices (including to householders who pass their waste to an unlicensed waste carrier) and to stop and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. We have also introduced new powers to allow penalties to be issued to the keeper of a vehicle from which litter is thrown (recognising that it is often difficult to identify the individual who threw the litter), and published guidance on the use of enforcement powers for littering and related offences.

Theresa Villiers:

[178903]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will use the ANPR camera network to gather evidence for the enforcement of regulations on litter and flytipping.

Rebecca Pow:

Enforcement against littering and fly-tipping on the road network is a matter for the local authority.

The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system is used by the police to check the number plates of passing vehicles against police databases and can identify vehicles which are of interest to the police. Local authorities do not have access to the ANPR camera network.

The ANPR cameras are not suitable for use in gathering evidence of littering or fly-tipping in progress due to the system recording vehicle images and number plates only. In cases of serious waste crime where the police are involved in enforcement, vehicles involved may be considered of interest and would be captured on police databases.

With effect from April 2018, we have introduced new powers enabling councils in England (outside London) to issue civil fixed penalties of between £65 to £150 to the keepers of vehicles from which litter is thrown. Councils in London already had similar powers. This enables them to take enforcement action, even when the precise offender cannot be identified.

Councils can already take action based on camera footage as long as they are satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, litter was thrown from that vehicle. It is for councils to decide whether they have sufficient evidence to take enforcement action in any given case.

Vehicles of those suspected of committing a waste crime, including fly-tipping, can be searched and seized. Guidance available to local authorities recommends that when investigating a fly-tipping incident information such as the description of any vehicles involved should be gathered. This guidance is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/fly-tipping-council-responsibilities>.

Theresa Villiers:

[178904]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how much his Department has spent on communications to discourage litter and flytipping in each of the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

Defra has spent the following amounts externally on communications to discourage litter and fly-tipping. The cost of other activities, such as social media messaging, cannot be separated. Likewise, spend on Defra staff cannot be disaggregated.

YEAR	PURPOSE	AMOUNT
2016-2017	Initial scoping and research for “Keep it, Bin it” national anti-litter campaign	£15,868
2017-2018	Development of “Keep it, Bin it” campaign, partnership strategy and stakeholder research, as well as testing and development of a campaign identity	£124,412
2018-2019	“Keep it, Bin it” campaign branding, creative assets and launch	£67,855 – (following years funded by external partners)
2019-2020	Development of Household Waste Duty of Care Toolkit	£6,703
2020-2021	Development and launch of “Respect the Outdoors” campaign, which includes messaging about litter among other issues	£96,650
2020-2021	Contribution to Keep Britain Tidy’s “Love Parks” campaign and use of creative assets	£30,000

The Environment Agency has also contributed funds in 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 to the ‘right waste, right place’ information campaign, managed by the Environmental Services Association, which aims to help small businesses and establishments meet their Duty of Care obligations, and seeks to deter fly-tipping incidents.

■ Landfill: Odour Pollution

Aaron Bell:

[\[179680\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many odour complaints have been received about each site regulated by the Environment Agency in March 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

We provide below the number of unsubstantiated odour reports that have been received about each site regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) for March 2021. The reports have not yet been verified and therefore may not be accurately attributed.

The EA seeks to quality-check attributions each month for sites which attract 20 or more reports. This has not yet been done for this data set due to the short timescale involved. To prevent inaccurate attributions, we have anonymised the names of the sites associated with the reports, specifying only the class of activity undertaken. The total number of reports of odour pollution received by the EA in March 2021 was 7516.

The table below provides the full list of the odour reports associated with each of the EA permitted sites for March 2021.

REPORTS IN MARCH 2021	CLASS
6347	Landfill
122	Landfill
87	Landfill
64	Landfill
51	Landfill
46	Landfill
45	Landfill
37	Biowaste
33	Landfill
29	Farming
26	Landfill
26	Landfill
26	Biowaste
25	Biowaste
23	Biowaste
20	Waste Treatment
19	Landfill
19	Landfill
19	Waste Treatment
17	Food Processing
16	Intensive Farming

REPORTS IN MARCH 2021	CLASS
16	Landfill
14	Food Processing
14	Food Processing
14	Biowaste
13	Biowaste
12	Other
12	Waste Treatment
11	Landfill
11	Biowaste
10	Manufacturing
9	Food Processing
9	Biowaste
9	Biowaste
8	Biowaste
8	Food Processing
8	Intensive Farming
8	Chemicals
8	Biowaste
6	Chemicals
5	Landfill
5	Intensive Farming
5	Biowaste
5	Food Processing
5	Biowaste
5	Waste Treatment
5	Waste Treatment

REPORTS IN MARCH 2021	CLASS
4	Biowaste
4	Landfill
4	Landfill
4	Biowaste
4	Intensive Farming
4	Landfill
4	Intensive Farming
4	Intensive Farming
4	Incineration
4	Incineration
4	Biowaste
4	Waste Treatment
4	Biowaste
3	Intensive Farming
3	Landfill
3	Waste Treatment
3	Food Processing
3	Intensive Farming
3	Biowaste
3	Landfill
3	Intensive Farming
3	Landfill
3	Food Processing
3	Waste Treatment
3	Waste Treatment
2	Food Processing

REPORTS IN MARCH 2021**CLASS**

2	Food Processing
2	Food Processing
2	Landfill
2	Intensive Farming
2	Intensive Farming
2	Intensive Farming
2	Biowaste
2	Chemicals
2	Biowaste
2	Food Processing
2	Intensive Farming
2	Manufacturing
2	Farming
2	Other
2	Biowaste
2	Minerals
2	Food
2	Food
2	Biowaste
2	Farming
2	Biowaste
2	Treatment
2	Farming
2	Food
2	Treatment
2	Biowaste

REPORTS IN MARCH 2021**CLASS**

2	Treatment
1	Landfill
1	Landfill
1	Food
1	Treatment
1	Landfill
1	Landfill
1	Landfill
1	Landfill
1	Farming
1	Farming
1	Farming
1	Biowaste
1	Biowaste
1	Food
1	Farming
1	Treatment
1	Food
1	Landfill
1	Biowaste
1	Incineration
1	Farming
1	Landfill
1	Incineration
1	Landfill
1	Chemicals

REPORTS IN MARCH 2021	CLASS
1	Treatment
1	Landfill
1	Treatment
1	Landfill
1	Treatment
1	Treatment
1	Treatment
1	Treatment
1	Biowaste
1	Treatment
1	Biowaste
1	Landfill
1	Treatment
1	Spreading
1	Unknown

■ Livestock: Transport

Wayne David:

[178842]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to (a) publish the results of the consultation on improvements to animal welfare in transport and (b) bring forward legislative proposals to ban the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening.

Victoria Prentis:

The public consultation ended on 25th February and we are currently analysing all the responses we received. We will be publishing the Government response later this year.

We hope to have legislation in place to end live animal exports for slaughter and fattening by the end of the year.

■ Marine Environment

Virginia Crosbie:

[179702]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to protect the seas around the UK as part of the Government's work on helping to tackle climate change.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government recognises that a healthy ocean is vital to life and livelihoods on Earth. Tackling climate change is vital for ocean health and as COP26 President we are pushing for ambitious and accelerated action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. Ocean conservation and the protection of marine biodiversity are particularly important for building resilience and adapting to the impacts of climate change, as well as supporting climate change mitigation.

The UK Marine Strategy is vital in achieving the Government's vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse ocean and seas' and our climate change objectives. It provides the framework for monitoring, assessing and taking measures to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status in our seas. Marine nature-based solutions, including marine protection, restoration and sustainable management, have a crucial role to play as part of measures to prevent biodiversity loss and support climate change adaptation, resilience and mitigation.

We are a global leader in ocean protection, with 38% of UK waters in Marine Protected Areas. We have also stated our intention to pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas in Secretary of State waters and look forward to publishing the Government's response to Richard Benyon's review in due course.

The UK Government is committed to reducing the impact of the fishing industry on the marine environment. The Climate Change Objective in clause 1 of the Fisheries Act ensures that consideration is taken of how fisheries management policy can mitigate against the effects of climate change, where appropriate, as well as adapting to any future impacts of climate change. Fisheries Administrations will introduce policies to achieve this objective in the legally binding Joint Fisheries Statement.

■ Protective Clothing: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[179309]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage members of the public to wear reusable face coverings during the covid-19 outbreak.

Rebecca Pow:

The latest Government guidance on face coverings is provided at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own#when-to-wear-a-face-covering>. It explains that many types of face coverings are

available including disposable products and those made of breathable, washable fabric. We welcome the efforts being made by businesses and consumers to produce, sell and buy reusable alternatives which align with the guidance. The guidance also provides instructions on how people can make and care for their own face coverings at home.

Face coverings that are required in shops and a number of other settings are not the same as the single-use surgical masks or respirators used by healthcare and other workers as part of their PPE. These should continue to be reserved for those who need them to protect against risks in their workplace. Instead, the latest Government advice on face coverings provides instructions on how people can make and care for reusable face coverings at home using washable textiles, and is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering>.

Reusable cloth face coverings are also available to buy from a wide range of retail outlets, including online.

The Government has published guidance on the disposal of face coverings and other PPE during the coronavirus pandemic. This is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>.

■ Seals

Luke Pollard: [179538]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure seals are protected.

Victoria Prentis:

Both native grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*) and common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) species are protected in the UK under relevant wildlife legislation. Please refer to the following link for details:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-marine-species/seals>

In addition, recent Government amendments to the Fisheries Act 2020 offer stronger protection for seals. The amendments prevent the intentional or reckless killing of seals in English, Welsh and Northern Irish waters as a result of commercial fishing.

Together with Seal Alliance we launched a new government-backed campaign ‘[Give Seals Space](#)’ on 2 April to reduce the impact that human disturbance can have on these vulnerable marine mammals.

■ Trade Agreements: Norway

Karl Turner: [179058]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of incorporating into future fisheries agreements

between the UK and Norway (a) the terms of the agreement established in the Oporto letters and (b) all other terms of the existing agreements between the EU and Norway.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK-Norway fisheries framework agreement, signed on 30 September 2020, provides the legal framework for annual negotiations between the UK and Norway. These negotiations concern the exchange of quota between the parties and access to waters. This agreement respects other treaties to which the UK is already party.

■ **Walley's Quarry Landfill: Odour Pollution**

Aaron Bell:

[\[179679\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many odour complaints have been received by the Environment Agency about Walley's Quarry Landfill in Newcastle-under-Lyme, each day since 27 February 2021.

Rebecca Pow:

Walleys Quarry Landfill is a high priority for the Environment Agency (EA). The EA has increased the resource focused on regulation of the site and on partnership working to address local concerns as quickly as possible. The EA continues to receive large volumes of complaints from the community surrounding the site and takes each one very seriously.

Earlier this month, the EA issued Red Industries with an enforcement notice legally requiring specific actions to be completed by 30 April, including the capping of certain parts of the site. This should reduce odours to a level where they do not cause an offence (against permit definition).

The EA is also working alongside its partners to ensure air quality monitoring covers their health remits. The EA has agreed two further locations, in addition to those that went live in early March, to site air quality monitoring equipment. The additional units will be in place as soon as possible. The EA is sharing this data with partners, including Public Health England, on a regular basis and has supported a Staffordshire County Council led multi-agency statement on health advice.

The EA is receiving complaint reports from a number of different avenues including via email and phone. These are being updated to the system at regular intervals so these figures may be subject to change.

DATE	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
27/02/2021	878
28/02/2021	467
01/03/2021	180
02/03/2021	93
03/03/2021	82

DATE	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
04/03/2021	60
05/03/2021	156
06/03/2021	666
07/03/2021	395
08/03/2021	574
09/03/2021	405
10/03/2021	159
11/03/2021	93
12/03/2021	143
13/03/2021	67
14/03/2021	141
15/03/2021	266
16/03/2021	164
17/03/2021	351
18/03/2021	229
19/03/2021	144
20/03/2021	206
21/03/2021	133
22/03/2021	248
23/03/2021	222
24/03/2021	196
25/03/2021	137
26/03/2021	94
27/03/2021	106
28/03/2021	42
29/03/2021	64

DATE	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
30/03/2021	296
31/03/2021	235
01/04/2021	56
02/04/2021	53
03/04/2021	149
04/04/2021	286
05/04/2021	129
06/04/2021	150
07/04/2021	182
08/04/2021	87
09/04/2021	159
10/04/2021	408
11/04/2021	244
12/04/2021	237
13/04/2021	450
14/04/2021	148
Total	10,430

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Andy Li

Afzal Khan:

[\[179516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to (a) Chinese and (b) Hong Kong authorities on the detention of Andy Li; and what assessment he has made of reports that Andy Li is being held in solitary confinement without access to his family or lawyers.

Nigel Adams:

We are closely monitoring Andy Li's case. We have raised the cases of the 12 Hong Kong activists and politicians, including Andy Li, arrested and detained in Shenzhen last August, with the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities, and will continue to do so.

■ Azerbaijan: Prisoners of War**Catherine West:**[\[178534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his counterpart in Azerbaijan on releasing remaining Armenian prisoners of war.

Wendy Morton:

During my recent visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan, I urged both parties to work with the ICRC to expedite the returns of all prisoners of war. Our Embassy in Baku continue to raise this with the Government of Azerbaijan. The UK Government will continue to support both sides in abiding by the November peace deal and to settle all outstanding matters through talks under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group.

■ Cameroon: Human Rights**Zarah Sultana:**[\[178736\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to promote the human rights and civil liberties of the English-speaking minority in South Cameroon.

Zarah Sultana:[\[179611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to promote the (a) human rights and (b) civil liberties of the English-speaking minority in South Cameroon.

James Duddridge:

The Government remains deeply concerned about the crisis in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon, including the disturbing reports of human rights abuses and violations by both armed separatists and the security forces. In a visit to Cameroon in March 2021, I [Minister Duddridge] met President Biya, Prime Minister Ngute and Foreign Minister Mbella Mbella, where I [Minister Duddridge] set out the Government's commitment to supporting a peaceful resolution to the crisis. I [Minister Duddridge] also met the President of the South-West Regional Assembly, civil society, political opposition and religious leaders, to hear the experiences of the affected communities.

As our International Ambassador for Human Rights set out at the UN Human Rights Council on 26 February 2021, the violence in the North-West and South-West regions must end and urgent, impartial investigations must hold the perpetrators to account. We are working with international partners to raise the crisis in multilateral fora. At the UN Security Council briefing on Central Africa on 9 December 2020 the UK representative reiterated the UN Secretary General's call for an end to violence and for all actors to refrain from attacks against civilians. We continue to call for an end to the violence, and for inclusive dialogue that addresses the root causes of the crisis. We have shared our experience of conflict resolution with the Government of Cameroon, and we call on all parties to remain engaged in Swiss-led efforts to

facilitate talks. We continue to urge the Government of Cameroon to engage fully with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights for all.

■ China: Migrants

Stephen Kinnock:

[179148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether it is his policy that all (a) Uyghurs, (b) Kazakhs and (c) other members of Chinese ethnic groups resident in the UK, regardless of their immigration status, will be provided with consular and other appropriate assistance to establish (i) the whereabouts of and (ii) contact with their children in China in the event that they require such assistance.

Nigel Adams:

The assistance the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) can provide to British nationals abroad is set out in the publication: Support for British nationals abroad: A Guide. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-british-nationals-abroad-a-guide> As stated in our guidance we cannot provide this support to other countries' nationals, even if they have been resident in the UK.

■ Colombia: Civil Disorder

Kate Osborne:

[179599]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to his Colombian counterpart on the high number of ocular injuries reportedly caused by the Colombian ESMAD police unit during demonstrations in that country.

Wendy Morton:

UK Ministers and officials regularly raise human rights issues with their Colombian counterparts. Most recently, the UK's Ambassador for Human Rights, Rita French, raised our concerns around the killing of human rights defenders, media freedom, and sexual violence during a virtual visit to Colombia in February.

We are aware of the concerning reports on protestors being injured as a result of the police response to protests in Colombia. We are clear that we support the right of all Colombians to protest peacefully. We look to the Colombian authorities to investigate fully any reports on excessive use of force against protestors, and take appropriate action against those responsible. Security services must be held accountable for their actions, and any complaints thoroughly investigated.

■ Cyprus: Politics and Government

Fabian Hamilton:

[178832]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Turkish counterpart ahead of the P5+1 talks on a political settlement for the island of Cyprus.

Fabian Hamilton:

[\[178833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in the Republic of Cyprus ahead of the P5+1 talks on a political settlement for the island of Cyprus.

Wendy Morton:

A Cyprus Settlement is in the best interests of both Cypriot communities, the wider region and the UK. The Foreign Secretary has therefore been actively engaged in support of UN efforts to find a Cyprus solution and will represent the UK as a Guarantor Power at the UN-led, informal talks from 27-29 April.

The Foreign Secretary spoke to the Cypriot Foreign Minister on 22 March and the Turkish Foreign Minister on 23 March. The Foreign Secretary visited the island on 4 February and met President Anastasiades, Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar and the UN. The Foreign Secretary also met the Greek Foreign Minister on 2 February. The UK is urging all sides to approach the UN talks in a spirit of flexibility and compromise. During my visit to Cyprus (7-9 April), I reiterated this message and the UK's support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue.

■ Developing Countries: Education

Fleur Anderson:

[\[179620\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of pledging funding to the 2021-25 replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education on meeting his Department's target to get 40 million more girls into education globally and get 12 million girls literate by the age of 10.

Fleur Anderson:

[\[179621\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government plans to take during its presidency of the G7 to ensure the 2021-25 replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education is fully funded.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has placed girls' education and broader gender equality at the heart of our G7 Presidency. We have set out two ambitious global objectives to get 40 million more girls into school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 in the next 5 years. We are using our G7 Presidency to rally others in getting behind these objectives, and stand up for every girl's right to 12 years of quality education.

A well-funded Global Partnership for Education (GPE) will be central to delivering these global objectives, especially in securing education financing from developing countries' domestic budgets. We are looking forward to hosting the Global Education Summit to refinance GPE with the Government of Kenya in July. Details of the UK's next contribution to GPE will be announced in due course.

■ Developing Countries: Health Services

Zarah Sultana:

[\[178708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 September 2020 to Question 84707, on Developing Countries: Children, what steps his Department has taken to help end preventable deaths of (a) mothers, (b) newborns and (c) children around the world in 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to working with others to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children by 2030. As such we have pledged up to £1.65 billion to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Over 2021-2025, Gavi will support the roll-out of the most comprehensive package of vaccines to the world's poorest countries, focusing on the hardest to reach children. We are also supporting delivery of quality antenatal and post-natal care, including through the Global Financing Facility in 36 countries, which is helping countries challenged by service disruptions due to the pandemic.

We know that improving education has a positive impact on health outcomes, which is why 12 years of quality education for girls is a major priority for this government. We will use our G7 presidency this year to rally the international community to step up support to girls' education and global health. Finally, UK Aid-funded COVID response and recovery programmes continue to provide health support in 2021. For example our partnership with Unilever is on track to reach over 1 billion people with messages on the importance of hygiene.

■ Developing Countries: Maternity Services

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[179356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to publish the Ending Preventable Deaths Action Plan.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to working with others to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns, and children by 2030. We hope to publish our approach to ending preventable deaths in due course.

■ Human Rights: Sanctions

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson:

[\[178839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to introduce sanctions against human rights violators in (a) Eritrea, (b) North Korea and (c) Myanmar.

Nigel Adams:

The UK remains deeply concerned about the appalling human rights situation in the DPRK. Its Government must address the many reports of continued and widespread human rights violations in the country, including the arbitrary detention of its citizens.

That is why, in July 2020, the UK designated two DPRK entities through the Global Human Rights sanctions regime, including the Ministry of State Security Bureau 7 and Ministry of People's Security Correctional Bureau.

The UK, in conjunction with partners including the US and Canada, have announced targeted sanctions against nine high-ranking military officials and two military conglomerates for their role in serious human rights violations in Myanmar. We are consulting with partners on further measures, including additional sanctions. There will be a cost on the Myanmar military, and we will consider all tools at our disposal to do so. These sanctions follow the 16 individuals from the Myanmar military who were previously listed by the UK for human rights violations.

We are deeply concerned by Eritrean involvement in the conflict in Tigray. The Minister for Africa has made clear to the Eritrean Ambassador the UK's concern about reports of human rights violations by all parties to the conflict, the dire humanitarian conditions in Tigray, and the need for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray. Perpetrators of human rights abuses and violations must be held to account, whoever they are.

■ India: Amnesty International

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[179146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Prime Minister on the potential merits of using his upcoming visit to India to make representations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the shutdown of Amnesty International India since September 2020 despite no charges having been brought against the organisation.

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[179147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he plans to have with the Prime Minister ahead of his visit to India on making representations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on attacks on media freedom and journalists in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The Prime Minister's visit to India will be an opportunity to discuss a range of bilateral and multilateral issues with the Indian Government. Where we have specific concerns we raise them directly with the Government of India.

■ India: Human Rights

Afzal Khan:

[\[178713\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his counterparts in the Indian Government on its application of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and other similar legislation in that country in response to (a) mass protests and (b) other activities by activists in that country.

Nigel Adams:

We engage India on a range of human rights matters, working with Union and State Government, and NGOs, to build capacity and share expertise to promote human rights for all in India. Where we have concerns, we raise them directly with the Government of India. On 9 October, officials from the British High Commission in New Delhi highlighted the impact on activists and human rights campaigners of amendments to Indian security legislation with India's Ministry of Home Affairs.

International Development Association: Finance**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[179341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in funding allocated by the Government to the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA 19) on tackling the covid-19 pandemic in low income countries in 2021-22.

James Duddridge:

The World Bank's International Development Association (IDA), with the support of the UK, has provided significant financial assistance to low-income countries during the pandemic, with over \$50 billion of financing made available to the end of June 2021 and further support being made available in 2021-22. While we cannot yet confirm our specific funding allocations, we confirmed in the 2021/22 Spending Review that the UK would remain the largest donor to the latest replenishment of IDA.

Israel: Palestinians**Stephen Timms:**[\[178772\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Israeli counterpart on the sexual violence reportedly committed against a Palestinian child in Israeli detention on 13 January 2021.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to make representations to the Israeli authorities on reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors in Israeli military detention. In instances where there have been accusations of ill-treatment, we advocate swift, transparent investigation.

Lebanon: Females**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[174938\]](#)

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 IRC programme to help vulnerable marginalised women and girls in Lebanon will be reduced in the 2021-22 financial year.

James Cleverly:

The UK is a long-standing friend of Lebanon and the Lebanese people.

Since the start of the Syria Crisis we have allocated over £787 million in humanitarian and development funding to Lebanon. The FCDO's two programmes with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Lebanon will end as planned in March 2021.

■ **Mehran Raoof**

Lisa Nandy: [\[179098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to his Iranian counterpart on the release of the detained British-Iranian national, Mehran Raoof from Evin prison.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports regarding the arrest and detention of Mr Raoof in Tehran in October 2020 and we stand ready to support him and his family.

Mr Raoof has not requested our assistance; we cannot raise his case with the Iranian Government without a request to do so from him, his family or his representatives.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Afzal Khan: [\[179514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he plans to reply to the correspondence of 17 December 2020 from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton on the EU DisinfoLab Report on Indian Chronicles.

Nigel Adams:

Regretfully, we had no record of receiving this item of correspondence on 17 December. One of my officials has reached out to your office in order to obtain a copy which we have now received. We will work to expedite a response on receipt.

■ **Myanmar: Military Coups**

Carol Monaghan: [\[179219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of (a) the number of political prisoners in Myanmar and (b) the number of peaceful protestors killed in Myanmar since the coup in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The reports of the arbitrary detention of thousands of people, as well as credible reports of torture are deeply concerning. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners estimates that 3,000 people have been detained and over 700 killed since the start of the coup. 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 particularly abhorrent. The violent crackdown on peaceful protestors is completely unacceptable and requires a strong message from the international community. It is essential that all those arbitrarily detained, are released. We condemn the politically motivated charges against those who are protesting the coup.

■ Myanmar: Political Prisoners

Carol Monaghan:

[\[179220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to the Myanmar military on the torture of political prisoners in that country.

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. 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. On 10 March, the UK secured a Presidential Statement at the UN Security Council condemning violence and calling on the military to respect human rights and democracy.

■ Myanmar: Politics and Government

Carol Monaghan:

[\[179221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to support dialogue and a peaceful transfer of power to the democratically elected government in Myanmar.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is clear that the military must respect the results of the November 2020 general election and accept the expressed wishes of the people of Myanmar. We will continue to put pressure on them to that end. The UK is working with partners across the region and the international community who share our ambitions and aims for a democratic Myanmar.

■ Myanmar: Religious Freedom

Carol Monaghan:

[\[179222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of levels of violence against or detention of faith leaders and religious figures in Myanmar.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is very concerned by divisive, racist and nationalist propaganda perpetuated by the military regime since the coup. Our Embassy is meeting with a range of stakeholders, including Buddhist, Christian and Muslim leaders who are bravely standing up against the military junta. The UK also works with partners and other community leaders to improve religious tolerance and social cohesion through

facilitating a greater understanding of religious and cultural differences, and promoting dialogue between different communities across Myanmar.

We continue to raise our concern, including at the UN Human Rights Council, at the Race and Religion Laws and the 1982 Citizenship Law which have been used to discriminate against non-Buddhists.

■ **Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe**

Tulip Siddiq: [\[175958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what diplomatic steps he plans to take in the event that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is not allowed to return to the UK by the end of April 2021.

James Cleverly:

We continue to raise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case at the most senior levels in the Iranian Government and are doing all we can to bring her home as soon as possible. The Foreign Secretary continues to press Foreign Minister Zarif for her release and the Prime Minister has raised this with President Rouhani, most recently on 10 March. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most recently on 29 March, and we will continue to request access to any future hearings.

■ **Overseas Aid**

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[179337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has advised charities and private sector suppliers in receipt of UK aid that they should not share information publicly on proposed reductions to that aid; and what his Department's policy is on the allocation of UK aid funding to charities and private sector suppliers in the event that those potential recipients have shared information publicly on proposed reductions to that aid.

Nigel Adams:

Final decisions about reductions to Official Development Assistance have not yet been made. Delivery partners are free to raise concerns about potential reductions without fear that this will prejudice their standing with FCDO. Delivery partners will continue to be chosen on the basis of who is best able to deliver UK aid programmes, including through the fair and transparent procurement process set out in the Public Procurement Regulations.

■ **Persecution of Christians Across the Globe Independent Review**

Sir Jeffrey M Donaldson: [\[178838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress his Department has made in implementing the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review of his Department's work to support persecuted Christians.

Nigel Adams:

The Government has committed to implementing the Bishop of Truro's recommendations in full, and work continues to implement them in a way that will bring real improvement to the lives of those persecuted due to their faith or belief. Of the 22 recommendations we have fully delivered ten, made good progress on a further eight, and are confident that all 22 will be delivered by the time of the independent review in 2022. At a country level, Ministers and officials regularly raise specific cases of concern, and discuss practices and laws that discriminate on the basis of religion or belief.

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 works with the Minister of State responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, to continue work on delivering the recommendations.

■ St Vincent and the Grenadines: Volcanoes**Fabian Hamilton:**[\[178834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) financial and (b) technical support the Government is providing to the St Vincent Government in response to the recent eruptions of the La Soufrière volcano.

Nigel Adams:

We are monitoring the situation in St Vincent and the Grenadines closely and our thoughts are with those affected by the eruption.

The UK has pledged an initial £200,000 to help address the immediate humanitarian impact of the volcano eruption, which will be used for emergency supplies and other immediate needs.

Urgently needed technical experts will support relief efforts on the ground, support emergency telecommunications, and restore critical lifeline facilities, like transport links.

We will continue to work with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency to provide further support.

■ Syria: Humanitarian Situation**Jim Shannon:**[\[174834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to relieve sanctions on Syria in order to improve the humanitarian situation in that country.

James Cleverly:

The UK continues to pursue sanctions as a policy tool to hold the Syrian regime to account. UK sanctions send a clear message to the regime and its supporters that we will not stand by whilst the regime continues to commit serious human rights abuses.

Our Syria sanctions carefully target specific individuals, entities and sectors. The UK and European partners take all possible steps to mitigate against the wider impact of sanctions on Syrian civilians. We do not sanction medicine, medical equipment and medical assistance. Items required to fight the COVID-19 pandemic are not subject to direct restrictions on export, supply, financing or use in Syria. Humanitarian exemptions apply in relation to other equipment required by the Syrian pharmaceutical industry.

■ **Tanveer Ahmed Rafique**

Sarah Owen:

[\[179592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 16 March 2021 to Question 167327, if he will provide an update on support provided to Tanveer Ahmed Rafique.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO continue regular contact with prison authorities in Pakistan to check on Mr Rafique's welfare and have sought assurances that medical staff will continue to monitor his health. His family are being kept informed of all developments and we continue to speak to Mr Rafique, his friends and lawyers. Whilst prison visits are suspended due to the pandemic, we continue to arrange telephone calls with Mr Rafique to discuss any welfare and health issues. Mr Rafique and his lawyer have lodged an appeal against his sentence. We hope that a pro bono legal panel, arranged by the FCDO, will provide support to his lawyers during this next stage of his legal case.

We regularly raise our concerns about the human rights situation with the Government of Pakistan at a senior level. On 20 February, Minister of State for South Asia and Minister responsible for Human Rights, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, discussed our human rights concerns with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights.

■ **West Bank: Humanitarian Aid**

Stephen Timms:

[\[178771\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the Government of Israel to provide (a) compensation and (b) restitution for the destruction of UK-funded humanitarian aid structures in the occupied West Bank which led to the displacement of people in the community of Khirbet Humsah al-Foqa in February 2021.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises the demolition of Palestinian property with the Government of Israel, including over the repeated confiscation and demolition of donor-funded assistance and structures at Humsa al Bqai'a. We continue to monitor the situation in Humsa al Bqai'a closely. Officials from the British Consulate General in Jerusalem most recently visited on 16 February. UK and European UN Security Council members delivered a joint statement on 25 February, calling for unimpeded access

for the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to the community. The UK Ambassador alongside European Ambassadors urged an end to demolitions in Humsa Al-Baqai'a in a meeting with Israeli authorities on 25 February. There have been no further demolitions or confiscations in the community since 22 February.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Alcoholism: Health Services

Fiona Bruce: [\[178546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Addictions Strategy will include measures to prevent as well as treat alcohol addiction.

Fiona Bruce: [\[178547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to protect funding for alcohol treatment in the Addictions Strategy.

Fiona Bruce: [\[178548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the Addictions Strategy will help reduce alcohol harm.

Jo Churchill:

The scope of the United Kingdom cross-Government addiction strategy is still being developed but will consider a range of issues including drugs, alcohol and problem gambling. The Department will consider the emerging evidence around increased alcohol harms during the COVID-19 pandemic and what further action is needed as we develop the strategy.

■ Brain: Tumours

Jonathan Ashworth: [\[179122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has for increasing funding awards for brain tumour research, particularly for research on brain tumours in children.

Edward Argar:

In May 2018 the Government announced £40 million over five years for brain tumour research as part of the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). This includes research on brain tumours in children.

The NIHR welcomes funding applications for research into any aspect of human health, including brain tumours. As with other Government funders of health research, the NIHR does not allocate funding for specific disease areas. The level of research spend in a particular area, is driven by factors including scientific potential and the number and scale of successful funding applications.

Jonathan Ashworth:

[179124]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to improve the speed of diagnosis for children with brain tumours.

Jo Churchill:

Improving early diagnosis of all cancer is a priority and in the Spending Review we announced a further £325 million of new investment in National Health Service diagnostics equipment to improve clinical outcomes.

■ Centene

Dr Rupa Huq:

[179306]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will intervene to block Centene's acquisition of GP practices in England.

Jo Churchill:

Centene Corporation does not directly own any general practitioner (GP) surgeries in England. It is the owner of Operose Health Ltd.'s holding companies. Operose Health Ltd currently hold a number of GP contracts in England.

Regardless of whether a general practice is run by an individual, a partnership or any other organisation, all providers of National Health Service core primary medical services are subject to the same requirements, regulation and standards.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Nadia Whittome:

[179725]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the public health risks of the use of hand dryers in toilets in public venues during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

At meeting 29 on 28 April 2020, Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies considered a paper on environmental influences on transmission of COVID-19 including the contamination risks of jet hand dryers in public bathrooms. The paper noted that hand hygiene methods may have a significant effect on hand contamination and subsequent surface contamination. The paper is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-influence-on-transmission-of-covid-19-28-april-2020>

■ Coronavirus: Gyms

Ian Mearns:

[179033]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the closure of gym and fitness facilities as a result of the covid-19 restrictions on (a) physical and (b) mental public health.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no assessment.

The Chief Medical Officer is clear that being physically active is important to long-term health and crucial for keeping people healthy. The Government ensured that people could exercise throughout the national restrictions and will also ensure that grassroots sport can resume as soon as restrictions ease.

Coronavirus: Vaccination**Florence Eshalomi:**[\[178688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to provide early access to covid-19 vaccinations for single parents who are at risk of being unable to care for their children in the event that they fall ill with covid-19 and do not have support from another parent or carer during the covid-19 lockdown.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Prioritisation for COVID-19 vaccination in phase one of the programme is based on reducing mortality, morbidity and protecting the health and social care system. Phase two, which started on 13 April, has been based on risk of serious health outcomes from COVID-19 therefore individuals have not been prioritised on the basis of factors such as responsibility for child-care. There are currently no plans to prioritise on this basis.

Naz Shah:[\[179181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether doctors can refuse to register individuals, whose immigration status is yet to be decided, for a covid-19 vaccine.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Doctors cannot refuse to register individuals whose immigration status is yet to be decided, for a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccination against COVID-19 is offered to every adult living in the United Kingdom free of charge, regardless of immigration status. Entitlement to free National Health Service treatment is generally based on ordinary residence in the UK. A person who can show they have taken up ordinary residence in the UK can access all NHS services immediately, including COVID-19 vaccinations, based on clinical need. No immigration checks are needed to receive these services and the NHS is not required to report undocumented migrants to the Home Office.

Duncan Baker:[\[179602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) importance of the OCTAVE trial and the timescale for its preliminary and full results for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable immunosuppressed and (b) level of risk to those people during the period from the end of shielding to the completion of the covid-19 vaccination programme for all adults; and what steps he is taking to reduce the risk of infection and protect people who are immunosuppressed, who may not

fully benefit from their own vaccination, in addition to prioritising the vaccination for the people who live with them.

Jo Churchill:

This OCTAVE study will provide important insights into the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in clinically at-risk groups. This includes COVID-19 vaccine responses in patients with certain immunosuppressed conditions, including those with inflammatory disorders, high risk cancer patient groups, and patients with severe kidney and liver disease. The research will use comprehensive immune tests performed on blood samples taken before and/or after COVID-19 vaccination. It will determine patients' COVID-19 immune response and therefore the likelihood that vaccines will fully protect these groups from COVID-19 infection. Key sample timings include 28 days and 6 months post vaccine boost. Results will be available within three months of sampling date. It is estimated that initial results for 28 days post-vaccine will be available across the majority of the cohort by the middle of June.

The decision to pause shielding was based on the epidemiological data which showed that cases of COVID-19 had fallen considerably from when national restrictions were first introduced in January. In addition to the prioritisation for COVID-19 vaccines of households of immunosuppressed individuals, the Government continues to provide all clinically extremely vulnerable individuals with additional guidance that they are advised to take to help protect themselves.

Olivia Blake:

[\[179708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to offer antibody testing for people who are immune suppressed to assess whether they have generated a response to covid-19 vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Routine COVID-19 antibody testing is not available to everyone who is immune suppressed but this cohort is well-represented in research studies. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is funding research on vaccine responses in groups of immune-suppressed individuals as part of its support for the OCTAVE study in the National Core Studies Immunity Programme. UKRI is providing initial funding of £1.8 million for up to 12 months towards the OCTAVE study.

The Government has testing capability in place to enact targeted antibody testing regimes for specific groups if clinical evidence from research studies suggest that it is necessary.

Nadia Whittome:

[\[179718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) people with chronic and terminal illnesses receive the second dose of the covid-19 vaccine as quickly as possible after the first dose and (b) there are no delays in the administration of that vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government's policy, based on recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) and the four United Kingdom Chief Medical Officers, is that second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine should be administered within 12 weeks of the first dose. This is the case for all people receiving a vaccination, including people with chronic and terminal illnesses.

People with chronic and terminal illnesses are receiving the second dose within 12 weeks of their first dose and there are currently no delays.

Dental Services**Holly Lynch:**[\[179250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to improve access to NHS dentists in (a) Calderdale and (b) England.

Jo Churchill:

Contractual arrangements for the first six months of the 2021/22 financial year have been communicated to dental practices by NHS England and NHS Improvement. National Health Service dentists have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible. A revised unit of dental activity threshold has been set at 60% for full payment of NHS contractual value, based on data that indicates practices have capacity to safely achieve more dental activity than in the final quarter of 2020/21. It is expected that this increased threshold will improve access to NHS dentistry. Arrangements will continue to be monitored and at current are expected to be in place for six months in order to provide increased stability for dental practices.

Calder Valley, received additional funding as part of the access scheme. This has been extended until the end of September 2021 and NHS England and NHS Improvement are currently considering the most effective way to support practices to improve access for patients. In circumstances where patients are unable to access an urgent dental appointment directly through a NHS dental practice, they are advised to call NHS 111 who will assist in booking an appointment at one of over 100 designated urgent care centres, which continue to stay open across Yorkshire.

General Practitioners: Coronavirus**Kate Osamor:**[\[105481\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the guidance issued to general practitioners recruited to the covid-19 Clinical Assessment Service in August 2020.

Edward Argar:

General practitioners (GPs) in the COVID-19 Clinical Assessment Service (CCAS) access a number of guidance resources which are published online, including the relevant pages at NHS.UK and GOV.UK.

GPs also access guidance via the NHS Pathways system and the NHS Futures Forum with ongoing professional and clinical discussions for support from within the service. The CCAS is administered by South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust has advised that this guidance is commercially sensitive as a result of the competitive process to award contracts to individuals or service providers to deliver the CCAS.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Robert Halfon:

[\[179027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason data on the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers is no longer publicly available; and if he will make that data available again online ahead of the increase in value of Healthy Start payments in April 2021 to allow local teams to assess their progress in promoting the scheme and increasing uptake.

Jo Churchill:

The NHS Business Services Authority launched a new Healthy Start website on 18 March 2021 in compliance with current accessibility standards and regulations. The previous uptake reports could not be made compliant with these accessibility standards and have been temporarily removed from the new website. The NHS Business Services Authority is prioritising work to re-publish the uptake data on the Healthy Start website.

■ HIV Infection: Drugs

Peter Kyle:

[\[179301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how the notional PrEP allocation of £577,957 in the Public Health Grant 2021-2022 for Brighton and Hove Council was calculated.

Jo Churchill:

Notional pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) funding allocations were calculated using a formula that considers the costs associated with continuing to deliver PrEP to residents who who received it through the PrEP Impact Trial and once the trial ended in October 2020, as well as to residents who would be starting PrEP for the first time during 2021-22. This approach was informed by feedback on the 2020/21 PrEP allocations from commissioner representatives and sexual health providers.

■ Kidney Diseases: Medical Treatments

Jim Shannon:

[\[164476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of covid-19 patients that have required dialysis in a clinical setting since March 2020.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The United Kingdom Renal Registry collects data on the number of patients in a dialysis facility who have COVID-19. This data has been collected in two time periods. From 1 April to 31 August 2020, 2,339 of in-centre haemodialysis patients had a diagnosis of COVID-19 in England. From 1 September 2020 to 3 March 2021, the figure was 3,566.

Members: Correspondence**Rosie Cooper:**[\[178929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 11 December 2020 on continuing care.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member's letter on 15 April.

NHS 111: Coronavirus**Kate Osamor:**[\[102133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 8 October 2020 to Question 96968, if he will place in the Library a copy of the assessment that call handlers recruited to the NHS 111 covid-19 Response Service have to pass before taking live calls.

Kate Osamor:[\[105483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 October 2020 to Question 99681 on NHS 111: Training, if he will publish the training materials provided to call handlers recruited to the Coronavirus Response Service.

Edward Argar:

The Coronavirus Response Service (CRS) is run by South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust has advised that the information requested is commercially sensitive as a result of the competitive process to award contracts to individuals or service providers to deliver the CRS.

Prostate Cancer: Health Services**Craig Whittaker:**[\[179003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of NHS Cancer Recovery Funding his Department has allocated to tackle the backlog in prostate cancer services as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and what comparative assessment he has made of how that allocation compares with such funding allocated to other cancers.

Jo Churchill:

This information is not held centrally. Funding allocation is decided at a local service level and is dependent on the needs of these services.

■ Recreation Spaces: Urban Areas

Colleen Fletcher:

[179160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the merits of increasing access to public green spaces in urban areas to help reduce health inequalities; and what steps the Government is taking to increase (a) access to and (b) the number of public green spaces in (i) urban areas and (ii) deprived communities.

Jo Churchill:

At present no direct discussions have taken place. However, the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, 'A green future: Our 25-year plan to improve the environment' acknowledges the essential role that the natural environment and greenspace play in people's physical and mental health. This includes helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces and through greening towns and cities. The Plan is available at the following link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Public Health England is collaborating with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Natural England on projects in relation to improving access to outdoor spaces.

■ Social Services: Reform

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[178979]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to reform social care; and what the timescale is for the publication of those plans.

Helen Whately:

The Government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward plans for reform in 2021. Our objectives for reform are to enable an affordable, high quality adult social care system that meets people's needs, whilst supporting health and care to join up services around people.

We are working closely with local and national partners to ensure our approach to reform is informed by diverse perspectives, including of those with lived experience of the care sector. There are complex questions to address and it is important that we give these issues our full consideration in the light of current circumstances.

■ Tobacco: Sales

Alex Norris:

[179406]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 are used to remove any products found to contain menthol immediately from the market following the results of the Public Health England investigation into the illegal sale of these products.

Jo Churchill:

We await the outcome of Public Health England's testing of tobacco products as part of the Department's investigation of possible breaches of the prohibition of menthol at a level that gives the product a characterising flavour. If any products are tested and found to be in breach of the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016, action will be taken to remove these products from the market.

Urology: Nurses**Craig Whittaker:**[\[179004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many of clinical nurse specialists are focused solely on (a) urology and (b) prostate cancer in England.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold the data requested.

Craig Whittaker:[\[179005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of clinical nurse specialists working in (a) urology and (b) prostate cancer.

Jo Churchill:

Specialist clinical nursing workforce working in urology and prostate cancer is a post registration qualification and it is the responsibility of individual employers to ensure they have the staff available to provide clinical services.

The Spending Review 2020 provided £260 million to continue to grow the National Health Service workforce and support commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, including continuing to take forward the Cancer Workforce Plan - Phase One commitment to expand education and training to increase the number of clinical nurse specialists by 250 and develop common and consistent competencies.

Vaccination**Chris Green:**[\[174872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to accelerate the (a) adoption and (b) uptake of vaccines approved by the Medicines Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The vaccines approved for adoption in the United Kingdom have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation regularly reviews MHRA approved vaccines and makes recommendations to the Department. These recommendations are considered thoroughly before putting in place new vaccines. Any vaccine that is approved must go through the same clinical trials and safety checks as other licensed medicines.

A range of actions have been implemented to improve vaccination uptake for children of all ages in England. This includes initiatives to improve access to the immunisation programme; communication with the public; data to better identify underserved individuals and populations; and training for healthcare professionals.

■ Vaccination: Children

Daisy Cooper:

[\[179573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to make an announcement on the vaccination timetable for children with underlying health conditions who are not included in the Green Book guidance.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Given the absence of safety and efficacy data on the vaccines in children, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation currently advises that only children at very high risk of exposure and serious illness, such as older children with severe neuro-disabilities in residential care, should be offered vaccination.

Studies into the safety and efficacy of the vaccines in children are ongoing. Any further recommendations on vaccinating children with other underlying conditions will be reviewed after the studies have been completed and the data allows a better assessment of risks and benefits.

HOME OFFICE

■ Agriculture: Seasonal Workers

Dave Doogan:

[\[179549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish details of the remaining two licenced operators for the seasonal agricultural workers scheme; and what steps she has taken to transfer allocations between licensed suppliers where any one supplier cannot fulfil their allocation of workers.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office does not provide ongoing updates regarding the consideration of specific sponsor licence applications. Any organisation applying for a sponsor licence will be notified of the outcome once their application has been fully considered.

The Home Office has established processes for managing the quotas granted to scheme operators.

We will continue to closely monitor uptake as the year progresses

■ Antisocial Behaviour and Crime

Grahame Morris:

[\[179024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will allocate additional policing resources to areas experiencing (a) anti-social behaviour and (b) crime rates above the national average.

Kit Malthouse:

Decisions about the allocation of police resources are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable PCCs. They are responsible for ensuring the needs of the local community are met.

To help ensure that the police have the resources they need to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, we have given them the biggest funding increase in a decade and are recruiting 20,000 additional officers by March 2023, which provides extra resource to protect the public and keep us safe.

On the 4th February 2021, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £636 million compared to 2020/21. Overall police funding available to PCCs will increase by up to £703 million (5.4% in cash terms) next year.

Asylum: Hotels**Holly Lynch:**[\[179251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of dispersal asylum properties that are required to end the use of hotels as asylum accommodation; and what the timeframe is for contractors to acquire those properties.

Kevin Foster:

We currently have c8100 people in hotels, although the exact number will change daily.

Our providers are working to procure sufficient accommodation to exit contingency accommodation and maintain a business as usual operation thereafter.

We require providers to work at pace, but at the same time have directed them to procure accommodation which is safe and secure for asylum seekers and the communities in which they live. This is the principle we continue to follow, so where there is substantive and reliable evidence which raise doubts in such regard, we will work with local authorities, Police and providers to resolve them.

We remain committed to working in partnership with Local Authorities, through the use the Strategic Migration Partnerships to ensure the views of Local Authorities are included when forward planning

Biometric Residence Permits**Peter Kyle:**[\[179297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of Biometric Residence Permit cards are produced by the DVLA within 10 working days of a notification of the decision to grant leave being sent out.

Kit Malthouse:

DVLA processes all BRP within 10 working days of receiving the request. It has a service level agreement to complete 90% of production requests within one working

day and the remaining 10% within two working days. For the financial year 2020/21 it achieved 69.3% (630,173) within 24 hours and 97.9% (259,977) within 48 hours. 2.1% (19,250) took longer than 48 hours.

The production of BRPs outside the 48 hour target was the result of a production failure at DVLA over a three working day period between 22 – 26 October 2020. The average processing time of the 19,250 affected was three working days. This enabled our secure delivery provider, FedEx, to attempt to deliver all BRPs within 10 working days of the decision notification being issued.

UKVI meets with DVLA weekly to monitor performance. The impacts of Covid-19 restrictions and safe working practices have reduced staffing capacity within the production site and contributed to the delays experienced in failing to achieve the 24 hour SLA.

■ Bomb Disposal: Exeter

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[178786\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the liability for the damage caused by the recent detonation of a World War II bomb in Exeter.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[178787\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential merits of establishing a fund to reimburse and compensate people affected by damage caused by the recent detonation of a World War II bomb in Exeter.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[178788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government plans to provide a briefing on the recent disposal of a World War II bomb in Exeter and distribute that briefing to the residents, businesses and insurance companies affected.

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[178789\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if the Government will intervene where insurers refuse or query claims in relation to the recent disposal of a World War II bomb in Exeter.

Kit Malthouse:

In cases such as this, the expectation is for costs to be met by private insurance. Communication channels for the public were set up through both the County and City Councils, and members of the public impacted by this incident were urged to go through those channels.

The Home Office does not routinely provide briefing when such instances occur. We would expect the local Council to keep residents and businesses updated.

The HO does not consider it is liable for any damage caused.

It is not for the Home Office to intervene in disputes between insurers and their clients, therefore it would not be appropriate for us to comment.

■ **British Citizenship: Northern Ireland**

Claire Hanna:

[179656]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of waiving the citizenship application fee for Irish citizens resident in Northern Ireland applying for British citizenship.

Kevin Foster:

Under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the people of Northern Ireland have the right to identify and be accepted as British, Irish or both, as they may so choose.

Irish citizens are automatically deemed to be "settled" in the United Kingdom and so any child born in the UK to an Irish citizen would be a British citizen by birth.

Irish Citizens have a unique position under UK law and do not need to apply for immigration leave to work, live or study in the UK. As such there has been no assessment of the potential merits of waiving the citizenship application fee for Irish citizens resident in Northern Ireland applying for British citizenship. Fee waivers, exceptions and reductions are not extended to citizenship applications, except in very limited circumstances.

We keep our 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 which can be viewed via the following link:

(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/22/section/68>).

■ **British Nationality: Applications**

Catherine West:

[178561]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how she plans to assess applicants for British citizenship who cannot meet the continuous residency requirement as they were unable to return to the UK from abroad as a result of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kevin Foster:

We are taking a pragmatic approach to the coronavirus outbreak and continue to monitor the situation in all countries. Individuals who are following official advice will not be penalised as a result of issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

There is discretion within the British Nationality Act 1981 to overlook excess absences. We would normally do so where there are compelling or compassionate grounds, such as the impact of the global pandemic.

■ Children: Exploitation

Peter Kyle:

[179296]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of existing modern slavery legislation in tackling child criminal exploitation.

Victoria Atkins:

THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO TACKLING THE HEINOUS CRIME OF MODERN SLAVERY IN ALL ITS FORMS AND STRENGTHENING THE MODERN SLAVERY ACT 2015 TO ENSURE IT CONTINUES TO BE WORLD LEADING AS THE FORMS OF MODERN SLAVERY AND THE NATURE OF EXPLOITATION CONTINUE TO EVOLVE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON, IN 2018, THE GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONED FRANK FIELD, MARIA MILLER MP AND BARONESS BUTLER-SLOSS TO LEAD AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE MODERN SLAVERY ACT 2015. THE REVIEW'S PURPOSE WAS TO REPORT ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ACT, WHICH PROVIDES THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR TACKLING MODERN SLAVERY IN THE UK. THE FINAL REVIEW MADE 80 RECOMMENDATIONS ACROSS FOUR THEMES: THE INDEPENDENT ANTI-SLAVERY COMMISSIONER; TRANSPARENCY IN SUPPLY CHAINS; INDEPENDENT CHILD TRAFFICKING GUARDIANS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS ADVOCATES); LEGAL APPLICATION OF THE MODERN SLAVERY ACT. THE GOVERNMENT WELCOMED THE FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW AND ACCEPTED OR PARTIALLY ACCEPTED THE MAJORITY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS. THE REVIEW CONSIDERED THE DEFINITION OF CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION UNDER THE ACT AND CONCLUDED THAT IT SHOULD NOT BE AMENDED AS THE DEFINITION CURRENTLY IN PLACE IS SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE TO MEET A RANGE OF NEW AND EMERGING FORMS OF MODERN SLAVERY. THE REVIEW RECOMMENDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PRODUCE POLICY GUIDANCE TO ASSIST IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE ACT. CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION IS DEFINED IN STATUTORY GUIDANCE FOR FRONTLINE PRACTITIONERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN, INCLUDING THE KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION AND WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN STATUTORY GUIDANCE. THE HOME OFFICE HAS ALSO ROLLED OUT INDEPENDENT CHILD TRAFFICKING GUARDIANS (ICTGs), AS SET OUT IN SECTION 48 OF THE ACT, IN ONE-THIRD OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES ACROSS ENGLAND AND WALES. ICTGs PROVIDE AN INDEPENDENT SOURCE OF ADVICE FOR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN. AS PART OF THE ICTG SERVICE MODEL, ICTG REGIONAL PRACTICE CO-ORDINATORS (RPCs) HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONGST PROFESSIONALS ABOUT THE NON-PUNISHMENT PRINCIPLE AND THE SECTION 45 DEFENCE OF THE ACT FOR CHILDREN WHO COMMIT OFFENCES IN THE COURSE, OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF, BEING TRAFFICKED. THE CONTINUED NATIONAL ROLL-OUT OF ICTGs IS BEING PROGRESSED AS PART OF THE NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISM TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME, WHICH IS IMPROVING THE UK'S SYSTEM FOR IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING ALL VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY. MORE WIDELY, THE HOME OFFICE IS WORKING TO ENSURE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND PARTNERS MAKE FULL USE OF THE POWERS AND TOOLS AVAILABLE, INCLUDING SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION AND RISK ORDERS TO TACKLE COUNTY LINES AND ASSOCIATED CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION.

■ Domestic Abuse: Missing Persons

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[179688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if her Department will publish information on the number of females across the UK who have domestic abuse markers against their name and are currently missing for each year since 2010.

Victoria Atkins:

We have interpreted this question as referring to the number of females with a police marker indicating they are a potential victim of domestic abuse. The data requested is not held by the Home Office. Individual police forces may hold this data.

For the year ending March 2020, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) showed that an estimated 2.3 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year.

■ Emergency Services Network: Strathconon

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[178675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 1 March 2021 to Question 157144 on Emergency Services Network: Strathconon, for what reason the activation of extended area service sites cannot be accelerated on sites where both the passive infrastructure and electricity are already in place.

Kit Malthouse:

We expect the contract for connecting all 292 EAS masts to the network to be awarded in Autumn 2021. We do need to follow government procurement processes fully in this award and are unable to accelerate this aspect of the process. Each site has to be individually designed, with planning approval granted, built and then integrated into the EE/ESN network. By default, EAS masts are in the most remote and rural areas of the country, situated in difficult terrain and with accessibility issues. After the award of the contract we anticipate that a survey of each site will result in activation timelines varying depending on the work involved. We will then complete the physical work to connect the mast to the network and, separately, activate the mast. Although we cannot give firm dates for the final activation of masts at this stage, we expect this work to commence in 2022 and complete towards the end 2024.

■ G7: Cornwall

Sarah Atherton:

[\[178707\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of offering a covid-19 vaccine to police officers who will be working at the G7 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.

■ Hassockfield Secure Training Centre

Layla Moran:

[\[179475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's rationale is for building a new immigration detention centre on the site at Hassockfield Secure Training at Meadomsley, County Durham; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient resilience, geographical footprint and capacity for the men and women it proves necessary to detain for the purposes of removal, while providing value for money.

The Home Office has acquired the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham and will open it as an immigration removal centre for women by the autumn. The Hassockfield site is already a government asset. By utilising an existing secure site, the Home Office is delivering the most cost-effective option for maintaining immigration detention capacity, as part of its plans to manage the closure and return of the Morton Hall immigration removal centre to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

■ Hate Crime: Educational Institutions

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[179340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 31 March 2021 to Question 174230, on Hate Crime: Young People, when her Department last undertook a review of the efficacy of its policies on the prevention and reporting of hate crimes in schools and colleges.

Kevin Foster:

The government, alongside schools and teachers, is committed to supporting children and young people to thrive and reach their potential in a safe and respectful environment.

Schools continue to play an important role in preparing children and young people for life in modern Britain, supporting them to understand the society in which they are growing up and teaching about respect for other people and tolerance.

We continue to work with colleagues across government, as well as those in the school sector and communities to better understand issues around discrimination, hatred and prejudice on an ongoing basis. For example, the Department for Education has provided funding to anti-bullying organisations to support schools to tackle bullying, including projects targeting bullying of particular groups, such as those who are victims of hate related bullying.

These grants ended in March 2021, and grant holders are currently working to finalise independent evaluations of their programmes, which will be published in due course.

The Department for Education has considered next steps for anti-bullying support in schools, working closely with external stakeholders, and will shortly be running a procurement exercise to fund activity in 2021-22.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Afzal Khan: [\[178530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 22 January 2021 on Ajmal Waziri.

Afzal Khan: [\[178532\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 2 February 2021 on Mitra Oloufi.

Afzal Khan: [\[179501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 15 December 2020 on Mr Abdul Rehman Abba.

Afzal Khan: [\[179502\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 12 January 2021 on Mr Tolani Lawal.

Afzal Khan: [\[179503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 12 January 2021 on Ms Nuala Jarjes.

Afzal Khan: [\[179504\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 12 January 2021 on Ms Aminata Koroma and Mr Bryan Ashley Musa.

Afzal Khan: [\[179505\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 12 January 2021 on Mr Imran Masood.

Afzal Khan: [\[179507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 9 February 2021 on Hasanain A Alstai.

Chris Philp:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of MPs written correspondence within 20 working days. Performance has been impacted by a very significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, alongside the need for Ministers and officials to instigate a remote process for drafting and signing correspondence during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Department recognises that it has not been able to meet service standard in some cases but have implemented an action plan to clear backlogs and drive up performance.

We regret that The Hon. Member's office has declined several offers to regularly discuss these and other cases in detail with Home Office officials. This offer remains open.

UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team responded as detailed below.

PQ 178530 – MPAM reference 0130533/21 – 25 March 2021

PQ 179503 – MPAM reference 0128323/21 – 31 March 2021

PQ 179507 – MPAM reference 0133230/21 – 1 April 2021

PQ 179504 – MPAM reference 0128306/21 – 31 March 2021

PQ 178532 – MPAM reference 0131823/21 – 31 March 2021

PQ 179505 – MPAM reference 0128684/21 – 27 March 2021

PQ 179501 – MPAM reference 0125432/21 – 6 April 2021

PQ 179502 – MPAM reference 0128279/21 – 30 March 2021

Afzal Khan:

[\[178533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 3 February 2021 on Maziyar Salehi.

Afzal Khan:

[\[178535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 9 February 2021 on Matarr Touray.

Afzal Khan:

[\[178538\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 9 February 2021 on Amir Hasan-Zada.

Afzal Khan:

[\[179495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter of 17 December 2020 from the hon Member for Manchester Gorton regarding Hamar Jalal.

Afzal Khan:

[\[179496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the letters dated 17 November 2020 and 22 December 2020 from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton regarding Amirabbas Banan.

Afzal Khan:

[\[179499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 15 December 2020 on Mr K Mahmood, Mr Hafeez Ahmed and Ms Tayyaba Malik.

Afzal Khan:

[\[179500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 17 December 2020 on Mohamed Shakanti.

Afzal Khan:

[\[179506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 28 January 2021 on Mr Asghar Khodadoust.

Chris Philp:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of MPs written correspondence within 20 working days. Performance has been impacted by a very significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, alongside the need for

Ministers and officials to instigate a remote process for drafting and signing correspondence during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Department recognises that it has not been able to meet service standard in some cases but have implemented an action plan to clear backlogs and drive up performance.

We regret that The Hon. Member's office has declined several offers to regularly discuss these and other cases in detail with Home Office officials. This offer remains open.

UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team responded as detailed below.

PQ 178535 – MPAM reference 0133128/21 – 1 April 2021

PQ 178538 – MPAM reference 0133374/21 – 1 April 2021

PQ 179495 – MPAM reference 0125756/21 – 30 March 2021

PQ 179499 – MPAM reference B3461/11 – 10 December 2020

PQ 179496 – MPAM reference B4171/11 – 13 April 2021

PQ 179506 – MPAM reference 031333/21 – 1 April 2021

PQ 179500 – MPAM reference B4978/11 – 13 April 2021

PQ 178533 – There is no trace of this correspondence being received. UKVI MP Engagement team will contact you to acquire a copy of the correspondence and apply priority

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[178785]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she or her Department plans to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Exeter of 5 March 2021 to the Secretary of State for Defence on the disposal of a World War II bomb in Exeter, which was copied to her and referred to her Department by the Ministry of Defence for further response.

Kit Malthouse:

We are aware and have answered a number of parliamentary questions on the render safe operation carried out in Exeter in February. Regarding questions articulated in Rt Hon Bradshaw's letter of the 5 March, we will write a fuller reply shortly.

Afzal Khan:

[179497]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 16 October 2020 on Kharajan Mohammad.

Afzal Khan:

[\[179498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to provide a substantive response to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Manchester Gorton of 21 October 2020 on Mr Tariq Mahmood and Mr Muhammad Naeem Khan.

Chris Philp:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of MPs written correspondence within 20 working days. Performance has been impacted by a very significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, alongside the need for Ministers and officials to instigate a remote process for drafting and signing correspondence during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Department recognises that it has not been able to meet service standard in some cases but have implemented an action plan to clear backlogs and drive up performance.

We regret that The Hon. Member's office has declined several offers to regularly discuss these and other cases in detail with Home Office officials. This offer remains open.

UK Visas and Immigration, MP Account Management team is pursuing enquiries on both cases and aims to respond as below:

PQ 179497 - B27434/00 – full response to be issued within two weeks.

PQ 179498 - B28129/00 – full response to be issued to the MP within two working days.

UKVI MP Engagement team will contact you if it is not possible to provide full responses within these timeframes.

■ **Peacekeeping Operations: Iraq**

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[179225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment her Department has made of the level of the threat faced by interpreters who previously worked with UK armed forces in Iraq.

Stewart Malcolm McDonald:

[\[179226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effect of the killing of Qasem Soleimani on the safety of interpreters in Iraq who had previously worked for the UK armed forces; and whether her Department plans to update its visa guidance for such interpreters.

Kevin Foster:

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to interpreters who risk their lives working alongside UK forces.

Government supported our locally employed staff (LES) in Iraq through the Locally Employed Staff Assistance Scheme. The scheme was open to those who were direct

employees of HM Forces or the Ministry of Defence (MOD), provided such staff worked in particularly close association with the UK as an integral and visible part of HMG operations, including having regular, substantial and sustained contact with UK official personnel and regular, substantial and sustained attendance at UK official sites.

The scheme was established in 2007 and administered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCDO). The last date for applications for former LES in Iraq to relocate to the UK was 19 May 2009 and the scheme closed in 2016.

The country policy and information note on 'perceived collaborators' published in February 2019 reported the risk level for Iraqi interpreters as low. Our country policy and information notes are published on the gov.uk website. They are kept under constant review and updated periodically.

Our country policy and information notes are based on evidence taken from a wide range of reliable sources, including reputable media outlets; local, national and international organisations, including human rights organisations; and information from the FCDO.

■ **Pets: Theft**

Nadia Whittome: [\[179720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to (a) collect data on the increase in pet theft during the covid-19 lockdown and (b) help tackle the increase in that crime.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is working with the police and others and will consider the evidence and what more could be done to prevent pet theft.

■ **Police: Misconduct**

Jessica Morden: [\[178960\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the length of time taken during police misconduct hearings.

Kit Malthouse:

It is very important that both misconduct investigations and disciplinary proceedings are dealt with in a timely manner.

The Home Office introduced new legislation in February 2020, which includes provisions to improve the timeliness of misconduct hearings. Greater powers for Legally Qualified Chairs (LQCs) allows them to better case manage hearings through the introduction of pre-hearings. This sets specified time limits for hearing dates to be fixed and ensures earlier management of disclosure, legal arguments and witnesses.

This legislation also includes provisions to improve the timeliness of investigations themselves, with specified action if an investigation is not completed within 12 months. This means that the investigating force, or Independent Office for Police

Conduct (IOPC), must put in writing to the Local Policing Body (or police force in the case of the IOPC) what progress it has made, why it hasn't completed the investigation and what it proposes to do to conclude the investigation.

■ Refugees: Resettlement

Fleur Anderson:

[179623]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to launch the UK Resettlement Scheme; and what the target number is of refugees to be resettled in the UK under that scheme.

Chris Philp:

Parliament was informed by Written Ministerial Statement on 18 March (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-03-18/hcws855>) that the new global UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) commenced on completion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. Through UKRS we are committed to welcoming refugees through resettlement in the months and years to come. The Home Office continues to work closely with partners to access capacity for resettlement activity, as we recover from the pandemic. As set out in the New Plan for Immigration we will continue to improve our resettlement offer as a safe and legal route to the UK for refugees in need of protection.

■ Refugees: Syria

John Lamont:

[179353]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how much funding has been provided to the Scottish Borders Council as part of the Syrian vulnerable person resettlement programme.

Chris Philp:

All local authorities receive a 5-year tariff, per refugee resettled, to assist with costs incurred providing support to refugees they have welcomed through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. In year 1 this totals £8,520 per refugee, with additional support for educational and medical needs. In years 2-5 local authorities receive £12,000 per refugee in total: tapering from £5,000 in year 2 to £3,700 in year 3, to £2,300k in year 4 and £1,000k in year 5.

[Home Office Immigration Statistics](#) on asylum and resettlement are published on a quarterly basis. This includes a detailed breakdown of the number of refugees resettled to each local authority.

■ Visas: English Language

Drew Hendry:

[179233]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of enabling visa applicants who would have to travel between local authority areas to attend a testing centre to undertake online English language testing during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

As of 13 April 2021, all SELT test centres in the United Kingdom are open, and testing is available with appropriate health and safety measures in place. There are currently no plans to introduce online testing.

Consideration of the feasibility of online testing prior to the award of the current concessions contracts was undertaken in 2019, however it was assessed at the time the maturity of online proctoring technology and its anti-fraud measures were not at a suitable level to ensure the integrity of the SELT.

The Home Office continues to be interested in the opportunities, innovations and new technologies in this space which can be provided to our customers in the future.

Youth Mobility Scheme**Paul Blomfield:**[\[178710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to expand youth mobility schemes.

Kevin Foster:

We have indicated our intention to continue operating and further expanding our youth mobility arrangements to additional countries.

Each Youth Mobility Scheme is subject to a bilateral, reciprocal agreement which also provides benefit to UK Nationals, with the detail negotiated and agreed between the relevant parties.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**Building Safety Fund****Dame Margaret Hodge:**[\[178760\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many staff in his Department are involved in processing applications for the Building Safety Fund; and what grades those staff are.

Christopher Pincher:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the responsible department and the decision-making body for the Building Safety Fund. We are working with the Greater London Authority (GLA) in London and Homes England (HE) outside London to administer the fund as Delivery Partners. The GLA and HE will draw on specialist expert legal and cost consultancy support to help assess applications.

Dame Margaret Hodge:[\[178761\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of applications to the Building Safety Fund have been accepted; and what proportion of those applications have received funding.

Christopher Pincher:

The number of accepted applications and amount of funding allocated from the Building Safety Fund so far can be found in the Building Safety Fund Registration Statistics, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remediation-of-non-acm-buildings#building-safety-fund-registration-statistics> .

■ Building Safety Fund: Leeds**Hilary Benn:**[\[178611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, for what reason, following the acknowledgement by the Building Safety Fund of its appeal in respect of Clarence House, Leeds Dock on 27 January 2021, the managing agents, LIV, have had no further contact about that appeal despite the 15 working day timetable for a response.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department is continuing to work with building owners to advance applications and appeals for the Building Safety Fund. Any registrants wishing to check their appeal progress can contact the Appeals team through the email address used to submit their appeal.

■ Buildings: Fire Prevention**Theresa Villiers:**[\[178905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to publish further details of the loan system to ensure that required fire safety remediation works can be carried out in buildings under 18 metres without leaseholders having to pay more than £50 per month.

Christopher Pincher:

On 10 February, we announced a generous finance scheme, which will provide leaseholders in buildings of 11-18m with access to finance for cladding remediation costs, and a commitment that their monthly cladding repayment costs will not exceed £50 a month. Further details of the financing scheme will be made available as soon as we are able.

Theresa Villiers:[\[178906\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how his loan scheme for funding fire safety remediation works for buildings under 18 metres will operate in cases where the £50 per month payment by leaseholders will not meet the cost of the works needed even if it continues right up the end of the lease term.

Christopher Pincher:

The Government will fund the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding on buildings over 18m. Buildings above 18m can be very high, some taller than 30m. We know as buildings get taller there is greater risk which is why, in line with longstanding expert advice, we are making sure that these buildings are remediated urgently.

In lower rise buildings, with a lower risk to safety, leaseholders will gain new protection from the costs of cladding removal through a financing scheme, so that leaseholders will never pay more than £50 a month. We will be publishing further details of the financing scheme.

■ **Domestic Violence: Homelessness**

Neil Coyle:

[\[179155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether the statutory guidance accompanying the Domestic Abuse Bill will make clear that housing officers should accept evidence from specialist services as proof of homelessness when they assess applications from women made homeless by domestic abuse.

Eddie Hughes:

It is critical that victims of domestic abuse get support, especially when they are in housing need, and that local authority housing officers are aware of the risks victims of domestic abuse face and know how to support them appropriately.

The published draft statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance, which will accompany the Domestic Abuse Bill, makes clear that with consent from the applicant, housing authorities can seek evidence from friends and relatives of the applicant, social services, health professionals, representatives from Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences, a domestic abuse support service or the police, as appropriate.

This is not an exhaustive list and housing officers should exercise their judgement in determining how to obtain the necessary supporting evidence in each case. The guidance is also clear that local authorities should ensure their enquiries do not provoke further violence or abuse, and that they should not approach the alleged perpetrator.

■ **Herefordshire Council: Finance**

Bill Wiggin:

[\[178843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2010.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[178844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2011.

Bill Wiggin:

[\[178845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2012.

Bill Wiggin: [178846]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2013.

Bill Wiggin: [178847]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2014.

Bill Wiggin: [178848]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2015.

Bill Wiggin: [178849]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2016.

Bill Wiggin: [178850]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2017.

Bill Wiggin: [178851]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2018.

Bill Wiggin: [178852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2019.

Bill Wiggin: [178853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how much funding the Government allocated to Herefordshire Council in 2020.

Luke Hall:

The Government publishes Core Spending Power (CSP) each year as a measure of the resources available to local authorities to fund service delivery

This year's Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS), with a breakdown of CSP for each local authority including Herefordshire Council going back to 2015/16, can be found in the supporting information document here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/core-spending-power-final-local-government-finance-settlement-2021-to-2022>

Core Spending Power was introduced in 2015. Comparisons before that date do not apply, because the system of local government finance changed, councils' responsibilities changed and because grants have been incorporated into the annual Settlement over time.

CSP shows the funding provided through the Settlement, but councils will have access to a number of other grants provided by Government departments as well as

other sources of income not in CSP such as from Sales, Fees, and Charges and commercial income.

Please find relevant links to previous LGFSs below:

YEAR LINK

- 2014/ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2014-to-2015>
- 15
- 2013/ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140505104701/http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1314/settle.htm>
- 14
- 2012/ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140505110056/http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1213/grant.htm>
- 13
- 2011/ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140505110052/http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1112/grant.htm#set>
- 12
- 2010/ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140505110048/http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1011/grant.htm>
- 11
- 2009/ <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140505110054/http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/0910/grant.htm>
- 10

■ **Home Information Packs: Fees and Charges**

Nadia Whittome:

[179730]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of (a) reducing the charge for freehold information packs for individuals selling properties or (b) making those charges means tested.

Christopher Pincher:

FME1 Freehold management forms enquire about information such as the amount of estate rent charges or service charge equivalent, when acting for a buyer of a freehold that shares services with other houses. The rent charge owner, management company, managing agent or their appointed representative should provide this information. The FME1 is not mandatory. We believe that freeholders would also benefit from having more certainty about the cost and timescales for providing this information. We propose to use legislation to set the same timescale and cost for provision of freehold information as we have already committed to for the provision of leasehold sales packs. We would want to ask whether the freehold packs should be subject to the same rules around cost and turnaround time as leasehold packs.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Alex Cunningham:

[\[179107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the expected timescale for Phase 2 of the Levelling Up Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Luke Hall:

The prospectus published at Budget provides guidance for local areas on how to submit bids for the first round of funding for projects starting in 2021-22. There will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds. Further detail on how the Levelling Up Fund will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out later this year.

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[179704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many bids local authorities in the second category can submit to the Levelling Up Fund (a) in the first tranche of bidding and (b) over the lifetime of the Fund.

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[179705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department has issued guidance on the likelihood of success for a second category submission to the Levelling Up Fund; and whether his Department has targets for the proportion of successful bids in the (a) first, (b) second and (c) third category.

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.

The Fund will be allocated competitively, and funding will be targeted towards places in England, Scotland and Wales with the most need, as measured by an index taking into account the following place characteristics: need for economic recovery and growth, need for improved transport connectivity, and need for regeneration. The bandings do not represent eligibility criteria, nor the amount or number of bids a place can submit. Bids from categories 2 and 3 will still be considered for funding on their merits of deliverability, value for money and strategic fit, and could still be successful if they are of exceptionally high quality.

Further detail on how the Levelling Up Fund will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out later this year.

■ Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[\[179252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 173088 on Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland, when the allocation of funding from the Levelling Up Fund will be determined for Northern Ireland for the financial years (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

Louise Haigh:[\[179253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 173088 on Levelling Up Fund: Northern Ireland, what proportion of the £800 million Levelling Up Fund for the devolved administrations will be allocated to Northern Ireland in the financial years (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

Luke Hall:

The Levelling Up Fund will set aside at least £800 million across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland over four years from 2021-22 to 2024-25. For the first round of funding, at least 9% of total UK allocations will be set aside for Scotland, 5% for Wales, and 3% for Northern Ireland. There will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds. Further detail on how the Fund will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out later this year.

■ Members: Correspondence

Kate Hollern:[\[179151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the letter of 2 March 2021 from the hon. Member for Blackburn on local authority remote participation.

Luke Hall:

Luke Hall MP, Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government wrote on 25 March to all Members and leaders of all principal councils in England on the future of regulations introduced during the coronavirus pandemic regarding remote meetings.

The Government is supporting the ongoing legal action for remote meetings to be ruled as permissible under existing legislation. Minister Hall will write again to Members when there is any update on the court case.

■ Planning

Steve Reed:[\[179133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps his Department is taking in response to the Planning for the future consultation.

Christopher Pincher:

The consultation on 'Planning for the Future' closed on 29 October 2020, and received over 44,000 responses, showing the significant interest the reforms generated. We received views from across the sector, including from local authorities, the private sector, community groups, and large numbers of individuals. We also held a series of roundtables with key stakeholder groups, and officials attended over sixty events run by external organisations.

We are considering all of this feedback carefully, and will publish our response setting out the proposed way forward. We anticipate introducing legislation to deliver aspects

of the reforms and will continue to engage with the range of interests involved the planning system as our proposals are developed further.

■ Police and Crime Panels

Kate Hollern:

[\[178585\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will publish any impact assessment it has undertaken on councils returning to in-person meetings after the expiry of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Luke Hall:

Councils have been able to meet in person throughout the pandemic so long as they follow the relevant Covid-19 guidance on the safe use of council buildings. It is for councils to apply the Covid-19 guidance to ensure meetings take place safely.

■ Private Rented Housing: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Paul Blomfield:

[\[179067\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the extent of landlords and private letting agents refusing prospective tenants who are in receipt of support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department does not hold this information but there is no reason landlords or letting agents should be refusing tenants outright on the basis of being furloughed.

The Government has put in place an unprecedented financial package, which supports renters and helps them to afford their housing costs. This includes support for businesses to pay staff salaries through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has now been extended until the end of September 2021.

A letting agent is free to carry out any referencing checks within the law as they deem appropriate before accepting a new tenant. This may include income requirements or the need for a guarantor, depending on the decision of the individual landlord.

■ Recreation Spaces: Urban Areas

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[179162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what (a) financial and (b) other steps his Department is taking to support local authorities to increase (i) access to and (ii) the number of public green spaces in urban areas.

Luke Hall:

The Government recognises the value of parks and green spaces in providing vibrant and inclusive locations for communities to socialise, volunteer, work, and exercise. We have seen during the Covid-19 pandemic how important access to parks and

green spaces are to local communities. MHCLG is aiming to explore how it can best support all urban parks and green spaces, taking into account the Government's environmental, social, and health priorities.

Depending on local decisions, Core Spending Power in England may rise from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms. If councils do decide to take up the entirety of the increase on offer, they will see an increase in line with last years. This recognises the resources councils need to meet their pressures and maintain current service levels.

DEFRA are responsible for accessibility to green spaces and recognises the crucial importance they have for people's health and well-being. The 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our comprehensive and long-term approach to protecting and enhancing our natural landscapes in England for the next generation, and to helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Preet Kaur Gill:

[179333]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what metrics the Government is using to measure the delivery of its levelling up agenda.

Luke Hall:

The Spending Review established a set of provisional priority outcomes and metrics across all departments and policy areas which have been published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2020-documents> .

These outcomes are now being embedded by departments into Outcome Delivery Plans, which will set out strategy and planning information for delivering the priority outcomes and for delivering on strategic "enabling" activities that are crucial to successful delivery.

■ Small Businesses: Leasehold

Thangam Debbonaire:

[179202]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of reforming full repairing and insuring leases for small business premises.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government will launch a review of the commercial landlord and tenant relationship later this year.

This is in response to growing concerns that the current commercial leasehold legislation has not kept pace with the realities of the sector, and will seek views on how to ensure a flexible and fit-for-purpose system that enables sustainable occupation of thriving high streets and town centres as we recover from the pandemic and beyond.

It will consider a broad range of issues including the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954 Part II, different models of rent payment, and the impact of Coronavirus on the market. The Government will make further announcements on the detail, including a timeline and full scope, in due course.

The Government has also recently launched a Call for Evidence on commercial rents to help monitor the overall progress of negotiations between tenants and landlords. This call for evidence will support the Government's decision making on the best way to withdraw or replace existing legislation preventing eviction and insolvency measures, while preserving tenant businesses and the millions of jobs that they support. We welcome responses by 11:45pm on 4 May 2021.

■ **Towns Fund**

Steve Reed:

[\[179134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if his Department will publish details for each of the 53 agreed Town Deals confirming which aspects of the town investment plans will be funded.

Luke Hall:

Once Heads of Terms are agreed between the department and towns for all Town Deals, the department plans to publish these on GOV.UK. Towns are also expected to publish the Heads of Terms on the lead local authority website.

■ **Towns Fund: Public Appointments**

Steve Reed:

[\[179136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what guidance his Department has issued to lead local authorities on who would be an appropriate chair of a Town Deal Board.

Luke Hall:

The Town Deal Board is the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town is defined and is responsible for producing the Town Investment Plan. Town Deal Boards have all generally appointed a private sector chair, as set out in the Towns Fund Prospectus and the Towns Fund further guidance published by the department provides further detail on the roles and responsibilities of the Town Deal Board Chair.

■ **Towns Fund: Standards**

Steve Reed:

[\[179135\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that Town Deal Boards operate in accordance with guidance issued by his Department.

Luke Hall:

As set out in the Towns Fund further guidance, we expect the Town Deal Board to align with the governance standards and policies of the town's lead council. This should include clear processes for managing conflicts of interests and guidance on the declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and exemptions. All Town Deal Board members must sign a code of conduct based on the Seven Nolan Principles and the lead council is required to publish the board's governance and decision-making structures.

My officials have carried out governance reviews for all Town Deal Boards as part of the Town Investment Plan assessment process, where relevant making recommendations for improvements and monitoring implementation.

Our Towns Fund Delivery Partner is also supporting Town Deal Board's through a leadership training programme which will promote good practice in Town Deal Board's and governance structures beyond the Town Fund.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE■ **Cairn Energy: India****Ian Murray:**[\[179021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the international arbitration tribunal decision in favour of Cairn Energy plc in its dispute with the Indian Government; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

HM Government respects the rights of both parties to pursue the legal options available to them and we note the award made by the arbitral tribunal in the case brought by Cairn Energy under the United Kingdom-India Bilateral Investment Treaty. HM Government is not a party to these legal proceedings, so it would be inappropriate to comment.

The Department for International Trade continues to provide support to any British investor seeking investment opportunities in India.

■ **Exports****Bill Esterson:**[\[179083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the letter addressed to her from Export Partners UK dated 9 April 2021 on British exporters.

Graham Stuart:

We welcome engagement from Export Partners UK and we will consider proposals as we refresh our Export Strategy. Announcements in respect of grant allocations, and the 2021-22 programme for trade show support, will be dependent on how

business planning discussions are concluded as part of the overall Spending Review priorities process.

■ Free Ports

Bridget Phillipson:

[179061]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Government's policy on freeports forms part of the negotiating mandate for UK negotiators.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

Freeports will be national hubs for international trade, innovation and commerce, attracting new businesses, spreading jobs, and bringing investment to towns and cities across the country.

Our approach to trade negotiations with the US, Australia, New Zealand and to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

■ Investment and Trade: Wales

Hywel Williams:

[175727]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her Department conducted an impact assessment on the establishment of a Trade and Investment Hub in Cardiff.

Graham Stuart:

No impact assessment was conducted on the establishment of a Trade and Investment Hub in Cardiff. Government-led research included in a Board of Trade report published in March showed exports support 6.5m jobs across the UK, 74% of which are outside London. The research estimates jobs directly and indirectly supported by exports pay around 7% higher than the national median, with Office for National Statistics estimating that goods-exporting businesses are also 21% more productive. Exports and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will be central to this Government's mission to 'level up' the UK economy. Given this context, the Trade and Investment Hubs in Cardiff, Edinburgh, Belfast and Darlington will be established as part of the Department for International Trade's refreshed strategy to boost exports and bring the benefits of the government's global trade policy to the whole of the UK.

■ Small Businesses: West Midlands

Marco Longhi:

[176064]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to support small and medium sized enterprises in (a) Dudley North, (b) Dudley Borough and (c) the West Midlands to increase their exports.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) delivers a range of export services across the West Midlands, Dudley North and Dudley Borough. These include

providing support in accessing international opportunities and trade missions; providing export credit and insurance through UK Export Finance (UKEF); access to DIT's international network; and support provided by experienced International Trade Advisers (ITAs).

DIT recently announced further support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with the introduction a new Internationalisation Fund, providing grants of up to £9k to SMEs to enhance their export potential, and the founding of a new Export Academy, providing businesses with the knowledge, skills and tools to develop and implement an export plan. SMEs will also benefit from direct local support through dedicated Local Enterprise Partnership ITAs that focus on key local priorities.

■ Trade Agreements

Emily Thornberry:

[\[178928\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, which of the continuity free trade agreements negotiated by her Department since 2019 contain prohibitions on duty (a) drawback and (b) exemptions.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

There are currently prohibitions to duty drawback and exemptions in agreements with Canada, Chile, Mexico and Singapore. In addition, there are restrictions on duty drawback and exemptions in place with most trading partners that are signatories to the Pan-European-Mediterranean Convention.

■ Trade Agreements: Western Europe

Emma Hardy:

[\[179412\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what measures are under consideration to ensure that trade deals with (a) Norway, (b) Iceland and (c) Greenland remain fair and balanced in the event that the UK loses access to fishing opportunities previously guaranteed through pre-existing EU agreements with those countries; and what assessment she has made of the potential for tariffs to be introduced for such trade with those countries.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom signed an interim trade agreement on goods with Norway and Iceland, which provides continuity for our trading arrangements, including for fish. This agreement has been in force since 1st January 2021. There is a shared ambition to build on this interim agreement and deliver a comprehensive free trade agreement between the United Kingdom and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

We are in dialogue with the Government of Greenland and are working closely to ensure a prosperous future trade relationship, which meets the needs of both sides. Imports from Greenland are subject to the "UK Global Tariff" at present.

Access to fishing waters negotiations are conducted separately and are ongoing too. HM Government is committed to securing a fair deal for the United Kingdom as a whole and to continue to improve the sustainability of fish stocks.

■ UK Trade with EU

Daniel Kawczynski:

[178964]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department is taking to help businesses to continue exporting to the EU.

Graham Stuart:

The Department for International Trade (DIT) provides support for businesses to understand the changes in trade with the EU via its Transition Period Enquiry Unit. Members can direct their companies to this service here -

<https://www.great.gov.uk/transition-period/contact/>.

DIT is also developing a refreshed Export Strategy to ensure firms can take advantage of new market opportunities through better support, better incentives, and a better business environment. DIT will raise the exporting culture of the UK, take advantage of our new independent trade policy, and target our market share in the world's fastest growing economies.

JUSTICE

■ Bail

Peter Kyle:

[178749]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many suspects in (a) murder and (b) rape cases received bail in each of the last five calendar years.

Chris Philp:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on defendants remanded on bail in England and Wales up to December 2019, prior to court, at magistrates' court and at Crown Court:

Remand status prior to court (relating to suspects) is available in the magistrates' court data tool and is labelled 'Remand status with Police'.

Magistrates' court

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888658/remands-magistrates-court-tool-2019.xlsx

Crown Court

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/888657/remands-crown-court-tool-2019.xlsx

In the data tools, search for murder and rape using the 'Offence' filter and the pivot table will populate with the number of defendants by principal (i.e. most serious) remand status for the chosen offences.

■ Coronavirus: Prisons

Dame Diana Johnson:

[178734]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment his Department has made of the risk of covid-19 infection in prisons for (a) prisoners and (b) prison officers.

Alex Chalk:

The safety of our staff and those under our supervision remains our top priority. We have taken quick and decisive action – backed by Public Health England and Wales – to limit the spread of the virus.

Our measures have included restricting regimes, minimising inter-prison transfers and compartmentalising our prisons into different units to isolate the sick, shield the vulnerable and quarantine new arrivals. A comprehensive regular testing regime of both staff and prisoners is in place and we are also working closely with the NHS to support the roll-out of Covid-19 vaccinations for eligible groups in custody. Our experience and evidence gathering provides an indication that these measures have undoubtedly saved lives and limited the transmission of the virus in prisons.

Plans for easing restrictions in prisons (and re-introducing them where necessary) will be guided by public health advice alongside an operational assessment of what can be safely implemented, whilst ensuring we can keep staff and prisoners safe.

Increasing numbers of adult prisons are now progressing to Stage 3 regimes, as outlined in our National Framework (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-national-framework-for-prison-regimes-and-services>). We are keeping the level of restriction necessary under close review. We must continue to respond in a measured way in line with public health advice to ensure our approach is proportionate and legitimate, as we have done throughout the pandemic.

■ Criminal Liability

Dr Rupa Huq:

[179307]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendation made by the Law Commission as part of its project on Insanity and automatism in 2013, what steps the Government is taking to bring forward legislative proposals to replace the common law defence of insanity with a new defence of being not criminally responsible by reason of recognised medical condition.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[179308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the common law defence of insanity; and what steps the Government plans to take to improve the law on criminal insanity.

Alex Chalk:

The Government has considered the proposals in the Law Commission's 2013 discussion paper.

Whilst we note the Law Commission's proposals on the potential to update the law in this area, we have no current plans to bring forward legislative proposals in relation to this rarely used defence. However, we continue to keep this, and the wider and related law on unfitness to plead, under review.

■ **Juries: Breastfeeding**

Alison Thewliss:

[\[179199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to introduce an exemption from jury service to people breastfeeding.

Chris Philp:

Currently all jurors, including breastfeeding women, can apply to change the date of their jury service, (to a maximum of 12 months after the original date) if the original date is inconvenient for any good reason. If a juror believes they cannot serve at any time within the next 12 months, they can apply for an excusal. Deferral and excusal applications are considered by summoning officers at the Jury Central Summoning Bureau (JCSB). This is done on individual merit and is done carefully, sympathetically and with regard to individual circumstances.

While it is vital juries represent a cross-section of society, we are urgently reviewing our guidance to make it clearer that new mothers should be able to serve at a time that is right for them.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[179683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what provisions his Department have put in place to support breast feeding women who are called to undertake jury service.

Alex Davies-Jones:

[\[179684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether needing to breast feed a child is a legitimate reason to (a) postpone or (b) be exempted from jury service.

Chris Philp:

Breastfeeding jurors who wish to undertake jury service can discuss their needs with the court to ensure that they can be supported during their service. This support could include providing a place to express milk and suitable storage for expressed milk. HMCTS will be guided by the needs of the individual and will meet any reasonable request wherever possible.

All jurors, including breastfeeding women, can apply to change the date of their jury service to another date within a 12-month period of the original summons. This is known as a deferral. If a juror believes they cannot serve at any time during those 12 months, they can apply to be excused. Deferral and excusal applications are considered by summoning officers at the Jury Central Summoning Bureau (JCSB). Each application is carefully considered on its own merits and in light of individual circumstances.

Juries: Day Care**Alison Thewliss:****[179200]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what childcare provision is available for people called for jury service.

Chris Philp:

There are no child-minding facilities at court. If jurors need to make specific childcare arrangements whilst on jury service they may be able to claim this through expenses as a financial loss.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service recognise that sometimes it may be inconvenient for some people to serve on the date originally summoned, for reasons which could include the needs of a child. Jurors are given the opportunity when responding to their summons to apply for a deferral to a more suitable date within the next twelve months. Those that believe they cannot serve as a juror at any time during the next 12 months can apply to be excused from their jury service.

Deferral and excusal applications are considered by summoning officers at the Jury Central Summoning Bureau (JCSB). Each application is carefully considered on its own merits and in light of individual circumstances.

Legal Aid Scheme: Contracts**Karl Turner:****[R] [179060]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many firms of solicitors held a (a) civil and (b) criminal legal aid contract as of 1 April 2021.

Alex Chalk:

Please note for the figures provided that firms may have more than one office. There are currently 1,090 Providers who hold a Criminal Legal Aid Contract. There are currently 1,439 Providers who hold a Civil Legal Aid Contract. This data is correct as at 7th April 2021.

The Legal Aid Agency frequently reviews market capacity to make sure there is adequate provision around the country and moves quickly to ensure provision where gaps may appear.

Prisoners: Smart Devices**Alex Davies-Jones:****[179686]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average waiting time was to examine digital devices at Digital Investigation Units across the UK in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Alex Chalk:

HMPPS Digital Media Investigation Unit is a specialist Digital Team whose responsibilities include the extraction of data from illicit mobile devices found in prison custody.

Average waiting times for centrally processed devices are relatively short – under 5 days.

In addition, Digital Media Investigation Unit has put in place capability for local extraction within prisons. The average waiting time for these interrogations is not held centrally.

It is important to note that these waiting times are not directly comparable with Law Enforcement Partners due to different operating contexts. DMIU does not extract data from every illicit device found in custody and on occasion some devices may be sent to Law Enforcement partners when dealing with specific investigations. Data for such waiting times is not held centrally.

The data provided is specific to those extractions completed by HMPPS relating to HMPPS cases and therefore does not include any other Digital Investigation Units such as the Police or related Law Enforcement Agencies.

■ Prisons: Visits

Ian Byrne:

[179675]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate visits to prisons that are not currently allowing social visitors; and what steps he is taking to support prisons in reaching stage 3 of the covid-19 national framework for prison regimes and services.

Ian Byrne:

[179676]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to support the wellbeing of prisoners that are unable to receive social visitors due to covid-19 health restrictions.

Ian Byrne:

[179677]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what additional steps his Department is taking to support the mental health of prisoners during the covid-19 outbreak.

Alex Chalk:

Visits to children in the youth custody estate and compassionate visits to adult establishments have continued throughout national lockdown. In line with changes to the stay at home guidance and travel restrictions in the community, over the coming weeks and months we will support establishments to ease some of the regime restrictions currently in place. This will be done when it is safe to do so and guided by public health advice. Our National Framework, which sets out in detail how we will take decisions about easing coronavirus-related restrictions in prisons, was published on GOV.UK on 2 June: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-national-framework-for-prison-regimes-and-services>

Maintaining safety and the mental health and wellbeing of prisoners continues to remain a priority, as it has throughout the pandemic. A range of tools have been made available to support Governors in devising and implementing local safety and

welfare plans designed to mitigate any risks. Healthcare providers have continued to provide access to services for prisoners throughout the pandemic.

We recognise that family contact provides a crucial lifeline for those in our care. Secure video calls have now been introduced at all prisons across England and Wales. As of 5 April, over 169,000 secure video calls have been made. Currently 66% of prison cells have in-cell telephony.

We have tailored guidance for supporting specific groups of people in prison whose wellbeing may be more impacted by Covid-19 measures put in place. We are delivering more in cell-activity and are continuing to improve our offer to support prisoners during this period.

Work is currently underway to roll-out of a revised version of the Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT), which is the care planning process for prisoners identified as being at risk of suicide or self-harm. This is first being rolled-out in the female estate and ten ACCT pilot sites from April 2021, followed by roll-out in the rest of the estate in Summer 2021. We will, however, be keeping these timeframes under review to ensure they remain feasible in the context of covid-19.

■ Young Offender Institutions: Restraint Techniques

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[179142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendation of Charlie Taylor's review into the use of pain-inducing restraint in the youth secure estate, what steps his Department has taken to establish an independent restraint and behaviour panel.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[179143\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendation of Charlie Taylor's review into the use of pain-inducing restraint in the youth secure estate, what steps his Department has taken to remove pain-inducing techniques from the Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint syllabus.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[179144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the recommendations of Charlie Taylor's review into the use of pain-inducing restraint in the youth secure estate, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that (a) the Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint syllabus does not train escorts to secure training centres and secure children's homes in pain-inducing restraint techniques, (b) escort staff are not allowed to use restraint on children for good order and discipline and (c) escorts taking children to and from young offender institutions are trained in Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint.

Alex Chalk:

Following Charlie Taylor's review into the use of pain-inducing techniques the Ministry of Justice responded to all recommendations in June 2020. It remains the case that restraint should only be used where there is no other suitable alternative. In

the first instance, the approach should always be to use behaviour management techniques that focus on de-escalation and diversion. In cases where restraint is used, it must always be necessary, proportionate and in accordance with the law.

To improve the monitoring of these instances, the Youth Custody Service established the independent restraint and behaviour panel in December 2020 as a multi-sector partnership with members providing independent and expert scrutiny on the use of pain-inducing techniques in establishments. The panel who reports to Ministers on a quarterly basis, reviews the use of pain-inducing techniques at a single youth secure establishment each month (rotating the establishment monthly) and then supports the establishment with actions focussed on the reduction of use.

The Ministry of Justice committed to removing pain-inducing techniques from the Minimising and Managing Physical Restraint (MMPR) syllabus in June 2020. Since then, the Youth Custody Service has been working on developing and implementing training to ensure that the revised syllabus is rolled out later this summer through the training of all staff. The use of pain-inducing techniques will be taught separately, for use as a last resort to prevent serious harm to a child or adult, in line with Recommendation 9.

Escorts transferring children to and from Secure Training Centre's, Secure Children Homes and Young Offending Institutions have all received training in the MMPR syllabus which no longer includes training on pain-inducing techniques. The department is currently reviewing the policy in line with recommendation 14.

■ Young Offenders: Academies

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[179140]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to clause 138 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, whether providers running secure 16 to 19 academies will be required to apply to Ofsted to register those establishments as children's homes.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[179141]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to clause 138 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, whether providers running secure 16 to 19 academies will be required to follow The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

Alex Chalk:

Secure 16 to 19 academies will be a new form of 16 to 19 academy and secure children's home combined, legislation for both these entities will form the statutory basis for secure schools. They will require approval by the Secretary of State to provide secure accommodation and by Ofsted to register as children's homes. Providers will therefore be required to apply to Ofsted for registration as children's homes. As secure children's homes, they will be subject to the Children's Home (England) Regulations 2015.

NORTHERN IRELAND**■ British Nationality: Republic of Ireland****Claire Hanna:**[\[179657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on the application process and fee for Irish citizens resident in Northern Ireland who wish to reclaim British citizenship.

Mr Robin Walker:

Officials in my Department are discussing this matter with the Home Office who are responsible for this policy.

An individual who has previously renounced their British citizenship may apply to resume it. Applications are at the Home Secretary's discretion, and the current published policy guidance sets out expectations about when discretion should normally be exercised.

The Home Office regularly reviews the guidance in this regard to ensure that it reflects immigration legislation.

The Government firmly believes that UK nationality law is consistent with its Belfast/Good Friday Agreement obligations, including the birthright provisions that allow the people of Northern Ireland to hold British or Irish citizenship, or both.

■ Community Ownership Fund: Northern Ireland**Louise Haigh:**[\[178687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether funding for Northern Ireland from the Community Ownership Fund will be ringfenced.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Community Ownership Fund will help to ensure that communities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can support and continue benefiting from the local facilities, community assets and amenities most important to them.

Details of how the fund will be allocated UK-wide will be announced with the publication of the bidding prospectus in June 2021.

■ Northern Ireland Government**Louise Haigh:**[\[178691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, when he plans to hold the next implementation review meeting under New Decade, New Approach.

Mr Robin Walker:

The New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) agreement was a historic moment for Northern Ireland and the whole United Kingdom.

Despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Government has made good progress on implementing its NDNA commitments.

The Implementation Review Meeting provides a vital service in maintaining progress under that agreement. The Implementation Review Meeting last met on 11 January 2021 and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland will work with the Northern Ireland parties to hold the next meeting at an appropriate moment in due course.

Louise Haigh:

[\[178694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if his Department will publish an assessment of the extent to which commitments under the New Decade, New Approach agreement have been met by the (a) Northern Ireland Executive and (b) Government.

Mr Robin Walker:

The New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) deal reached in January 2020 includes a balanced package of commitments to deliver more transparent and sustainable institutions in Northern Ireland. The Government have already delivered a number of our key commitments including:

- The release of £556 million of the £2 billion of funding agreed in the deal;
- Appointment of a Veteran's Commissioner in September 2020;
- The launch of the programme for the Centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021 and including 39 successful bids for the £1million Shared History Fund;
- The establishment of the governance structures that underpin New Decade New Approach, namely the Joint Board and the Implementation Review Meeting.

The Government works closely with Northern Ireland's political leaders to support them in making the devolved institutions work and where appropriate, in delivering their commitments within NDNA. We will consider publishing assessments of implementation of the Agreement in due course.

■ Northern Ireland Government: Finance

Louise Haigh:

[\[179254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, with reference to New Decade, New Approach agreement, published on 8 January 2020, how much funding the Government has allocated to address the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland referred to in Annexe A of that agreement; how much of that funding has been allocated; to which priorities that funding has been allocated; how much of that funding remains to be allocated; and to which priorities that remaining funding will be allocated.

Mr Robin Walker:

The New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) deal provided the restored Executive with a £2bn financial package. This included £140m to be allocated to address Northern Ireland's unique circumstances.

To enable the Executive to begin implementing the Troubles Permanent Disablement Scheme, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland agreed with the Treasury that the Executive will be able to access £100m NDNA funding earmarked for Northern Ireland's unique circumstances.

£40 million is reserved for addressing the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland referred to in Annexe A, page 53 of the New Decade, New Approach agreement. This funding is to be deployed on areas including:

- Mental health
- Tackling paramilitarism
- Tackling deprivation and improving opportunity
- A Culture and Community fund
- Support in marking the 2021 centenary and related projects
- Support for languages and broadcasting
- Supporting the armed forces and veterans
- A fund to promote the competitiveness of Northern Ireland's economy
- Additional funding to support the Derry/Londonderry addiction centre
- UK Contribution to the International Fund For Ireland

The UK Government has committed £3m to support the marking of the 2021 Centenary and related projects. In addition, in 2020/21 the UK Government released funding to support the NI Veterans' Support Office and the setting up of a new NI Veterans' Commissioner role. The remaining funding will be disbursed in due course to the priorities listed above.

The UK Government is continuing to work closely with Northern Ireland's political leaders through the Joint Board to deliver on NDNA commitments.

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Louise Haigh:

[\[178689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, further to the Answer of the 25 March to Written Question 173085, where the funding to support the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement proposals on legacy will be drawn.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government has made substantial financial contributions and commitments towards addressing the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland, including as part of the Stormont House Agreement.

The Government remains committed to addressing Northern Ireland legacy issues by bringing forward legislation that focuses on reconciliation, delivers for victims and ends the cycle of reinvestigations that is not working for anyone. We are committed to making progress on this as quickly as possible.

Louise Haigh:

[\[178698\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will list the victims groups that he has met as part of stakeholder engagement on legacy legislation.

Mr Robin Walker:

The Government remains committed to making progress on legacy issues and recognises the importance of engaging with victims groups and other key stakeholders as part of this process.

The Department has undertaken a number of engagements with victims groups on legacy issues - including the Victims and Survivors Forum and groups funded under the Victims and Survivors Services' Victims Support Programme - at both ministerial and official level.

The Government is committed to publishing a list of ministers' meetings with external organisations, including those with victims groups, on a quarterly basis. Publications for the Northern Ireland Office can be found on GOV.UK.

SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION**■ Electoral Register****Cat Smith:**[\[179211\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what recent estimate the Commission has made of the number of eligible people who are (a) not on the electoral register and (b) not registered correctly; and how the Commission calculated those estimates.

Christian Matheson:

The Commission carries out research studies on the accuracy and completeness of the electoral registers. These are based on an established, robust methodology involving house-to-house interviewing across the UK. The most recent study, published in 2019, found that 83% of people eligible to appear on a local government register in Great Britain were correctly registered.

The findings from this research can be used, with the Office for National Statistics' population estimates, to estimate that between 8.3 and 9.4 million people in Great Britain were not correctly registered. This estimate includes people not on a register, and people on a register but not at their current and therefore correct address. It is not possible, however, to provide a specific estimate for each category separately.

TRANSPORT**■ Cycling and Walking****Sir Greg Knight:**[\[178840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish the report commissioned by his Department with NatCen in response to the 2018 Cycling and Walking Safety Review.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The full report will be published shortly.

■ Cycling: Finance

Jim McMahon:

[179319]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when the Bikeability grant was last put out to contract.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The management for delivery of the Bikeability grant was last competed in 2016 under the Highways England Specialist Professional and Technical Services (SPATS) framework. The contract was awarded to Pell Frischmann with a start date of 8 September 2016 and an end date of 31 August 2018, with the option to extend for a further two years. The proposal included the establishing of an independent charity with a view to the management of the programme being transferred to this charity, and the management functions were duly transferred to the new charity, the Bikeability Trust, on 1 September 2018.

Jim McMahon:

[179320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding has been provided under the Bikeability grant scheme on average per child in each of the last 10 years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Between 2010/11 and 2019/20 the average funding provided to Bikeability grant recipients per training place delivered has varied between £29 and £38. The figures vary because the grant provided for delivering different Bikeability modules range from £5 per pupil for the basic level 1 Bikeability training, to £40 per pupil for the more comprehensive level 3 Bikeability training. Some children do more than one type of training or module. The figures refer to Bikeability training delivered in England, but not including London. More detailed figures are available on the Bikeability website at <https://bikeability.org.uk/support/publications/>

More widely, by way of context, from 2006 (when Bikeability started) to 2010, on average 65,360 children were trained every year; since 2010, on average 328,472 children have been trained every year.

■ DfT OLR Holdings

Jim McMahon:

[178670]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the DfT OLR Holdings Limited Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, what assessment he has made of the value for money for the public purse of the Company operating with the risks set out on page 12 (a) that the Company is not sufficiently well equipped to manage any further Franchise Operations should this be required and (b) concerning the Company's ability to deliver timetable changes, due to lack of resource resilience having adverse impact on revenue, operational efficiency and reputation.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In deciding whether to transfer an operator to the Department for Transport's Operator of Last Resort (DOHL) in order to maintain the continuity of passenger

services, the Secretary of State has regard to the Statement of policy on the exercise of the Secretary of State's power under section 26(1) of the Railways Act 1993.

It is entirely appropriate that DOHL identifies all and any potential risks to passenger services, including the management of potential further franchise operations or its ability to deliver timetable changes. The company works closely with the Department to ensure it has the capacity and expertise to ensure these risks are managed and that it has both the capacity and capability to address those risks should they manifest. This is good management practise in any business.

■ Driving Licences: USA

Ian Murray:

[\[179022\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will extend the validity of driving licences for foreign nationals from the US who are eligible to drive in the UK for 12 months before requiring a theory test in the context of disruption caused by the covid-19 outbreak.

Rachel Maclean:

After becoming resident in Great Britain, foreign licence holders from outside the European Economic Area can drive all classes of small vehicle, motorcycle and moped to which their domestic licence applies for up to 12 months. After this time, unless they have a licence from certain designated countries/territories, they are required to take a GB driving test. A list of the designated countries can be found [here](#). The 12-month limit is set in law and there are no current plans to change it.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[178542\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on extending funding for the On-street Residential Charge Point Scheme beyond the 2021-22 financial year.

Rachel Maclean:

I have regular and ongoing discussions with Ministerial colleagues about a wide range of aspects regarding the Government's support for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. We have ringfenced funding for our various schemes to support charging infrastructure until 2024-2025 as part of the £275m secured at Spending Review 2020.

■ Electric Vehicles: Grants

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[179052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to take steps to review the potential effect of the changes to the plug-in grant on the adoption of electric vehicles over the next six months.

Rachel Maclean:

We ensure that all of our grant funding schemes are reviewed on an ongoing basis. We will continue to keep the eligibility criteria and rates for the plug-in grant under review as the market grows.

■ Electric Vehicles: Sales**Lilian Greenwood:****[178600]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to provide support for the purchase of 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.

■ Fishing Gear**Alex Davies-Jones:****[179685]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of law enforcement for crimes involving the illegal dumping of commercial fishing equipment in UK waters; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The UK has been party to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships (MARPOL Annex V) since 1988, and the international requirements have been implemented in UK law through the 1998 and 2008 UK Regulations. Under these Regulations, discharge of all garbage into the sea is prohibited with very limited exceptions and in all cases the discharge of plastic is prohibited. In 2020 the Regulations were further revised to reflect the current international requirements.

During the 2020 revisions, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) carried out a thorough review of the existing offences and penalties. As a result of this review, the scope of the type of garbage which may not be discharged to sea was widened. Under the 2020 Regulations it is an offence to fail to report the discharge of fishing gear which poses a significant threat to the marine environment or navigation.

The UK's Port Waste Reception Facilities Regulations (S.I. 2003/1809) put legal obligations on ports and vessels to manage ship generated waste including fishing gear. The MCA has received ministerial approval to review the UK's current regime on Port Waste Reception Facilities and this review will start in spring 2021.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line: Rolling Stock

Jim McMahon:

[178669]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when will the preferred bidder of the HS2 rolling stock procurement process will be announced.

Andrew Stephenson:

As referenced in the latest 6 monthly parliamentary report published on 23 March 2021, HS2 Ltd is finalising the procurement of the new HS2 rolling stock for Phases One and 2a, with the contract award anticipated later this spring.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hs2-6-monthly-report-to-parliament-march-2021>

■ HM Coastguard

Dave Doogan:

[179544]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what functions national maritime operations centres perform; what resources and equipment are located at those centres; and how many staff are stationed at each of those centres.

Robert Courts:

Her Majesty's Coastguard has one National Maritime Operation Centre (NMOC) which is based in Fareham in Hampshire. In addition to the National Maritime Operations Centre there are ten Coastguard Operations Centres (CGOCs) which are located at: Aberdeen; Belfast; Dover; Falmouth; Holyhead; Humber; Milford Haven; Shetland; Stornoway; and London.

The NMOC and the CGOCs form a fully integrated and flexible national network which allows Her Majesty's Coastguard to fulfil its national and international functions, which includes the initiation and coordination of civil maritime and aeronautical search and rescue.

As defined by international convention the six key functions of the integrated national network are; search and rescue; pollution and response; vessel traffic management; maritime safety; maritime security and emergency; and disaster management. All centres are equipped to respond to such incidents 24/7/365.

In addition, the NMOC also incorporates the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre and the Mission Control Centre, which are responsible for tasking of all Her Majesty's Coastguard search and rescue aviation assets and the receipt and response to distress beacons respectively.

All Her Majesty's Coastguard centres are equipped to receive, respond and coordinate all distress, urgency and alert situations within the UK Search and Rescue

Region. This includes an integrated command and control system, search planning, integrated mapping and communications systems, including satellite-based services.

The below table demonstrates how many full-time equivalent operational staff, by job role, are expected to be at each location.

	MARITIME OPERATIONS CONTROLLERS	TEAM LEADERS	SENIOR MARITIME OPERATIONS OFFICERS	MARITIME OPERATIONS OFFICERS
Aberdeen CGOC	1	4	12	4
Belfast CGOC	1	4	12	4
Dover CGOC	1	4	21	6
Falmouth CGOC	1	4	12	4
Holyhead CGOC	1	4	12	4
Humber CGOC	1	4	18	6
London	1	0	6	0
Milford Haven CGOC	1	4	18	6
NMOC	8	8	51	16
Shetland CGOC	1	4	12	4
Stornoway CGOC	1	4	12	4

Two Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Managers also work at the National Maritime Operation Centre. A further two full time equivalent staff work at the Mission Control Centre and thirty-two staff work at the Aeronautical Rescue Coordination Centre.

■ HM Coastguard and Maritime and Coastguard Agency: Staff

Dave Doogan:

[\[179547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many staff are employed by (a) the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and (b) HM Coastguard in (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Northern Ireland and (iv) Wales.

Robert Courts:

As of 31 March 2021, the employees of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency are broken down as follows, this includes permanent and fixed term employees:

England - 926

Scotland -161

Northern Ireland - 41

Wales – 108

Her Majesty's Coastguard is a Directorate within the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and therefore is included in the figures above. Disaggregating Her Majesty's Coastguard figures from above, permanent and fixed term employees within Her Majesty's Coastguard Directorate as of 31 March 2021 are:

England - 334

Scotland -114

Northern Ireland - 28

Wales – 57

■ **HM Coastguard: Boats and Helicopters**

Dave Doogan:

[\[179545\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what types of (a) helicopter and (b) ships HM Coastguard has access to; and where those vehicles are stationed.

Robert Courts:

Her Majesty's Coastguard has on contract two types of search and rescue helicopter. These are the Sikorsky S 92 and the AgustaWestland (Leonardo) AW189.

The dedicated search and rescue helicopters operate from the following locations:

Sikorsky S92 AgustaWestland 189

Sumburgh Inverness

Stornoway Prestwick

Humberside St Athan

Caernarfon Lydd

Newquay Lee on the Solent

Her Majesty's Coastguard has on contract one Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV) – which is an Anchor Handling Tug. The ETV is permanently stationed off the northern coasts of Scotland.

■ **HM Coastguard: Expenditure**

Dave Doogan:

[\[179548\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the budget for HM Coastguard was in each of the last five years.

Robert Courts:

The budget for Her Majesty's Coastguard for each of the last five years is as follows:

Financial Year Budget (£)

2016-17 242,355,780

2017-18 260,745,074

2018-19 248,005,106

2019-20 259,397,741

2020-21 271,058,746

■ Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Dave Doogan:

[\[179546\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what role the Maritime and Coastguard Agency performs apart from coastguard.

Robert Courts:

In summary, as well as the services of Her Majesty's Coastguard, the Maritime & Coastguard Agency manages the UK Ship Register and carries out its ship survey and inspection roles as both as a Flag and a Port State. Through its survey and inspection regime, it enforces standards for ship safety, security, pollution prevention and seafarer health and safety.

It also provides seafarer examinations and certification services and provides regulatory and policy advice on matters including fishing vessel safety, civil hydrography, navigation safety and future technologies. The Maritime & Coastguard Agency promotes maritime standards and encourages economic growth.

■ Motorways: Safety

Jim McMahon:

[\[179318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether smart motorway schemes referenced the Road Investment Strategy 2: 2020 - 2025 that have not yet started main works will (a) include emergency refuge areas no more than a mile apart and (b) be built to the other new safety standards detailed in his Department's March 2020 smart motorway safety evidence stocktake and action plan.

Rachel Maclean:

Highways England (HE) is delivering all the actions set out in *Smart Motorway Safety Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan* over the RIS2 period, confirmed in HE's Strategic Business Plan 2020-25, along with implementation dates.

The safety improvements in the 2020 Action Plan consisted of a package of 18 measures, costing £500 million, and included; committing to a new standard for spacing of places to stop in an emergency and considering a national programme to install more emergency areas on existing smart motorways; the rollout of a radar-based stopped vehicle detection (SVD) system across the All Lane Running (ALR) motorway network; faster attendance by more HE traffic officer patrols; and upgrading cameras across the ALR motorway network to enable automatic detection of Red X violations, which can then be enforced by the police.

Earlier this year, the Secretary of State asked for a first-year progress from Highways England detailing its progress in delivering the 18-point Action Plan and identifying actions that can be delivered ahead of schedule. He asked for this by 12 March 2021. Highways England has provided the Department with the report, and work is rapidly being completed to assess it so it can be published shortly, once the Secretary of State is assured that the proposals are sufficiently robust.

■ **Public Transport: Season Tickets**

Peter Kyle:

[\[179300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 13 May 2020 to Question 46749, on Public Transport: Coronavirus, what progress he has made on introducing flexible season tickets; and when passengers will be able to access those tickets.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government recognises the change in travel patterns, the impact of COVID-19 and therefore the need to accommodate a more flexible style of working and travelling.

The Department is actively working with train operators to develop a solution that offers better value and convenience for those who commute flexibly, and we will provide further details in line with the Government's four-step roadmap out of lockdown.

■ **Railway Stations: Swansea**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[179009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on developing the proposal for a West Wales Parkway station near Swansea for the South Wales Mainline.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

An integrated approach is required between the new station proposal and the development of the train services that will call at it. For a West Wales Parkway station these services will be provided by the devolved Wales & Borders operator. We are engaged with Transport for Wales via their 'Swansea Bay & West Wales Metro Development Strategy Board' to determine the optimal location for the station and the pattern of enhanced services that will call at it. A number of options are currently being evaluated prior to selecting a single option for further development.

■ **Shipping: Carbon Emissions**

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[178900\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the International Chamber of Shipping proposals to the United Nations for a global carbon levy on shipping.

Robert Courts:

We welcome the initiative shown by the International Chamber of Shipping and other industry players in submitting the proposal for an International Maritime Research Board to the International Maritime Organization (IMO). We look forward to discussing this in further detail at the upcoming Marine Environment Protection Committee in June. It is crucial that we see work at the IMO to both unlock new and innovative technologies in the near term, as well as to decarbonise fully in the longer term.

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[178898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of the delay in the publication of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan from December 2020 to Spring 2021 on his Department's ability to reduce carbon emissions to meet carbon budget commitments.

Rachel Maclean:

Publication of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan in Spring 2021 rather than December 2020 has no impact on delivering transport's contribution to carbon budgets, and takes into account the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Kerry McCarthy: [\[178899\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the inclusion of a roadmap for decarbonising international aviation and shipping in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

Rachel Maclean:

We have worked across government throughout the drafting of the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP), including on aviation and shipping.

TREASURY**■ Betindex: Excise Duties****Claire Hanna:** [\[178552\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many times HMRC confirmed with Betindex that they were able to meet their Betting Duty liabilities between 1 January 2020 and 1 March 2021.

Kemi Badenoch:

HMRC treats information about any exchanges it has with individual customers as private and confidential. HMRC is unable to answer the question because to do so would breach this strict principle

■ Boats: VAT

Paul Blomfield:

[178712]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of HMRC rules which incur VAT charges on returning boats on UK citizens with boats in the EU as a result of covid-19 travel restrictions.

Jesse Norman:

Relief from import VAT and any customs duty is available under 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.

■ Bounce Back Loan Scheme: Bank Services

Colum Eastwood:

[179682]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether eligibility for the Bounce Back Loan Scheme is dependent on an applicant holding a bank account with a bank that is accredited under that scheme.

John Glen:

The Government launched the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS) on 4 May 2020 to ensure that the smallest businesses could access loans from £2,000 up to £50,000, capped at 25% of turnover in a matter of just days. As of 21 March, over 1.5 million UK businesses have received Bounce Back Loans worth over £46 billion. Please note the scheme has now closed to new applications.

Whilst the scheme was open, there was no requirement under the scheme rules for borrowers to hold a bank account with an accredited lender to be eligible for a facility. However, decisions on what products were offered to individual businesses were fully delegated to lenders.

Under the scheme rules applicants were required to make a number of declarations to self-certify their eligibility, for example, that they will only use funds solely for the economic benefit of their business. Accredited lenders also carried out anti-fraud,

know-your-customer and anti-money laundering checks as part of the application process.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Claire Hanna: [\[179658\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether there will be a Barnett consequential for the Northern Ireland devolved government as a result of the announcement of 10 February 2021 of £5 million funding for the removal of unsafe cladding.

Steve Barclay:

The Housing Secretary announced £3.5 billion on 10 February 2021 as part of a £5 billion multi-year investment in building safety in England.

The Barnett formula is applied to changes in departmental funding so will apply to changes in funding related to this announcement. The level of Barnett consequentials to the Northern Ireland Executive will be confirmed at future fiscal events and spending reviews when the overall level of funding for MHCLG is set.

■ Capital Allowances: Impact Assessments

Ben Lake: [\[179377\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has conducted a regional economic impact assessment by NUTS-1 region of the capital allowance super-deduction.

Jesse Norman:

Conducting a regional economic impact assessment by NUTS-1 region for the super-deduction is not feasible as the data available would be inadequate for such an assessment. HMRC's corporation tax outturns data reflects the geographic locations where companies are registered; rather than where the assets on which capital allowances are claimed are located. In addition, the ONS does not collect regional breakdowns of business investment.

■ Capital Gains Tax

Zarah Sultana: [\[178615\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the evidential basis was for not raising the Capital Gains Tax in line with Income Tax as part of Budget 2021.

Jesse Norman:

The Government keeps all taxes under review, and any changes are made at fiscal events within the context of wider public finances. As demonstrated in last month's Budget, the Government's priority is supporting jobs and the economic recovery from the pandemic.

Any changes to the tax system will balance the need to raise revenue with the principles of fairness and market efficiency.

Dan Carden:

[\[179421\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2020 to Question 119350 on Capital Gains Tax, when he plans to publish the Government's response to the Office for Tax Simplification's Capital Gains Tax Review.

Jesse Norman:

Last year, the Chancellor commissioned the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS) to carry out a review of Capital Gains Tax (CGT).

Given the wide scope of the review, the OTS will produce two reports.

The first report, on the policy design and principles underpinning CGT, was published in November 2020.

The second report, which will explore key technical and administrative issues, will be published later this year.

The Government will respond to these reports in due course.

■ **Cash Dispensing: Coventry**

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[179161\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of free-to-use ATMs that have closed 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 such closures on levels of financial exclusion in those areas.

John Glen:

The Government recognises that access to cash remains important for many individuals and businesses across the UK. It has committed to legislate to protect access to cash and ensure that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term.

To progress this work, the Government published a Call for Evidence on Access to Cash in October 2020. The Call for Evidence sought views on the key considerations associated with cash access, including deposit and withdrawal facilities, cash acceptance, and regulatory oversight of the cash system. The Government is considering responses to the Call for Evidence and will set out next steps in due course.

The Government also created the Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group in 2019, which has provided a forum for the public bodies to formally co-ordinate respective approaches to access to cash. This is chaired by HM Treasury and attended by the Bank of England, Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Group published an update on the actions of the Group's members in July 2020. This included work led by the PSR and FCA to develop a comprehensive picture of cash access infrastructure across the UK.

With regards to ATMs, LINK (the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network) publishes the total of free-to-use ATMs across the UK online. As of March 2021, they

reported that there were around 41,000 free-to-use ATMs in the UK – this reflects ATMs that may have been located in premises closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. LINK's Monthly ATM Footprint Report also publishes information monthly on the break down by constituency.

LINK has existing arrangements in place to protect free-to-use ATMs that do not have another free-to-use ATM or Post Office within one kilometre. LINK's members have also made £5 million available to fund ATMs at the request of communities with poor access to cash. The PSR has powers to regulate LINK and is holding it to account over its commitment to protect the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs.

The Government also continues to be fully supportive of the Post Office Banking Framework Agreement. The agreement allows 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers to carry out their everyday banking at 11,500 Post Office branches in the UK.

The Government is deeply committed to ensuring that individuals, regardless of their background or income, have access to useful and affordable financial products and services, including banking, payment services, credit, insurance, use of financial technology. To promote financial inclusion, the Government works closely together with regulators and stakeholders from the public, private and third sectors.

The Government reports annually on progress on financial inclusion. HMT published the latest Financial Inclusion Report, covering the period 2019-20, in November 2020. This can be found online at gov.uk

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/935985/Financial_Inclusion_Report_2020.pdf

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Mick Whitley:

[179563]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department has taken steps to encourage employers to furlough employees who have been instructed to shield during the covid-19 outbreak rather than place those employees on Statutory Sick Pay.

Jesse Norman:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has been available since the start of the pandemic, including for the duration of the Government's most recent shielding advice, reintroduced from 4 January 2021. Shielding guidance is no longer in place, but Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) individuals can continue to be claimed for like everyone else, subject to the CJRS eligibility criteria.

It is not for the Government to decide whether an individual firm should put its staff on furlough; that is a decision for the employer, in consultation with the employee. CEV individuals should talk to their employer to discuss and agree options in relation to work, such as working from home, or returning to the workplace in a different role if their previous position cannot be fulfilled in a Covid-secure manner.

■ Devolution: Finance

Claire Hanna:

[\[179655\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will allocate funds to the devolved Governments equivalent to the £51.3 billion package for councils in England announced by the Minister of Housing, Communities & Local Government, on 10 February 2021.

Steve Barclay:

At Spending Review 2020, the core spending power for Local Government increased from £49.0 billion to £51.3 billion in 2021-22. The Barnett formula was applied to changes in departmental funding as set out in the Statement of Funding Policy so additional funding for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has already generated additional funding for the devolved administrations as part of their own 2021-22 settlements.

■ Financial Services: Coronavirus

Anne Marie Morris:

[\[179126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with representatives of the Financial Conduct Authority on enabling lenders to (a) restructure and (b) extend loans in light of the covid-19 outbreak.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to regulating only where there is a clear case for doing so, in order to avoid putting additional costs on lenders that would ultimately lead to higher costs for business customers. Business lending is unregulated and is not generally within the scope of the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA's) conduct rules.

However, the Government has provided unprecedented support to businesses through the emergency Covid-19 loan schemes which have been open since March 2020: over 1.6 million businesses have accessed over £75 billion of finance through the schemes to date.

Whilst it is important that businesses are responsible for repaying any facility they take out, to help businesses repay their loans the Government has taken steps to give them time to get back on their feet. This includes "Pay as You Grow" (PAYG) options for the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLS), giving businesses the option to: repay their BBLS facility over ten years, move temporarily to interest-only payments for periods of up to six months (an option which they can use up to three times), or to pause their repayments entirely for up to six months.

The Government has also amended the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) rules to allow lenders to extend loan terms from six to a maximum of ten years at their discretion and where they judge that the borrower is in difficulty and this will help them repay their loan, helping to reduce their monthly repayments.

Businesses which need support should discuss options with their lenders, who are best placed to offer tailored engagement based on individual business' circumstances.

■ Free Ports

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[179062\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether goods processed and produced in a freeport in the UK, regardless of their prior origin, are entitled to the arrangements for goods originating in the UK for the purposes of trade with the EU, as governed by the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement; and which provisions in that treaty specify that treatment.

Steve Barclay:

Goods processed and produced in a Freeport and then exported are subject to the relevant rules of origin under the applicable FTA.

This means to be considered as “originating” for the purpose of the TCA, goods processed and produced in a Freeport will need to satisfy the rules outlined in Chapter 2 Title 1 Part 2 of the TCA and the corresponding Annex ORIG-2. Goods processed and produced in a Freeport will benefit from the same rights to preferential access as other UK goods.

Businesses operating within Freeport customs sites can take advantage of tariff benefits, including import duty deferral while the goods remain on site, and duty inversion if the finished goods exiting the Freeport attract a lower tariff than their component parts. The Freeport customs offer for businesses also includes the ability to import goods into customs site with the duty suspended and subsequently re-exporting without paying the duty.

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[179063\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement, whether the Government’s policy on freeports formed part of the negotiating mandate for the UK negotiators.

Steve Barclay:

The UK published its opening mandate in February 2020, this did not reference freeports directly. However, all our red lines on returning sovereignty have been achieved. The most important objective - in all policy areas, not just freeports- is for the UK to have genuine economic and political independence. The Agreement leaves us in full control of our laws and preserves policy space and flexibility, including creating Freeports which when developed will empower regions across the UK to become hubs for international trade and investment.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Huw Merriman:

[\[179217\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent estimate his Department has made of the potential effect of the take-up of zero emission vehicles on receipts to the Exchequer from fuel duty in (a) 2025, (b) 2030, (c) 2040 and (d) 2050.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the transition towards electric vehicles and the phase out of new petrol and diesel cars and vans will make a vital contribution to this.

The interim Net Zero Review report in December last year highlighted that structural changes in the economy related to net zero will have fiscal implications. Much of the revenue from fossil fuel-based taxes is likely to be eroded during the transition to a net zero economy. However, there is currently a high level of uncertainty regarding the effect on receipts.

As we move forward with this transition, the Government will need to ensure that revenue from motoring taxes keeps pace with this change, so that the Government can continue to fund the first-class public services and infrastructure that people and families across the UK expect.

■ **Gift Aid****Claire Hanna:**[\[179652\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the amount of eligible gift aid on charitable donations that is unclaimed each year.

Kemi Badenoch:

HMRC has not undertaken recent analysis on this subject and this would only be available at disproportionate cost.

Research conducted for HMRC in 2015/16 found that 25% of the value of donations did not have Gift Aid added to them where the donor was eligible, contributing up to £0.56bn to the value of unclaimed Gift Aid. The full report is available on GOV.UK at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charitable-giving-and-gift-aid-research>

■ **Gift Aid: Income Tax****Claire Hanna:**[\[178650\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of temporarily decoupling the link between rates of gift aid and income tax to help support charities who have experiencing reductions in donations as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

Kemi Badenoch:

Gift Aid is a tax relief tied to the basic rate of tax paid by donors, currently at 20%. Changing the rate at which Gift Aid is paid would break the link with tax that has been paid and it would no longer be a tax relief but a grant to charities. The Government is not convinced this is the most appropriate or practical way to provide support to charities at this time.

However, the Government is fully committed to supporting charities. It recognises that the sector is experiencing significant pressures and has also made available an unprecedented package of economic support, including a £750 million package

specifically for charities, social enterprises and the voluntary sector. This has ensured that charities and other civil society organisations, including those at risk of financial hardship, can continue their vital work during the COVID-19 outbreak.

■ Myanmar Economic Holdings: Sanctions

Stephen Kinnock:

[\[179145\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the sanctions placed on Myanmar Economics Holdings Ltd on 25 March 2021 include (a) financial services and (b) insurance.

John Glen:

Yes. Myanmar Economics Holdings Ltd was designated under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations on 25 March 2021. The Regulations impose financial sanctions through a targeted asset freeze on designated persons. This involves the freezing of funds and economic resources (non-monetary assets, such as property or vehicles) of designated persons and ensuring that funds and economic resources are not made available to or for the benefit of designated persons, either directly or indirectly. The asset freeze prohibits the payment of insurance premiums in the absence of a licence from the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI).

■ Public Expenditure: Scotland

Duncan Baker:

[\[179601\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the briefing note published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies on 31 March 2020, and its finding that public spending per person in Scotland is over 30 per cent higher than equivalent English funding, if he will review the Barnett formula to take account of (a) recent trends in the level of Scotland's population growth and (b) the cost of living in that country.

Steve Barclay:

The government sets out funding arrangements for the Devolved Administrations in the Statement of Funding Policy (SFP), which was most recently updated at the 2020 Spending Review and is kept under review. The 2020 SFP states that the Barnett formula continues to perform a key part of the arrangements for pooling and sharing risks and resources across the UK. This means that a downturn in one area can be supported by other areas, rather than being dependent on local economic conditions – and a windfall can be shared with other areas. It ensures the devolved administrations receive a population share of changes in relevant funding consistent with the wider principles set out in the SFP.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Grahame Morris:

[\[179025\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will identify the 20 constituencies most in need of levelling up; and if he will make it his policy to deliver investment to strengthen local economies and increase the employment rate and average wage in those areas.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government's levelling up agenda aims to spread opportunity and investment across every region and nation of the UK. We will deliver this pledge by boosting jobs, wages and prospects for all communities. In light of Covid-19, the government has introduced unprecedented support for businesses, households and workers, and local economies across the UK to protect them against the current economic crisis.

Furthermore, at the Budget, the government announced policies that will benefit places most in need, including additional funding for skills and job support, launching the prospectus for the Community Renewal Fund and the first round of the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund, to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and support economic recovery.

Sanitary Protection: Tax Yields**Sarah Olney:****[179329]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much revenue to the Exchequer was generated from the 20 per cent tax on period pants in the (a) 2018-19, (b), 2019-20 and (c) 2020-21 financial years.

Kemi Badenoch:

The information is not available. HMRC does not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products because businesses are not required to provide figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.

A zero rate of VAT has applied to women's sanitary products since 1 January 2021. This applies to those products which were previously subject to the reduced rate of five per cent, for example tampons and pads, and to reusable menstrual products, such as keepers.

The relief specifically excludes articles of clothing such as "period pants". Such exclusions are designed to ensure that the relief is properly targeted, since difficulties in policing the scope of the relief create the potential for litigation, erosion of the tax base and a reduction in revenue. Under existing rules "period pants" may already qualify for the zero rate, if they have been specifically designed to be worn by a child, meet the sizing criteria, and are held out for sale specifically for use by girls under the age of 14 years old.

Details are provided in VAT Notice 714: Zero-rating young children's clothing and footwear: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vat-notice-714-zero-rating-young-childrens-clothing-and-footwear/vat-notice-714-zero-rating-young-childrens-clothing-and-footwear#items-suitable-only-for-young-children> "

Self-employed: Coronavirus**Zarah Sultana:****[179603]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to support self-employed people who have had no financial income for the duration of the covid-19

restrictions and lockdowns who are ineligible for support through universal credit or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Jesse Norman:

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has provided and will continue to provide generous support to self-employed people who meet the eligibility criteria. The Government will have spent over £33 billion supporting those in self-employment through the SEISS, making it one of the most generous self-employment income COVID support schemes in the world.

The Government is bringing more people into the scheme: changes to the fourth grant mean that over 600,000 people previously ineligible for SEISS may now be eligible, including those newly self-employed in 2019-20. This brings the total number of people who could be eligible to 3.7m.

The Government recognises that some of the rules, criteria and conditions vital to ensuring that the SEISS works for the vast majority mean that some people may not qualify.

Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the support available. The Government has decided to extend the suspension of the Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor for three months, to the end of July 2021, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings.

New style Jobseeker's Allowance is also available to individuals with sufficient National Insurance Contributions who now work under 16 hours a week on average, and does not assess household capital.

Self-employed people may also have access to other elements of support available, including Restart Grants, the Recovery Loan scheme, business rates relief, and other business support schemes.

■ **Self-employment Income Support Scheme: Internet**

Ben Lake:

[\[179376\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to open the online claims service for the fourth Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grant to applicants.

Jesse Norman:

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer given on 23 March 2021 to UIN 171650.

■ **Soft Drinks: Taxation**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[179139\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which Departments received funding from revenues from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy during Spending Review 2020.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Soft Drinks Industry Levy is not linked to any specific programmes, or departmental spending. Departmental spend for children's food and to promote children's health is allocated through Spending Reviews. This provides departments with certainty over their programme budgets, as tax revenues vary year-to-year.

■ Tax Rates and Bands**Lilian Greenwood:**[\[178602\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has in 2021 to publish benefit in kind tax rates beyond the financial year 2024-25.

Kemi Badenoch:

Company car tax appropriate percentages beyond 2024-25 remain under review and will be announced at future fiscal events. The Government aims to announce appropriate percentages at least two years ahead of implementation to provide certainty for employers, employees and fleet operators.

■ Taxation: USA**Ben Lake:**[\[179378\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterpart on a (a) Digital Tax and (b) minimum corporation tax.

Jesse Norman:

Securing a global solution to the tax challenges posed by digitisation remains a priority for the UK.

The Chancellor has made supporting progress towards a two-pillar solution a priority of the UK's G7 presidency.

As such, he has been in regular discussion with his G7 counterparts on these issues, including with his US counterpart, with a view to supporting that aim.

■ Taxis: Coronavirus**Zarah Sultana:**[\[179604\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he has taken to support self-employed taxi drivers experiencing reductions in work as a result of the covid-19 outbreak and who require financial support to bridge the gaps between receipt of Self-Employment Income Support Scheme grants.

Jesse Norman:

The Government recognises that this is a challenging time for many sectors and individuals, including self-employed taxi drivers.

The Government has acted to support those that are self-employed and have been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, and 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 will have spent over £33 billion supporting those in self-employment through the SEISS, making it one of the most generous self-employment income COVID-19 support schemes in the world.

The SEISS is not intended to provide a month-by-month replacement of income. Due to the volatility of self-employed income and the lack of granular data that HMRC holds on self-employed trading profits, precise mapping of income replacement month by month is not possible. Instead, the SEISS provides a lump sum payment to support eligible self-employed individuals whose businesses have been affected by coronavirus.

The SEISS is just one part of a wider package of support for the self-employed, which includes automatic, self-serve time-to-pay arrangements, loans, welfare support, and other business support grants.

WALES

■ NHS: Incentives

Sarah Owen:

[\[178614\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a one-off payment scheme for NHS workers similar to the £735 payment introduced by the Welsh Government.

Simon Hart:

NHS funding decisions in Wales are devolved to the Welsh Government. The UK Government has provided the Welsh Government with an extra £7.3bn to tackle the pandemic; that is over £2,300 per person in Wales. Including a £5.2bn funding guarantee, £650m flexible funding and an additional £1.5bn announced at the Spending Review and Budget

We are also buying vaccines on behalf of the Devolved Administrations and so far, have provided over 60% of Covid tests in Wales.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Civil Service: Dudley North

Marco Longhi:

[\[176059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to deliver civil service jobs in her Department to Dudley North constituency.

Mims Davies:

Our Jobcentre Employment Advisers within Dudley North work closely with other Government Departments located in the area to ensure any planned recruitment is fully supported. Work Coaches undertake job-matching to identify customers in the area who have indicated an interest in joining the Civil Service, and provide

assistance to register on the Civil Service Jobs website, including support with searching for vacancies and setting up job alerts.

Jobcentres across Dudley Borough have a partnership with the 'Skills Shop' at the Merry Hill Centre, where customers can be referred for further assistance with Civil Service applications and interview techniques. They also have a partnership with Go Train, a local provider, to provide support to customers with applying for the recent Work Coach recruitment exercise, including help and advice with the application process.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Freedom of Information

Helen Hayes:

[179305]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the (a) average and (b) longest waiting time for a response to be issued to a Freedom of Information request made to her Department was in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Guy Opperman:

Departmental Freedom Of Information (FOI) performance is based on compliance against the statutory 20 working day time limit and these stats are captured for all Government departments on a quarterly and annual basis.

These statistics are accessible through the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics>

The next update to these statistics will be 28 April 2021 when Q4 2020 and 2020 annual statistics will be published.

■ Disability Premium: Judgements

Vicky Foxcroft:

[179272]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to implement the Court of Appeal's decision in the case of R (TD & Ors) v Secretary of State for Work And Pensions [2020] EWCA Civ 618.

Will Quince:

The Department is considering its response to the judgment and will communicate further details in due course.

■ Employment and Support Allowance

Vicky Foxcroft:

[179282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of (a) New Style and (b) contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance are in the assessment phase; and of those claimants how many are awaiting a face-to-face assessment.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[179283]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants of (a) New Style and (b) contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance have been in the assessment phase when their payments stopped at the end of 365 days since March 2020.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The available statistics for ESA WCA by month of claim start (to June 2020) for initial assessment outcomes, including those still in progress, and assessment outcome by month of decision to September 2020, are published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/esa-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessments-including-mandatory-reconsiderations-and-appeals-march-2021>

■ **Employment and Support Allowance: Severe Disability Premium**

Chris Stephens:

[179230]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of employment and support allowance are eligible for, but not receiving, severe disability premium.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department does not hold the information necessary to provide the requested figure.

■ **Employment: Epilepsy**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[178748]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the number of employees with epilepsy working in Government departments.

Guy Opperman:

We do not hold information for other Government departments and can only answer in relation to the Department for Work and Pension's staff.

I refer the Right Honourable Member to the answer given to the Honourable Member for East Renfrewshire to Question 132962 on 11 January 2021. <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2020-12-30/132962>

■ **Jobcentres: Industrial Health and Safety**

Chris Stephens:

[R] [179227]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) risk assessments and (b) discussions with trade unions her Department conducted in preparation for the full reopening of jobcentres on 12 April 2021.

Mims Davies:

Ahead of the return to full opening hours and the restart of face-to-face appointments, every jobcentre has reviewed all relevant site risk assessments, including the Jobcentre Claimant Facing Risk Assessment, in consultation with local Trade Union representatives. We have maintained an open dialogue with Departmental Trade Union Side, meeting with them weekly to discuss our plans for the 12 April (and 26 April in Scotland), and giving them opportunity to review and comment on all of the supporting products we have provided for our people, and, wherever possible, making changes to reflect their feedback and concerns.

Chris Stephens:**[R] [179228]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the return of staff for the full reopening of jobcentres on 12 April 2021, how many staff were expected to return immediately; how much notice they were given; and whether individual covid-19 risk assessments were carried out.

Mims Davies:

We take the health and safety of colleagues extremely seriously, and are absolutely committed to ensuring all our sites remain COVID secure in line with Public Health and Government guidance to keep colleagues and customers safe. We have adopted a slow, steady and safe approach to returning colleagues to the workplace, with the number of colleagues able to return varying by site and based on the COVID secure capacity of the jobcentre. An announcement about the department's intention to return to full opening hours and restart face-to-face appointments was made by the Permanent Secretary on the 18th March. In advance of their return to the workplace, every colleague, including those who were in the clinically extremely vulnerable group, is having a one-to-one with their manager to make sure they are aware of the support available to them.

■ Kickstart Scheme**Alison McGovern:****[179099]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications to the Kickstart Scheme have been (a) received and (b) approved to date; and how many young people have started a job on that scheme.

Mims Davies:

As of 8th April 2021 there have been 18,900 applications received from gateway organisations and employers, of which 5,300 have been approved. These approved applications represent over 180,000 jobs. Over 11,800 young people have started in their Kickstart job.

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.

■ Kickstart Scheme: Applications**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[174794\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications for the KickStart scheme her Department has (a) received, (b) approved, (c) rejected, (d) not made a decision on in (i) England, (ii) West Midlands and (iii) Birmingham, Ladywood constituency.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[174800\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average turnover is of businesses that have applied for KickStart scheme support that have been (a) approved and (b) rejected in (i) England, (ii) West Midlands and (iii) Birmingham, Ladywood constituency.

Mims Davies:

As of the 12th March 2021, there have been over 900 unique gateway applications approved and over 1,200 unique employer bids accepted on the Kickstart Scheme with many more employers included under the gateway applications.

We are currently unable to publish the number of rejected applications. We are also unable to publish information broken down 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.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[174795\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications to the KickStart scheme have been awaiting a decision for (a) less than one month, (b) one to two months and (c) more than two months in (i) England, (ii) West Midlands and (iii) Birmingham, Ladywood constituency.

Shabana Mahmood: [\[174796\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many full-time equivalent civil servants are employed to approve applications for the KickStart scheme.

Mims Davies:

A breakdown of exact decision times is currently unavailable. I refer the honourable member to the answer given for PQ [167866](#).

■ Kickstart Scheme: Costs**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[174799\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the cost is of administering the KickStart scheme to date.

Mims Davies:

The expected estimated cost of the Kickstart scheme will be approximately £2 billion, this includes administration costs and grant payments.

Members: Correspondence**Drew Hendry:**[\[179235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey of 23 November 2020 passed to the Department for Housing Communities and Local Government and then the Department for Health and Social Care before being returned to her Department for response on 17 March 2021.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 13 April 2021.

Pension Credit: Severe Disability Premium**Chris Stephens:**[\[179229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many recipients of pension credit are eligible for, but not receiving, severe disability premium.

Guy Opperman:

The information requested is not available.

Personal Independence Payment**Alex Sobel:**[\[179488\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average timescale is for a personal independence payment applicant to receive an assessment for (a) a new applications and (b) a renewal claim.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Data on clearance times for all PIP New Claims to January 2021 (the latest available data) is published in Table 2A of the PIP Statistics tables which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969159/tables-pip-statistics-to-january-2021.xlsx

This data does not distinguish between renewal claims and new applications. Column (iii) 'Referral to AP to return from AP' is measured as the average time between the date of referral to the Assessment Provider and the date of return of the Assessment Provider's recommendation to DWP. This is a proxy for the length of time the claimant has waited for an assessment, because data on the dates that assessments took place is not held by DWP.

Apsana Begum:

[\[179626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria her Department is using to review extended personal independence payment awards.

Justin Tomlinson:

Award reviews, whether following an extension to the award or not, are initiated within the 12 months prior to the award ending.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Appeals**

Apsana Begum:

[\[179627\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many of the extended personal independence payment awards that are currently being reviewed were awarded following an appeal to the First Tier Tribunal or the Upper Tier Tribunal.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Benefits Rules**

Louise Haigh:

[\[179256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the extension to personal independence payment awards to allow time for renewal claims to be submitted is still in place; and whether that policy incorporates awards that are won at appeal.

Justin Tomlinson:

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants given an award without a review, whether following an appeal or not, were extended due to the pandemic to ensure renewal claims did not have to be made at that time and awards would not go out of payment.

We have now returned to a business-as-usual process.

■ **Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations**

Hilary Benn:

[\[178599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is for a personal independence payment (PIP) renewal assessment to be undertaken; and what comparative assessment she has made of that waiting time with waiting times in April (a) 2020 and (b) 2019.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Hilary Benn:

[\[178630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will prioritise personal independence payment reassessments in cases where the applicant has a known mental health issue.

Justin Tomlinson:

Eligible Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants are invited to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – “reassessment claims” – in one of four ways:

- On reaching age 16;
- When reporting a change of circumstances which might result in a change in their DLA award;
- Shortly before an existing DLA fixed term award comes to an end; or
- Through random selection for those with long-term or indefinite DLA awards where none of the triggers above apply.

No invitations to claim PIP are prioritised by the DLA claimant’s health condition or disability.

Hilary Benn:

[\[178823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many personal independence payment renewal assessment cases were awaiting consideration in Leeds Central constituency on 1 January in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Apsana Begum:

[\[179628\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants for extended personal independence payment awards will be given a choice between a face-to-face assessment and a phone/video assessment.

Justin Tomlinson:

As has always been the case, we will continue to assess new claims to Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and reviews of existing PIP awards, on the basis of the paper-based evidence whenever possible. While telephone, paper-based and a limited number of video assessments will continue to be appropriate for many of our claimants, for others it might be more appropriate to conduct a face-to-face assessment in order to collect sufficient evidence and make a robust recommendation. These might include claimants without access to a telephone or a reliable telephone signal, claimants who lack insight into their condition, those with speech or hearing impairments (who cannot use the text relay service), and claimants who, due to their condition, feel unable to communicate via telephone. We will be identifying the most appropriate assessment type for individual claimants.

■ Severe Disability Premium: Take-up

Chris Stephens:

[179231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to maximise take-up of Severe Disability Premium among eligible recipients of (a) Pension Credit and (b) employment and support allowance.

Justin Tomlinson:

The severe disability premium in Employment and Support Allowance and the additional amounts for persons severely disabled in State Pension Credit are not separate benefits in themselves but are payable as part of the award to those who are eligible, i.e. those severely disabled people who live independently and who are most likely to need to purchase care. When a claim to either benefit is made, the claimant is asked questions, for example if they are in receipt of a qualifying disability benefit or if anybody is caring for them, which helps to determine if the premium or the additional amount is payable. Once entitled to the benefit, claimants are required to report any change of circumstance including ones which may lead to the awarding of the premium or the additional amount. The Department also makes use of the information that it holds to prompt enquiries of the claimant as to possible entitlement to the premium or the additional amount. There is information for claimants about the [severe disability premium](#) and the [additional amount for persons severely disabled](#) on the relevant pages of www.gov.uk.

■ Sick Pay: Coronavirus

Mick Whitley:

[179564]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that workers who were instructed to shield during the covid-19 outbreak and placed on Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) by their employers do not have their entitlements deducted in the event that they claim SSP in the future.

Justin Tomlinson:

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable for up to 28 weeks per period of sickness absence. Sickness absences which are less than 8 weeks apart count as the same period of sickness. In a new period of sickness, employees are eligible for an additional 28 weeks of SSP.

SSP provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are sick or incapable of work. Employers are legally required to pay SSP to eligible employees who are off work sick or incapable of work, where employees meet the qualifying conditions. Some employers may also decide to pay more, and for longer, through Occupational Sick Pay.

If an individual has used up their SSP entitlement, they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance when their SSP ends, depending on individual circumstances.

■ Universal Credit: Remote Working

Alex Cunningham:

[\[178584\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the additional costs of working from home are taken into account when calculating universal credit payments for claimants who are working from home during covid-19 restrictions.

Will Quince:

A Universal Credit award is calculated on the basis of the set benefit rate against money coming in, to ensure fairness of treatment for all claimants against the money that they have available. This is a long-standing principle of means-tested benefits.

Universal Credit rules align closely to tax legislation (Income Tax (Earnings and Pensions) Act 2003 (ITEPA)). Amounts that are taken into account for a Universal Credit award include those that are general earnings, as defined in section 7(3) of ITEPA. Amounts paid as expenses that are exempt from Income tax under Part 4 of ITEPA are not taken into account for a Universal Credit award.

■ Universal Credit: Rents

Drew Hendry:

[\[179234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of extending universal credit rent support to adult children living in their familiar home where that rent is not paid to a family member.

Will Quince:

Housing Costs Support in Universal Credit is already available to any claimant with a rent liability for the home they live in, where that liability is on a commercial basis and not owed to a close relative who lives at the same address.

There are no limitations on adult children who live at the same address as their parents from claiming housing costs support, so long as the above conditions are met.

■ Universal Credit: Severe Disability Premium

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[179166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims were made by people who were both homeless and in receipt of severe disability premium in 2017.

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[179167\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims were made by people who were both homeless and in receipt of severe disability premiums in January 2017.

Will Quince:

The Department does not centrally collate this data.

■ Winter Fuel Payments**Sarah Olney:****[\[179328\]](#)**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to remedy the winter fuel allowance payment letters that were sent out with incorrect information and ensure that people who are entitled to that payment receive it.

Guy Opperman:

This problem has been rectified.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Mineworkers' Pension Scheme

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[99079\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much the Government has received from its share of the surplus from the Mineworkers' Pension Scheme since the surplus-sharing arrangement was agreed.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 8 October 2020. The correct answer should have been:

Kwasi Kwarteng:

Since the agreement was reached in 1994, the Government has received £3,411.8m as its share of surpluses. This is in return for the provision of the guarantee that ensures pensions are paid. The guarantee has enabled an investment strategy that has resulted in scheme members receiving payments 33% higher than they would have been if they received only their actual earned pension up to privatisation.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Diagnosis

Chris Green:

[\[126894\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure equitable patient access to proven remote diagnostics to support home testing.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 4 January 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Department and the National Health Service are prioritising the improvement of connectivity and digitisation across all aspects of diagnostics in order to drive efficiency, deliver seamless care across traditional boundaries and facilitate remote reporting.

The first four phases of the Artificial Intelligence in Health and Care award included innovations in remote diagnostics, including the Neuronostics Limited smartphone-based app which can receive electroencephalogram recordings from wireless headsets to assist with assessing epilepsy treatment; Senti Tech Limited's project enabling remote chest examination for respiratory patients through sensors embedded into a jacket; and Healthy.io UK Limited's smartphone albuminuria self-test, which uses a home test kit and a mobile app to allow patients to self-test at home with clinical grade results.

NHSX is supporting the COVID Oximetry @home services which remotely monitor the oxygen saturation levels of patients with COVID-19 symptoms. This offers both technology-enabled and standard services with paper diary and telephone check-in for those without smartphones. In some areas, devices are provided for people to use in their own homes. NHSX are also supporting the scaling of remote monitoring approaches across the seven regions in England. This includes a focus on vulnerable groups such as those living in care homes.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

HOME OFFICE

■ Domestic Abuse Bill

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Victoria Atkins): **[[HCWS918](#)]**

This Thursday – 15 April – the House of Commons will consider the Lords amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill available [here](#). As we are approaching the end of the session and further consideration of this Bill is likely to proceed at pace, I am issuing this written statement to set out for the benefit of MPs, Peers and others the Government's position on the various Lords amendments.

The Domestic Abuse Bill will be a ground-breaking piece of legislation. Building on the strong suite of measures already in the Bill as agreed by the House of Commons, the Government proudly welcomes many of the Lords amendments (namely, amendments 4 to 8, 10 to 32, 34 to 36, 39 and 44 to 82 and 84 to 86) and worked closely with peers to achieve them. In particular, we support the Lords amendments:

- creating a new offence of non-fatal strangulation (Lords amendment 36);
- extending the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the “revenge porn” offence) to cover threats to disclose intimate images (Lords amendment 35);
- extending the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse (Lords amendment 34);
- stopping vexatious family proceedings that can further traumatise victims by clarifying the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 (Lords amendment 32); and
- prohibiting GPs and other health professionals from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid (Lords amendment 39).

In addition, as further evidence of our commitment to community-based services, the Government has committed to consult on the provision of community-based domestic abuse services in the upcoming Victims' Law consultation to be launched this summer.

We have also listened closely to concerns about misogyny and attitudes towards women and girls, and will ask police forces in England and Wales to record, on an experimental basis, any crimes of violence against the person, including stalking and harassment, and sexual offences where the victim perceives it to have been motivated by a hostility based on their sex.

That being said, there are other amendments made in the House of Lords which the Government is unable to support (that is, amendments 1 to 3, 9, 33, 37, 38, 40 to 43 and 83). These amendments apply to England and Wales only.

1. Abuse by carers (Lords amendments 1 to 3)

We fully recognise that abuse of disabled people perpetrated by carers is wholly unacceptable and needs to be tackled along with all other forms of abuse. The Government's definition includes husbands, wives, partners and relatives who act as "carer" for the victim whom they abuse.

These amendments, however, would bring the relationship between a disabled person and a paid or volunteer carer who is not a partner or relative within the meaning of "personally connected". Extending the scope of the Bill in this way would undermine the common understanding of domestic abuse. Central to this understanding is the manipulation of the emotional bond between intimate partners or family members.

Further, the Government's approach is consistent with international definitions. The explanatory report to the Istanbul Convention declares that domestic abuse or violence covers "intimate-partner violence between current or former spouses or partners and inter-generational violence which typically occurs between parents and children".

Nevertheless, we are determined to act on the concerns that have been raised in this debate. Accordingly, we are pleased to announce that as part of the Government's ongoing commitment in this sphere, the Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care, with input from the Ministry of Justice and Cabinet Office, will undertake a review to examine the protections against carer abuse and the support available to victims. The review will apply to England.

1. Judicial training (Lords amendment 33)

The Government acknowledges the importance of effective domestic abuse training for judges and magistrates involved in family proceedings. Training in domestic abuse for the judiciary is a priority and is included in all Family Law courses run by the Judicial College both for newly appointed judges and magistrates and as part of their continuous professional development.

Judicial training on domestic abuse is kept under constant review and is updated to reflect key developments. The senior judiciary (including the President of the Family Division and Chair of the Judicial College), have already made clear commitments to further develop domestic abuse training, taking into account this Bill, as well as the recommendations of the Harm Panel report, and findings from the four recent Court of Appeal judgments in domestic abuse cases (handed down on 30 March).

While the Lord Chancellor will continue to support the judiciary in this area, the provision of training is properly a matter for the Lord Chief Justice, as Head of the Judiciary, working through the Judicial College. By conferring functions on the Lord Chancellor in relation to judicial training this amendment is fundamentally at odds with the constitutional principle of judicial independence.

1. Reasonable force in domestic abuse cases and statutory defence of previous domestic abuse (Lords amendments 37, 38 and 83)

The Government understands the motivation behind these amendments, but we are clear that the existing full and partial defences are sufficient.

Full defences, such as self-defence, are defences to any crime which, if pleaded successfully, result in acquittal. In the circumstances of domestic abuse, the partial defences relating to “loss of control” or diminished responsibility can also be argued. Additionally, the fact that an accused is also a victim of domestic abuse will be considered throughout the criminal justice system process from the police investigation through to any Crown Prosecution Service charging decision, to defences deployed at trial under the existing law and as a mitigating factor in sentencing.

Moreover, these amendments are open to abuse by those seeking to evade justice, including potentially by a perpetrator of domestic abuse.

1. Migrant victims (Lords amendments 40, 41 and 43)

We agree that all victims of domestic abuse, regardless of their immigration status, should be treated first and foremost as victims and that they should not be deterred from seeking support. We have emphasised this throughout the passage of the Bill.

To recap, migrant victims of domestic abuse who live here on a spousal visa receive help and support through the Destitute Domestic Violence Concession scheme. For those victims who are on other types of visa, such as student, visitor or work visas, or who are here illegally, and who are not eligible for existing support schemes such as the National Referral Mechanism, we have announced a pilot support scheme. The game-changing £1.5m Support for Migrant Victims Scheme will provide access to safe accommodation and specialist services for these victims, who have previously not been eligible for other support. As well as providing immediate support within safe accommodation for those who need it, our new scheme will also provide us with clearer evidence of the needs of victims, so that we can build a sustainable programme of support.

Migrant victims should not be treated as a homogenous group with similar, if not identical, circumstances and needs. We want our longer-term work to recognise migrant victims as individuals with complex and diverse needs. The scheme for migrant victims will help achieve this.

In relation to data sharing, we are committed to considering existing data-sharing procedures following the publication, on 17 December 2020, of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) report in response to a super-complaint about the police sharing immigration data. HMICFRS recommended that the Home Office conduct a review of the legal and policy framework governing the sharing of information about vulnerable victims of crime, including domestic abuse, and to report on the outcome of the review within six months. We have accepted this recommendation and the review is now underway. This amendment pre-empts the completion of that review which we have commenced in good faith.

1. Accreditation of child contact centres (Lords amendment 9)

The Government recognises that provision of child contact centres is vital in supporting families and enabling parents to have contact with their children and that these must provide a safe environment for children and parents alike. The existing regulatory framework ensures that this is the case.

High level data provided by the National Association of Child Contact Centres indicates there are up to 400 contact centres, fewer than 15% of which may be unaccredited. However, this figure includes contact centres which may be commissioned by local authorities and which are already subject to extensive safeguarding provision and regulation.

In private law family cases, the Judiciary and the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) have protocols in place to ensure that they only refer parties to child contact centres accredited by the National Association of Child Contact Centres.

In public law family cases, where children are in the care of the local authority, or under their supervision, comprehensive statutory provisions are already in place and emphasise that contact should not undermine the welfare and safeguarding of children. All plans and decisions regarding contact, including the use of contact centres or services, are made by social workers on a case-by-case basis, with detailed safeguarding risk assessments and taking full account of any child protection plan and/or contact order. All local authority activity in relation to child contact must be in the best interests of the child and subject to the relevant statutory provisions, including sections 22 and 34 of the Children Act 1989, the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

We are also concerned that the definition of contact services would be so broad, that it may create duplicative burdens on a wide range of local authority services, which goes beyond child contact centres.

1. Management of perpetrators (Lords amendment 42)

The Government agrees that high-harm domestic abuse perpetrators need to be effectively monitored and supervised. The current legislation in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 already provides for serial and high harm domestic abuse offenders to be managed under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) on either an automatic or discretionary basis. Adding a new category of offenders automatically eligible for MAPPA would add complexity to those arrangements without delivering clear benefits.

There is already significant work in train to improve the operation of MAPPA. As well as strengthening the statutory guidance that supports MAPPA, we are pleased to announce the development of a new Multi-Agency Public Protection System (MAPPS). MAPPS, as a modern and efficient subject management system, will facilitate more effective and automated information sharing between MAPPA responsible authorities and their partner agencies, thereby improving the multi-agency risk management of all offenders managed under MAPPA, including those domestic abuse perpetrators whose risk is such that they need to be managed under the MAPPA framework. The target is for the new system to be piloted in 2022. Once MAPPS is deployed, it will allow ViSOR (the existing subject management system) to be decommissioned. In addition, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill includes provisions to further strengthen the legal framework governing information-sharing between MAPPA partners and others.

In relation to a domestic abuse perpetrator strategy, we have already committed to bringing forward such a strategy later this year as part of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

We have tabled Government amendments to enshrine this commitment in law (**Government amendments 42 (a) to (c)**).

Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority for the Prime Minister and this Government. Our landmark Domestic Abuse Bill will help to better protect and support victims and their children and bring perpetrators to justice.