



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 23 April 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (03:42 P.M., 23 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

■ **BT Group: Reorganisation**

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[181376\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will encourage BT to resume talks with its employees on the company's restructuring plans to protect the livelihoods of key workers.

Paul Scully:

The Government encourages all employers and employees to engage in dialogue. Where there is a dispute between an employer and a trade union, the Government considers that the resolution of the dispute is a matter for the parties involved. ACAS stands ready to assist the parties to resolve their dispute, should they wish it.

■ **Fireworks: Sales**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[180926\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department plans to bring forward proposals to amend the regulations on the purchase of fireworks.

Paul Scully:

There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks that controls who can purchase them, their availability and use, curfews and their safety as a product.

We agree with the conclusion of the Petition Committee's 2019 inquiry into fireworks, that any further restrictions on fireworks sold to the public by retail outlets could lead to more individuals buying products inappropriately, through online social media sources or from outside the UK. This could drive individuals to source fireworks from illegitimate or unsafe suppliers, where products may not meet the UK's safety requirements.

The Government will continue to promote the safe and considerate use of fireworks.

■ **Green Homes Grant Scheme**

Caroline Nokes:

[\[181260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans he has to include (a) energy and (b) water saving showers in any successor scheme to the Green Homes Grant Scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government recently announced an extra £300 million of funding to be invested to cut greenhouse gas emissions from the nation's homes through energy efficiency

and low carbon heating schemes, delivered through the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Scheme and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

Through the LAD scheme, all eligible measures must be included within the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP). Eligible measures are any energy efficiency and heating measures that will help improve homes. These products should be covered by SAP and when bidding for funding Local Authorities should list the measures they would like to install in their regions. Local Authorities are encouraged to focus on installing the most cost-effective measure to improve the overall efficiency of the building such as wall insulation and low carbon heating.

Design guidance for the SHDF scheme is currently being developed. A wide range of possibilities will be examined to ensure successful delivery of the fund.

Jim Shannon:

[\[181270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will reconsider his decision to end the Green Homes Grant voucher scheme.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Following a review, the Green Homes Grant Vouchers scheme closed to new applications on 31 March 2021. The voucher scheme will not reopen.

We will refocus efforts and funding on alternative approaches which will maximise delivery of home retrofits for consumers who are most in need.

The Government will be expanding its funding commitment for both the Local Authority Delivery element of the Green Homes Grant scheme and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund with £300 million of new funding.

■ Green Homes Grant Scheme: North West Norfolk

James Wild:

[\[181452\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many households in North West Norfolk constituency have applied to the Green Homes Grant scheme to date.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[Official statistics](#) for the Green Homes Grant (Voucher) Scheme were released on 18 March. From this release, 78 applications were received from households in the North West Norfolk Parliamentary Constituency, up to the end of February.

The figure above represents the number of household applications that have not been withdrawn or rejected from the scheme.

The next statistical release will be published on 22 April.

James Wild:

[\[181453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many grants have been awarded under the Green Homes Grant scheme in North West Norfolk constituency.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

[Official statistics](#) for the Green Homes Grant (Voucher) Scheme were released on 18 March. From this release, 27 vouchers were issued in the North West Norfolk Parliamentary Constituency, up to the end of February.

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

The next statistical release will be published on 22 April.

■ Greensill: Redundancy Pay**Mike Amesbury:**[\[183281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the amount of statutory redundancy paid to former Greensill Capital employees since the collapse of that company.

Paul Scully:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The Redundancy Payments Service (RPS) is dealing with two cases: Greensill Capital Management Company (UK) Limited and its subsidiary, Greensill Capital (UK) Limited.

In respect of Greensill Capital Management Company (UK) Limited the RPS has, to date, paid out £138,971 in statutory redundancy payments.

In respect of Greensill Capital (UK) Limited, to date no claims have yet been received and no payments made.

■ Housing: Energy**James Wild:**[\[181451\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to provide support for owners of off gas grid homes to install energy efficiency measures.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Support to improve the energy efficiency of homes off the gas grid is available through two current schemes:

- The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme is worth £640m per year and is a legal obligation placed on larger energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency and heating measures to fuel poor, low income and vulnerable consumers across Great Britain. The current scheme runs until March 2022 and requires energy suppliers to deliver at least 15% of their obligation in rural areas and suppliers are further incentivised to deliver measures to off-gas homes
- Green Homes Grant: Local Authority Delivery has allocated £500m with the aim of upgrading over 50,000 homes occupied by low income households, including those off the gas grid.

In addition, the Home Upgrade Grant has been allocated an initial £150m to specifically support low-income households with upgrades to the worst-performing off-gas-grid homes in England. The Home Upgrade Grant is due to commence delivery in early 2022.

■ Hydrogen

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[181347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what plans his Department has to develop green hydrogen production across the UK.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Low carbon hydrogen will be vital for meeting our legally binding commitment to achieving net zero by 2050, with potential to help decarbonise vital UK industry sectors and provide flexible deployment across heat, power and transport.

Working with industry, the UK is aiming for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. As we progress towards this ambition, we would hope to see around 1GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2025.

The UK has expertise and assets to support both electrolytic (green) and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) enabled (blue) hydrogen. Our twin track approach to enable both routes will drive cost effective supply volumes in the 2020s in line with our 2030 ambition, whilst scaling up green hydrogen. This approach is already in evidence in the Government's £121m hydrogen innovation funding programme, the development of business models to stimulate private investment and the design of the £240m Net-Zero Hydrogen Fund, confirmed out to 2025.

We will publish the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy in the first half of this year which will set out the key steps needed in the 2020s to deliver our 5GW ambition and set the context for further scale up on the way to net zero.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[181214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in circumstances where the Valuation Office Agency has made an error in valuation classifications for business rates purposes, whether local authorities should (a) treat affected business applicants as if such errors had been rectified at the time a covid-19 related grant was due to be issued and (b) be compensated for the additional cost of those applications.

Paul Scully:

As the question does not specify which grant scheme it relates to, I am responding under the assumption that it refers to Restart Grants which are the current primary business grant mechanism managed by local authorities.

Any changes to the rating list (rateable value or to the hereditament) after 1 April 2021 should be ignored for the purposes of eligibility. Local Authorities are not

required to adjust, pay or recover grants where the rating list is subsequently amended retrospectively to 1 April 2021. In cases where it was factually clear to the Local Authority on 1 April 2021 that the rating list was inaccurate on that date, Local Authorities may withhold the grant and/or award the grant based on their view of who would have been entitled to the grant had the list been accurate. This is entirely at the discretion of the Local Authority and only intended to prevent manifest errors.

■ **Private Rented Housing: Energy Performance Certificates**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[181263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has plans to further increase Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings for rental properties to band C for existing tenants in 2025 and for new tenants in 2028; what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of that increase on the supply of private rented housing as a result of affected landlords potentially leaving the sector; and what assessment his Department has made of the potential for damage to older properties with original features as a result of the work necessary to meet that increased EPC rating.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Department recently consulted on raising the energy performance standards in the domestic private rented sector to EPC band C for new tenancies from 2025 and all tenancies by 2028. As part of the consultation, we sought evidence on the possible impacts of the policy on the size of the private rented sector and on listed buildings and those in conservation areas. We are currently analysing the responses and will be publishing the Government response in due course.

■ **Restart Grant Scheme**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[180948\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department has provided to local authorities to enable them to undertake the new requirements for pre-application checks for Restart Grants so that local authorities can make timely payments to eligible businesses to fulfil the aims of the scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Scully:

The Government is committed to carrying out a full New Burdens assessment and to provide funding to local authorities that is commensurate with the additional tasks they are being asked to carry out in order to deliver Restart Grants.

■ **St George's Day**

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[180937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether he plans to make St. George's Day a public holiday in England.

Paul Scully:

The Government regularly receives requests for additional bank and public holidays to commemorate a variety of occasions such as cultural, historical and religious events. The current pattern of bank and public holidays is well established and acknowledged.

■ Unite: Annual Reports**John Spellar:**[\[180920\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March 2021, what reasons the Certification Officer has provided for the length of time taken between receiving the 2019 annual return for Unite on 18 December 2020 and publishing that return in March 2021.

Paul Scully:

The Certification Officer published the Unite annual return as soon as it was feasible to do so. There is no statutory requirement for the Certification Officer to publish annual returns within a particular period.

John Spellar:[\[180921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, for what reason did the Certification Office not publish page 36 of the Unite 2019 return regarding compensation for key management personnel as referenced in Note 4 on page 14 of the notes to the consolidated accounts.

Paul Scully:

Page 36 of the notes to the consolidated accounts for year ending 31 December 2019 was not provided to the Certification Officer by Unite. There is no statutory requirement for Unite to supply the Certification Officer with a complete set of notes to the consolidated accounts.

■ Vaccination: Manufacturing Industries**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[181349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps the Department is taking to support British domestic capacity to produce future vaccines.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government has invested over £300 million to secure and scale-up the UK's manufacturing capabilities to be able to respond to this pandemic, as well as any future pandemics. This includes:

a) Facilities that have come online:

- £65.5 million for the early manufacture of the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine;
- £8.75 million for the set-up of the rapid deployment facility at Oxford Biomedica in Oxfordshire;

- £8.6 million to the Centre of Process Innovation to develop GMP-ready mRNA manufacturing capability;
- £4.7 million for skills training through the Advanced Therapies Skills Training Network, which will be delivered through both virtual and physical centres; and
- Funding for fill and finish through a contract with Wockhardt in Wrexham, North Wales, which is currently providing fill and finish capabilities to the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

b) Facilities that will come online later this year, to help provide longer-term UK capacity:

- £140.6 million to accelerate the completion and expanded role of the Vaccines Manufacturing Innovation Centre in Oxfordshire;
- £127 million for the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult in Braintree, Essex; and
- Funding for the expansion of the Valneva factory in Livingston, Scotland.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Bambos Charalambous:

[\[181086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Government's support for the wedding industry sector adversely affected by the cancellation of wedding receptions and religious ceremonies as a result of covid-19 restrictions on the number of people attending those receptions and ceremonies.

Paul Scully:

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

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

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alan Brown:

[\[181061\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what support his Department is providing to the development of port infrastructure for offshore wind energy.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In October 2020, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced £160m of support for offshore wind coastal manufacturing infrastructure across the whole of the UK, and committing to deploying 40 gigawatts of offshore wind by 2030.

In February 2021, the Department announced up to £95 million of government investment for two new offshore wind port hubs, to be constructed on Humberside

and Teesside. The support for the Teesworks Offshore Manufacturing Centre and the Able Marine Energy Park will help to level up the UK economy, bring in new investment, create high-skilled jobs, and provide new opportunities in ports and the areas around them.

In addition, in the Budget 2021 my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Government would provide £27 million, subject to business case, for the Aberdeen Energy Transition Zone, helping to support North East Scotland to play a leading role in meeting the UK's net zero ambitions.

In addition, GE Renewable Energy announced an investment in a major new offshore wind turbine blade manufacturing plant, the first investment at the Teesworks Offshore Manufacturing Centre. This brand-new manufacturing facility could create 750 direct renewable energy jobs and close to 1,500 indirect jobs in the area.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: York

Rachael Maskell:

[\[183197\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reasons the information provided on the number of his Department's jobs that will be moved to York was different in the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179241 and his oral contribution of 25 March 2021, Official Report, column 1038.

Julia Lopez:

As outlined in both the answer to PQ 179241 on 15 April and in the oral contribution of 25 March, Cabinet Office Ministers have consistently informed the House of the Government's commitment to relocating roles to regions and nations of the UK. More detailed plans for growth in York will be set out in due course.

■ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: Complaints

Justin Madders:

[\[181039\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what discussions he has had with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on the increase in the (a) waiting time for allocation of complaints from 29 days to 74 days and (b) average time from allocation to completion to 152 days.

Chloe Smith:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) is independent of Government and is accountable to Parliament through the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee for its performance. The PHSO will therefore reply separately to these questions by letter.

■ Weddings: Coronavirus

Zarah Sultana:

[183305]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to proposals under Step 3 in Covid-19: Guidance for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations, whether restaurants will be considered covid-secure indoor venues where up to 30 people may proceed with a wedding reception.

Penny Mordaunt:

At Step 3, no earlier than 17 May 2021, weddings and civil partnership receptions can proceed with up to 30 people either outdoors (including private gardens) or in any COVID Secure indoor venue that is not required by law to remain closed. At Step 3, indoor hospitality will be allowed to open, meaning that wedding receptions can take place in restaurants as well as a range of other COVID-Secure venues and businesses.

Further details on receptions at this Step will be updated in due course to enable us to take account of developments in the pandemic.

For further information, please refer to the guidance for for wedding and civil partnership receptions and celebrations:

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

For further information, please refer to the guidance on reopening businesses and venues, which sets out what businesses/venues open at each step:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reopening-businesses-and-venues-in-england/reopening-businesses-and-venues>

EDUCATION

■ Children: Disadvantaged

Christian Wakeford:

[183320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans the Government has to increase funding for the mentoring of vulnerable children in or on the edge of care.

Vicky Ford:

Local authorities set their own children's services budget from their core spending power, based on local need and priorities.

An additional £300 million has been provided to local authorities this year for the social care grant, giving councils a total grant of £1.7 billion for children's and adults' social care in the financial year 2021-22. This is part of the total £51.3 billion core spending power available to local authorities this year for their services, including services for vulnerable children and those on the edge of care. The government has increased core spending power by 4.6% this year.

Local authorities will also receive an additional £1.55 billion of grant funding to support COVID-19 expenditure pressures this year, including children's services. This funding is un-ringfenced, recognising local authorities are best placed to decide on where to allocate resources, and is on top of the £4.6 billion of grant funding which the government has already provided to support councils through the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Department for Education will work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Her Majesty's Treasury ahead of the next Spending Review, which will establish funding levels across the government .

■ Schools: Counselling

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:

[181084]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of schools providing in-school counselling support as part of a whole school approach to mental health.

Vicky Ford:

The department recognises that counselling can play a particularly effective role as part of a whole-school or college approach, and that many schools already provide their pupils access to counselling support.

To support the provision of counselling support in schools, the department published a blueprint for school counselling services. This provides schools with practical, evidence-based advice, informed by schools and counselling experts, on how to deliver high quality school-based counselling. It also offers information on how to ensure that vulnerable children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children and those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, who have a higher prevalence to mental illness, can access counselling provision. Further guidance on counselling in schools can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counselling-in-schools>.

However, the department has not made the provision of access to counselling in schools and colleges mandatory, as it is important for schools to have the freedom to decide what support to offer their pupils, based on their particular needs, and drawing on an evidence base of effective practice. This support can come from a number of sources, including counselling.

The government has invested £8 million in the new Wellbeing for Education Return programme which funded expert advisers who offered training and support to schools and colleges and made links to local support available, including, potentially, counselling. Alongside this, the department launched a £95,000 pilot led by the Education Support charity to provide online peer-support and telephone counselling from experts to around 250 school leaders. The pilot ended in March 2021. The outcome of the pilot will inform any future wellbeing and mental health interventions for staff.

To increase support further in the long term, we remain committed to our joint green paper delivery programme with the Department of Health and Social care and NHS England, including introducing new mental health support teams linked to schools and colleges, providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges, and testing approaches to faster access to NHS specialist support.

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

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Research

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[180994\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what progress his Department has made on boosting innovation in the organic sector; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing research and development funding for organic and agroecological innovation.

Victoria Prentis:

We work closely with organic producers and sector bodies on promoting innovation via a sector led approach. The sector has a number of exciting programmes working towards this goal, and we believe that farmer led training and support best provides for innovation that suits the needs of the industry.

The Soil Association Innovative Farmers programme brings together a network of farmers, researchers, advisors and businesses to share expertise and develop new approaches to organic farming. The English Organic Forum, Organics Research Council, National Farmers Union, and the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, also produce research of relevance to the organics sector.

From 2022 we will launch an ambitious Innovation R&D Package, putting farming businesses at the centre of R&D for new technologies and practices - including organic farming practices - to transform the productivity, profitability and sustainability of agriculture.

As highlighted in the recently published Agricultural Transition Plan, we will build on previous R&D funding, such as the £160m 2013 Agri-tech Strategy and the £90m Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund 'Transforming Food Production' initiative, to provide additional investment. This will be administered through a new R&D funding package for England.

Application guidance will be published prior to scheme launch, including a summary of application deadlines, funding criteria, timetable and themes. Competitions are expected to open in early 2022, with communication to farmers and growers in advance, and projects are expected to begin later that year.

■ Chemicals: Regulation

Ruth Jones: [\[181429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when UK REACH plans to initiate restrictions on each of the 11 hazardous substances on which opinions have been adopted by the European Chemicals Agency, that will not be initiated by UK REACH in its first year.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK REACH Work Programme will be published annually, setting out the Health & Safety Executive's priorities, including work on restrictions. We will continue to identify further measures to safeguard human health and the environment based on robust science and the best available evidence, including considering evidence developed by the European Chemicals Agency. Restriction dossiers that we ask the Health & Safety Executive to prepare in future Work Programmes will address issues that we consider to be most pressing in Great Britain.

Ruth Jones: [\[181430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will publish the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency analysis on which EU restrictions the European Chemicals Agency has adopted an opinion on were prioritised for consideration by UK REACH in its first year.

Rebecca Pow:

HSE and the Environment Agency used a wide range of sources of information to identify priorities for initial restriction proposals under UK REACH. They will continue to keep this analysis under review in considering priorities for future years.

■ Emergency Services Network: Rural Areas

Luke Pollard: [\[181109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the effect on ambulance, flood and other emergency response times of the time taken to roll out the Emergency Services Network in rural areas with poor 4G coverage.

Luke Pollard: [\[181110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Home Affairs on the effect on ambulance, flood and other emergency service response times in rural areas with inadequate 4G coverage of delays to the roll out of the Emergency Services Network.

Rebecca Pow:

The emergency services currently use the Airwave system which is not run on 4G. This will eventually be replaced by the Emergency Services Network when it is safe to do so. The Home Office is responsible for roll-out of the Emergency Services Network.

■ **Fisheries: Crime****Jim Shannon:**[\[181272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to tackle illegal fishing in UK waters.

Victoria Prentis:

On 1 January 2021 the UK became an independent coastal state and retained the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Regulation (IUU) in UK Law. This means that imports of most fish and fishery products into the UK will need to be accompanied by a catch certificate and other relevant IUU documentation. As an independent coastal state, the UK has full responsibility over how it ensures compliance with fisheries regulations within its waters. We are committed to ensuring an effective and robust enforcement system. Control and enforcement is a devolved matter. Defra, the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive continue to work together to share information and ensure a coordinated approach to monitoring, compliance and enforcement across UK waters. In England, the Government has put in place a significant increase in the number of personnel and surveillance assets dedicated to fisheries protection, including offshore patrol vessels for at-sea surveillance, and planes for aerial surveillance. This strong presence will deter against fisheries infringements, while also enabling our agencies to take robust action where they may occur.

■ **Fisheries: Quotas****Angus Brendan MacNeil:**[\[180947\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his timeframe is for the allocation of the fishing quota; and what proportion of that quota is planned to be allocated to (a) coastal communities and (b) companies.

Victoria Prentis:

On 24 March, we announced the method we will use to apportion additional quota between the four UK administrations.

On 14 April, we announced how the English share of this additional quota will be allocated to industry. The details of both of these announcements can be found on gov.uk. We will be working with the Marine Management Organisation to finalise allocations for England in the coming weeks.

As the allocation of quota is a devolved responsibility it is for each administration to decide how and when to allocate their share of the UK quota.

■ Fisheries: UN Climate Conference

Darren Jones:

[\[181088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the impact of commercial fishing is planned to be on the agenda at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties.

Victoria Prentis:

As incoming president of COP26 in partnership with Italy, the UK is committed to showcasing ambitious action on climate change and inspiring others to do the same. We are placing a priority on Nature at COP26, championing the protection, restoration and sustainable use of marine ecosystems, to improve the ocean's resilience to climate change and support the restoration of habitats critical for adaptation.

The agenda for COP26 will be based on mandates agreed at previous COPs. We are committed to enabling progress across all the mandates we have been given, and to securing an outcome that respects and reflects the interests of all Parties, including the poorest and most climate vulnerable. This includes the outcomes from the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue, mandated at COP25 in Decision 1/CP.25.

Looking beyond COP26, we will use our status as a newly independent coastal State to expand and enhance our international efforts to sustainably manage fisheries, protect ecosystems and combat illegal fishing.

■ Fishing Catches

Darren Jones:

[\[181087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the catch limits provided for by UK fishing vessel licences take into consideration by-catch; and how that by-catch is monitored.

Victoria Prentis:

The catch limits on UK fishing licences are set to ensure the UK stays within the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for each stock as set out by the Secretary of State every year. The TACs account for by-catch and any obligation fishing vessels have to land this by-catch. In some cases, catch limits are set for by-catch only stocks and where this is the case it is clearly stated in the relevant fishing vessel licence.

By-catch is monitored in the same way as all stock uptake. This is through the mandatory recording of all catches and landings by fishing vessels and the mandatory recording of all sales made directly from fishing vessels.

■ Genetically Modified Organisms

Navendu Mishra:

[\[181131\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect on trade with the EU of the proposal to

authorise the use of gene-editing technologies in agriculture and food and drink manufacturing in England.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra's recent genetic technologies consultation sought information on the implications of not regulating organisms produced by genetic editing and other genetic technologies as GMOs if they could have been produced through traditional breeding methods which included impacts on trade.

The consultation ended on 17 March and we are currently analysing the responses. A full Government response will be published within three months.

■ **Horses: Animal Welfare**

Luke Pollard: [\[181111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the risks posed by stray horses.

Luke Pollard: [\[181112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he plans to take to reduce the number of horses being allowed by their owners to stray.

Victoria Prentis:

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, animal owners and keepers are under a legal duty of care for the animals for which they are responsible on a permanent or temporary basis. It is an offence to cause any animal unnecessary suffering or to fail to provide for its welfare. The 2006 Act is backed up by the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Horses, Ponies, Donkeys and Their Hybrids which provides owners with information on how to meet the welfare needs of their equines, as required by the 2006 Act. That includes ensuring the animal has a suitable environment to live in and is protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

The Control of Horses Act 2015 introduced more flexible options for the management of fly-grazing, straying or abandoned horses which present numerous difficulties for landowners, the public and the horses themselves. The 2015 Act allows landowners and occupiers to seize and, if necessary, remove horses unlawfully left on their land and take them immediately to a place of safety. In all cases, the person seizing the horse must notify the local police force within 24 hours of doing so, and if the horses' owners can be identified, the person must also notify them. If no owner can be identified within four working days, landowners, occupiers and local authorities may then decide what to do with the horses, including rehoming, either privately or via charities, or offering them for sale.

The Government considers that the relevant legislation and guidance in place provides the right safeguards and powers in respect of protecting equine welfare and addressing the issue of straying horses. We remain committed to working with enforcement agencies and other interested parties to ensure issues of horse abandonments or neglect are effectively addressed.

■ Livestock: Transport

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[181230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what impact assessment his Department has made of the proposed reforms to animal welfare in transport.

Victoria Prentis:

We published a consultation stage impact assessment which estimated the potential impact on businesses of proposals to end live animal exports for slaughter and fattening and introduce further improvements to animal welfare during transport.

Our aim was to gather additional evidence through the consultation process to further refine the impact assessment. The public consultation ended on 25 February and we are currently analysing all the responses we received.

■ Marine Environment

Darren Jones:

[\[181089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release, Gove calls for 30 per cent of world's oceans to be protected by 2030, published 24 September 2018, how protected oceans will be (a) maintained and (b) enforced as no fishing zones; and how that enforcement is planned to be funded.

Rebecca Pow:

The UK is a world leader on ocean protection. The UK is championing a target to protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030 and working to secure its adoption at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Conference of Parties later this year where the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be adopted. In support of this target, the UK leads the Global Ocean Alliance and is the Ocean Co-Chair (alongside France and Costa Rica) of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

We are also playing an active role in negotiations to conclude a new agreement, under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction ("the BBNJ Agreement"). We are pressing for an ambitious BBNJ Agreement to be concluded this year that includes provisions for the designation of globally recognised Marine Protected Areas in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

The UK believes the whole ocean should be sustainably managed to allow the marine environment and sustainable marine economies to thrive. Effective MPAs can cover a range of protection measures including highly protected no-catch sites and those that deliver conservation outcomes alongside sustainable economic activities.

Accountability with effective planning, reporting and review mechanisms will be essential to delivering the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. That is why the UK, in partnership with Norway, is leading a programme of workshops to provide space for discussions between Parties to enhance planning, reporting and review

mechanisms to strengthen the implementation mechanisms of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the CBD.

To deliver on an ambitious the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, it is essential that the framework is supported by a global uplift in financing for nature and capacity-building. Mobilising resources from all sources (public and private), and at all levels (domestic and international) will be vital to supporting implementation of the goals and targets.

The UK is a major contributor to the Global Environment Facility and wants to see it become the Financial Mechanism for the BBNJ Agreement as it is for the CBD. The UK's new Blue Planet Fund will also provide additional support for marine and ocean protection for developing countries, complementing the successes of the Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme and Blue Belt Programme for UK Overseas Territories.

Darren Jones:

[\[181090\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to his Department's press release Gove calls for 30 per cent of world's oceans to be protected by 2030 published on 24 September 2018, whether existing Marine Protected Areas and Marine Conservation Zones in UK waters are no-fishing zones; how no-fishing zones are (a) monitored and (b) enforced; and whether the designation of those zones has led to a like-for-like reduction in the (i) size and (ii) number of fisheries being licensed out of the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government consulted on measures to reduce personal water use in 2019 and we have committed to publish our response in late spring. Our ambitions are aligned with the recommendations set out in the National Framework to reduce personal water consumption to 110 litres per person per day by 2050. We believe our measures will enable this ambition to be met without affecting the quality of life and the enjoyment of water used by households.

■ Neonicotinoids

Daniel Zeichner:

[\[181286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason an emergency authorisation for the use of neonicotinoids on sugar beet was approved.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra applies the precautionary principle to pesticides policy. That is why, for example, we supported a ban on the use of neonicotinoids to treat crops including sugar beet in 2018 and removed the general authorisation for its use. However, we can consider applications for emergency authorisations, just as other countries across Europe continue to do. In fact, ten EU countries have repeatedly granted emergency authorisations for use of the withdrawn neonicotinoids in sugar beet. Emergency authorisation was granted for the use of a neonicotinoid seed treatment this year to address a potentially serious risk to the sugar beet crop.

We will only grant an emergency authorisation where the relevant statutory requirements are met. In particular, that is where use of the product is necessary because of a danger which cannot be contained by any other reasonable means and any potential risks to humans, animals and the environment (including risks to bees and other pollinators) are considered to be acceptably low.

The product will not now be used on the crop because disease levels were forecast to be below a threshold set as a condition of authorisation.

The reasons for the decision to issue this emergency authorisation for the product Cruiser SB were set out in the [Statement on the decision to issue – with strict conditions – emergency authorisation to use a product containing a neonicotinoid to treat sugar beet seed in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statements/2021-04-23-statement-on-the-decision-to-issue-with-strict-conditions-emergency-authorisation-to-use-a-product-containing-a-neonicotinoid-to-treat-sugar-beet-seed-in-2021).

Daniel Zeichner: **[181287]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, for what reason the Health and Safety Executive risk assessment for the application for emergency use of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam on sugar beet was based on industry studies and did not examine evidence from independent scientific studies.

Daniel Zeichner: **[181289]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether the risk assessment undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive for the application for emergency use of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam on sugar beet granted in January 2021 considered the risk to (a) wild bumblebees, (b) solitary bees and (c) managed honey bees.

Daniel Zeichner: **[181290]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Health and Safety Executive's emergency authorisation of the use of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam on sugar beet granted in January 2021, whether the risk assessment undertaken for that application considered the risk to (a) bees and (b) other pollinators of being exposed via pollen and nectar in wildflower margins adjacent to the treated sugar beet crop.

Victoria Prentis:

Any consideration of possible authorisation of a pesticide, including emergency authorisation, starts from the information provided by the applicant. Those carrying out the risk assessment will also draw on their wider knowledge. In this case, the assessment carried out by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for Cruiser SB took account of an earlier assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The EFSA work considered honeybees, bumblebees and solitary bees, although the available data mostly relates to honeybees. HSE's assessment considered the risks from residues of thiamethoxam in the soil being taken up by flowering plants attractive to bees in future years. The assessment focussed on following crops such

as oilseed rape, which have a greater potential to expose bees than wildflowers in field margins.

Daniel Zeichner: [\[181288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the emergency authorisation for the use of the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam in January 2021, for what reason his Department did not include a mitigation measure to tackle the risk of guttation on following maize crops.

Victoria Prentis:

The mitigations built into the emergency authorisation to protect bees were considered sufficient to support the granting of the authorisation.

■ Organic Farming: Finance

Daniel Zeichner: [\[180995\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to make entry into organic production appealing for new entrants; and whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of funding an organic conversion advice and support service.

Victoria Prentis:

Now that the UK has left the European Union we have the opportunity to chart our own course in organic regulation, setting rules around organic production and certification that suit the needs of our domestic organics industry. We are working to streamline bureaucratic processes inherited from the EU regulatory system to allow for a more flexible and responsive way to handle our regulatory obligations while reducing costs for producers and the burden on the public purse. By reducing these administrative burdens, we hope to make conversion to organics easier and more appealing for producers.

From 1996 to 2011 Defra ran the Organic Conversion Information Service (OCIS) which provided free technical advice to farmers considering conversion via a dedicated helpline and information packs, followed up by on-site visits. As the organic market matured producers built up their own expertise and other sources of expert advice became available, meaning that it was no longer considered cost effective or necessary to continue OCIS.

Support now exists under the Countryside Stewardship scheme. Producers who want to know more about applying for an organic Countryside Stewardship agreement can book an advice session for support. In addition, any eligible application for either a Mid-Tier or Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship is guaranteed an agreement with conversion payments available for the first years of the agreement if moving from conventional to organic farming.

■ Pesticides: Regulation

Julian Sturdy:

[\[180969\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 13 October 2020 to Question 99604 on Pesticides: Regulation, what progress the Health and Safety Executive has made on its review of regulations on the use of pesticides by voluntary conservation groups for environmental conservation purposes; and when that review will be published.

Victoria Prentis:

Voluntary conservation groups are not prohibited from using pesticides. Volunteers may use products that are authorised for amateur use; they may also use products authorised for professional use providing they are trained and hold a recognised certificate in the application of pesticides. Untrained conservation volunteers may apply pesticides that are authorised for professional use but only if they are under the supervision of a trained certificated user and are working towards gaining a recognised certificate in the application of pesticides.

As stated in the answer to question 99604, this aspect of pesticide regulation is under review. We are expediting this work and I expect to be able to inform the hon. Member for York Outer of the conclusion within the next two months.

■ Pets: Regulation

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[181352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to regulate the ownership of exotic animals in England.

Victoria Prentis:

Zoos in England are regulated by the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 and the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice (2012). Licences are awarded for up to four or six years and at least two inspections per licence have to use qualified zoo inspectors appointed by Defra. Local Authorities are responsible for enforcing conditions in zoos, and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is responsible for nominating Defra inspectors for formal inspections. Defra is working with the UK Zoos Expert Committee to ensure the standards are clear and enforceable whilst representing the latest knowledge on the keeping of wild animals. We intend to launch a targeted consultation on the standards later this year.

The keeping of dangerous wild animals as pets is regulated by the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976. The Act requires owners of dangerous wild animals to be licensed by their local authority. The aim of the Act is to ensure that where private individuals keep dangerous wild animals, they do so in circumstances that create no risk to the public. We are looking closely at the wider animal welfare law to see whether it needs to be improved in relation to the welfare of exotic, non-domesticated animals. We have a manifesto commitment to start this process by banning the keeping of primates as pets and we consulted on this earlier this year.

It may also be helpful if I set out the laws already in place that provide for the protection of the welfare of exotic, non-domesticated animals in England. Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, animal owners and keepers are under a legal duty of care for the animals for which they are responsible on a permanent or temporary basis. A person could therefore be responsible for an animal if they own it or are in charge of it. Responsibility for an animal includes having an understanding of the specific welfare needs, including health, of the animal and having the appropriate knowledge and skills to care for the animal. Local authorities, the APHA and the police all have powers of entry to investigate complaints of suspected animal cruelty or neglect and undertake prosecutions where necessary.

Anyone who is cruel to an animal, or does not provide properly for its welfare needs, faces an unlimited fine or being sent to prison for up to six months, or both. Following a conviction for either of these offences, the court may also ban the offender from keeping any animals or certain types of animals and/or order that their animals are removed from them. The Government fully supports increasing the maximum custodial penalty for animal cruelty offences (including causing unnecessary suffering to an animal) from six months to five years through the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill which is currently before Parliament.

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018, anyone who is in the business of selling animals as pets (including non-domestic species) needs a valid licence from their local authority. Licencees must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue, refuse or revoke licences.

■ Poultry: Transport

Dr Dan Poulter:

[\[181231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what impact assessment his Department has made of the transport of day-old chicks for up to 72 hours.

Victoria Prentis:

No such assessment has been undertaken.

■ Water: Conservation

James Wild:

[\[181455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to introduce a water labelling efficiency scheme linked to building regulations and minimum standards.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government consulted on measures to reduce personal water use in 2019, which included amendments to building regulations, introducing a water efficiency labelling scheme and minimum standards. The response is due to be published in

late spring and sets out our ambition and a package of policies to reduce household water consumption.

James Wild:

[\[181456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of potential saving in water per person from the introduction of a mandatory water efficiency labelling scheme linked to building regulations and minimum standards.

Rebecca Pow:

The Government consulted on measures to reduce personal water use in 2019 and we have committed to publish our response in late spring. Our ambitions are aligned with the recommendations set out in the National Framework to reduce personal water consumption to 110 litres per person per day by 2050. We believe our measures will enable this ambition to be met without affecting the quality of life and the enjoyment of water used by households.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Afghanistan: Peacekeeping Operations

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[181233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the Government's plans are to protect (a) human rights and (b) women's rights in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of UK troops in September 2021.

Nigel Adams:

The UK remains committed to supporting Afghanistan on its path to a more peaceful and positive future. We will continue to work closely with the UN, Afghanistan and our international partners to intensify peace efforts as NATO forces drawdown.

The UK has assisted in the significant improvement in the rights of all Afghans, including women and minorities. Life expectancy increased from 56 years in 2002 to 65 in 2020. There are 8.2 million more children in school now than in 2002, including 3.7 million girls. However, only a negotiated and inclusive settlement will safeguard the rights and freedoms that Afghans want and deserve. We will continue to make clear to all sides that any Afghan-led political settlement must preserve progress, including protection for women and minorities.

Afghanistan is a focus country under the UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This plan shows how the UK aims to reduce the impact of conflict on women and girls and to promote their inclusion in conflict resolution. It is part of wider efforts to ensure that the UK's foreign policy consciously and consistently delivers for women and girls. The UK has also provided technical assistance for the implementation of Phase 2 of Afghanistan's National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (which runs from 2019 - 2022).

■ Christianity: Females**Chris Evans:**[\[181250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to help tackle religious persecution and gender based violence of Christian women in countries around the world.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all. We recognise that women and girls from religious minorities can often suffer because of both their gender and their faith. That is why we ensure our human rights policy work considers the intersectionality of human rights, including the importance of addressing the specific vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls from religious minority communities.

The UK is recognised as a global leader in tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in all its forms, by pioneering approaches around the world that have shown that VAWG is preventable. In the DRC, a project with faith leaders and community action groups halved women's experience of intimate partner violence from 69% to 29%. Preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence remains a top priority for the FCDO. In November, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, launched the Declaration of Humanity by faith and belief leaders which calls for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and denounces the stigma faced by survivors, including by children born of rape. Through UK Aid Connect, FCDO has supported the Creid programme (managed by the Institute of Development Studies) to work with women from religious minorities in five countries in Africa and Asia to understand the problems they face and identify effective approaches to tackle these issues.

Chris Evans:[\[181251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support and counsel persecuted Christian women who are stigmatised by sexual violence overseas.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all. We recognise that women and girls from religious minorities can often suffer because of both their gender and their faith. That is why we ensure our human rights policy work considers the intersectionality of human rights, including the importance of addressing the specific vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls from religious minority communities.

The UK is recognised as a global leader in tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in all its forms, by pioneering approaches around the world that have shown that VAWG is preventable. In the DRC, a project with faith leaders and community action groups halved women's experience of intimate partner violence from 69% to 29%. Preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence remains a top

priority for the FCDO. In November, Lord Ahmad launched the Declaration of Humanity by faith and belief leaders which calls for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and denounces the stigma faced by survivors, including by children born of rape. Through UK Aid Connect, FCDO has supported the Creid programme (managed by the Institute of Development Studies) to work with women from religious minorities in five countries in Africa and Asia to understand the problems they face and identify effective approaches to tackle these issues.

■ Developing Countries: Climate Change

Ruth Jones: [\[181442\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is taking steps to compensate poorer countries for the effects of climate change resulting from carbon emissions from wealthier nations.

James Duddridge:

Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss is an international priority for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and we are calling for significantly increased action to support the most vulnerable to adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. The UK has pledged to double its International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion from 2021-26 and we are using our COP26 and G7 Presidencies to urge all other donors to be equally ambitious in their commitments.

■ International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Chris Evans: [\[181253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to support the creation of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

James Cleverly:

The UK remains committed to making progress towards a two-state solution. We support the objectives of the International Fund for Israeli-Palestinian Peace and continue to engage with the Alliance for Middle East Peace and Biden administration to discuss the Fund's development.

■ Israel: Demolition

Sarah Olney: [\[182077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make it his policy to ensure that representations made in (a) public statements and (b) bilateral relations with Israel refer to forcible transfer on the matter of illegal demolitions that violate (i) international criminal law and (ii) international humanitarian law.

James Cleverly:

[Holding answer 21 April 2021]: I continue to maintain an active dialogue with regional partners on the matter of demolitions, and frequently raise our objections in

bilateral conversations with my Israeli counterparts. The UK urged the Government of Israel to end demolitions of property in the West Bank at the UN Security Council on 25 March 2021. On the same day, the British Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners. I called on Israel to stop demolitions on 5 February 2021 and raised my concerns about the demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures with the Israeli Ambassador on 29 October 2020. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities.

The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. The practice causes unnecessary suffering to Palestinians and is harmful to efforts to promote peace.

■ Jerusalem: Palestinians

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[183224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations his Department has made to the Israeli authorities on evictions of Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah.

James Cleverly:

We regularly make clear our concerns about the evictions of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem to the Israeli authorities and the Municipality of Jerusalem. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity.

The UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv raised ongoing demolitions with the Israeli Authorities in a meeting alongside like-minded partners on 25 March 2021. I raised the issue of evictions of Palestinians from their homes, with the Israeli Ambassador to the UK on 29 October 2020, and the British Embassy in Tel Aviv raises this issue regularly with the Israeli authorities. UK officials from the British Consulate in Jerusalem have made regular visits to areas at risk of demolition and eviction to reiterate UK support for those communities. On 8 April 2021, the UK Consul General Jerusalem visited families at risk of eviction in Sheikh Jarrah, restating UK opposition to evictions of Palestinians from their homes.

■ Morocco: Political Prisoners

Alex Sobel:

[\[181421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the UN Security Council to advocate for the release of Saharawi civilian prisoners in Moroccan prisons.

James Cleverly:

Human rights is a UK priority around the world, including in Morocco, and we raise human rights issues with Morocco accordingly. The UK and Morocco have regular discussions on human rights, including prison conditions. The UN Security Council

adopted Resolution 2548 on 30 October 2020. The resolution stresses the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, and encourages the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, bearing in mind their relevant obligations under international law.

■ **Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu**

Margaret Ferrier:

[\[180998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he has made to his Turkish counterpart on the arrest of Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of reports of the arrest of Mr Gergerlioğlu, MP for the People's Democratic Party (HDP). We have made it clear to Turkey that we expect the government to undertake any legal processes or actions against opposition parties, MPs, party officials and elected mayors, as well as human rights defenders and journalists, fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law. Our Embassy meets regularly with the HDP leadership, as it does with other opposition parties, to discuss their concerns, including the arrests of HDP MPs. We will continue to engage closely with Turkey to encourage the full protection of fundamental rights of all peoples, regardless of their legitimate political affiliations, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression and assembly, press freedom and the treatment of detainees.

■ **Overseas Aid**

Jim Shannon:

[\[180978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, for what reason his planned timescale for temporarily reducing Official Development Assistance to 0.5 per cent GNI has changed.

Nigel Adams:

The UK economy is 11.3% smaller than last year and undergoing the worst contraction for 300 years. The deficit this year is projected to be double its peak during the financial crisis. Against this backdrop we have been forced to prioritise public spending, including temporarily reducing the ODA commitment from 0.7% of GNI to 0.5%. We will return to spending 0.7% on ODA as soon as the fiscal situation allows.

■ **Property Rights: Croatia**

Mary Robinson:

[\[181312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether there is a reciprocity agreement between the UK and Croatia allowing British nationals to purchase property in Croatia.

Wendy Morton:

There is currently no agreement in place specifically for the purpose of UK nationals buying homes in Croatia and vice versa. The FCDO is actively working to try and find a solution to ensure that British Nationals who wish to purchase property in Croatia are able to do so.

■ Religious Freedom: Females**Chris Evans:**[\[181252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of trends in the level of gender-specific religious persecution of women from religious minorities abroad.

Nigel Adams:

The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief for all. We recognise that women and girls from religious minorities can often suffer because of both their gender and their faith. That is why we ensure our human rights policy work considers the intersectionality of human rights, including the importance of addressing the specific vulnerabilities experienced by women and girls from religious minority communities.

The UK is recognised as a global leader in tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in all its forms, by pioneering approaches around the world that have shown that VAWG is preventable. In the DRC, a project with faith leaders and community action groups halved women's experience of intimate partner violence from 69% to 29%. Preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence remains a top priority for the FCDO. In November, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, launched the Declaration of Humanity by faith and belief leaders which calls for the prevention of sexual violence in conflict and denounces the stigma faced by survivors, including by children born of rape. Through UK Aid Connect, FCDO has supported the Creid programme (managed by the Institute of Development Studies) to work with women from religious minorities in five countries in Africa and Asia to understand the problems they face and identify effective approaches to tackle these issues.

■ Spain: British Nationals Abroad**Emma Hardy:**[\[181407\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department has taken to identify (a) the needs of UK nationals residing in Spain and (b) how those needs may have changed since the UK left the EU.

Wendy Morton:

The Withdrawal Agreement, signed on 24 January 2020, provides citizens with the certainty they need about their rights going forward. It means UK nationals living in Spain before the end of the transition period can continue to live, work, study and access benefits and services broadly as they did before the UK left the EU.

Throughout the negotiations, we have sought to understand the unique circumstances of UK nationals living in Spain and continue to use the feedback received from UK nationals to help inform our approach.

The Government has been actively engaging with UK nationals in Spain through our Embassy in Madrid and Consulates across Spain. This has included town hall events; social media outreach; interviews with print media and radio; as well as digital content on gov.uk such as the Living in Guides. We have also launched a multi-million pound communications campaign for UK nationals in the EU, which informs them about the actions they may need to take. To date, there have been over 318 outreach events in Spain. We also maintain a regular dialogue with both the Spanish government and civil society groups.

The Government is also working with third party organisations through the UK Nationals Support Fund to help UK nationals who may struggle to register in Spain. Since May 2020, 126,503 UK nationals have accessed the services of our three grant-funded organisations in Spain. 3,306 people have been directly supported by a caseworker and 1,013 registrations have been submitted on behalf of those who would struggle to do so themselves.

■ Western Sahara: Natural Resources

Alex Sobel:

[\[181420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make representations to the UN Security Council to call for an end to the illegal extraction of natural resources from Western Sahara against the interests and wishes of the indigenous Saharawi.

James Cleverly:

The UK notes the UN legal view from 2002, which stated that commercial activity in Western Sahara (including the exploration for, and exploitation of natural resources) is not inherently illegal but must not disregard the interests and wishes of the people of Western Sahara. We also note the European Court of Justice ruling of December 2016 on the applicability of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement to Western Sahara. The Association Agreement was subsequently amended to comply with the ruling following EU consultations with a wide spectrum of Western Saharan representatives, stake-holders, civil society, and other organisations. The UK-Morocco Association Agreement replicates the effects of the existing EU-Morocco Association Agreement, including on the current territorial application and products originating in Western Sahara subject to controls by customs authorities of Morocco.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Abortion: Health Services**

Andrea Jenkyns: [\[181350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the content is of the aftercare provided to women who undergo home abortions; and whether those women receive a follow-up call to check on their pain management.

Helen Whately:

The Department's required Standard Operating Procedures, which all independent abortion providers must comply with, set out that all providers should have protocols in place covering the support that should be in place for women following an abortion procedure.

Abortion providers will discuss possible complications with the woman during the consultation and women will be provided with written advice and information about possible symptoms, including those which would necessitate urgent review. Women have access to a 24 hour telephone helpline should they have any concerns. Follow up calls regarding pain management are a matter for individual providers.

■ Arthritis: Mental Health

Andrew Rosindell: [\[164377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has had made of the effect of covid-19 lockdown on the mental health of people with arthritis.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with their COVID-19 musculoskeletal (MSK) stakeholder group to assess the impact of lockdown on both the physical and mental health of those with MSK conditions, such as arthritis. This group is led by the MSK National Clinical Director and involves a range of professional, charity and patient groups including the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance and Versus Arthritis.

This collaboration has led to the development of a self-management resource for patients, including those with arthritis, in managing both the physical and mental health implications of their condition at home during the pandemic. The self-management resource is available at the following link:

www.csp.org.uk/conditions/managing-pain-home

■ Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus

Jessica Morden: [\[182029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase funding for bereavement support services for (a) BAME communities, (b) deprived communities and (c) other communities disproportionately affected by the covid-19 outbreak.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Since March 2020, the Government has given over £10.2 million to mental health charities, including bereavement support charities, to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing due to the impact of COVID-19.

We continue to take a cross-Government approach to assess what is needed to provide support to bereaved individuals and families during this incredibly difficult time, in order to ensure that individuals from all backgrounds and communities have access to appropriate bereavement support.

Brain: Tumours**Alex Sobel:**[\[179486\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the remainder of the £40 million funding for brain tumour research announced by his Department as part of the establishment of the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission Brain Tumour Research is disbursed to support scientific research on brain tumours; and if he will provide funding to increase the number of NHS staff qualified to provide services and support to brain tumour patients.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: The Department's National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is continuing to encourage applications for research in this difficult area. The NIHR is also planning and funding workshops via the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission to support researchers in submitting high quality research applications in order to increase this small research community.

Spending Review 2020 provides £260 million to continue to increase 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. Full details on funding allocations towards NHS workforce budgets, including Health Education England, in 2021-22 will be published in due course. This will cover the whole cancer workforce including those providing services for brain cancer patients.

British Students Abroad: Coronavirus**Tom Tugendhat:**[\[181058\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an announcement on the covid-19 vaccine priority applicable to students planning to study abroad in the 2021-22 academic year; and if he will make it his policy that those students will be eligible to receive both doses of that vaccine prior to the start of that academic year.

Nadhim Zahawi:

There are no plans to do so.

On 13 April, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published their final advice on phase two of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, which was to continue with an age-based programme. Students planning to study abroad in the

2021-22 academic year will receive their vaccinations in line with that advice when they become eligible because of their age, individual clinical risk factors, or because they are students who work as frontline health or social care workers or are unpaid carers. In line with other adults in the United Kingdom, they can expect to receive their first dose by the end of July 2021 and their second dose within 12 weeks of their first.

■ Care Homes

Sir George Howarth: [\[183080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people live in residential care homes on average for the latest period for which data is available.

Helen Whately:

The Department receives data on care home occupancy on a voluntary basis from care homes. However, this data is not sufficiently accurate to provide a comprehensive assessment of occupancy in residential care homes.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus

Sir John Hayes: [\[135803\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that adequate safeguarding measures are in place to protect care home residents whilst (a) Care Quality Commission inspections are suspended and (b) relatives are prohibited from visiting those residents during the covid-19 outbreak.

Sir John Hayes: [\[135804\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of safeguarding provisions in care homes during the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

At the start of the pandemic the Care Quality Commission (CQC) paused routine inspections. They have continued to inspect services in response to risk, including where whistleblowing or safeguarding information has been received.

In addition to continuing to undertake inspection activity where there is a clear risk to safety, the CQC is undertaking infection, prevention and control inspections, inspecting services where there is an ability to award a new rating, supporting local authorities to commission care where needed and continuing to monitor and assess services where there is a risk of a closed cultures developing.

Safeguarding adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect remains a statutory duty of local authorities under the Care Act 2014. Statutory guidance makes clear that safeguarding is everyone's business. Local authorities, social care providers, the health and voluntary sector and our communities must continue work to prevent and reduce the risk of harm to people with care and support needs.

■ Children: Social Services**Layla Moran:** [\[179468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children's social care cases were (a) reported to and (b) taken forward by Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs after being initially reported in (i) England and (ii) Oxfordshire in each month in 2021 to date.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: This information is not collected centrally.

■ Chronic Illnesses: Health Services**Rosie Cooper:** [\[178937\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the effect of of NHS RightCare scenarios on improving the quality of life for patients with long term conditions.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: No specific assessment has been made.

NHS England and NHS Improvement work with clinical leaders within the field to evaluate and ensure that the clinical content in their toolkits is correct and up to date, as well as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to ensure that they align with their guidance. In addition, informal feedback has been received on how the scenarios and toolkits have been used to develop services across the National Health Service.

■ Coronavirus: Care Homes**Ian Mearns:** [\[179034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies on care home visiting during the covid-19 outbreak of the restriction by some private sector care homes of visits to residents by friends and families despite guidance from his Department that visits are permitted; and what steps his Department is taking to ensure that all care homes allow visits unless there is a reasonable reason not to.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: Care home visiting must be supported wherever and whenever it is possible and safe to do so. Our guidance makes clear that care homes should support visiting as the default. We are supporting the care home sector to encourage and enable care homes to do so, to avoid care homes or local areas restricting visiting where that is not justified. We are currently working with our regional assurance team, local authorities and the Care Quality Commission to make sure that guidance is followed. This approach allows us to move swiftly in changing circumstances and to accommodate all care homes.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**Andrew Rosindell:****[178887]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 lockdown on the mental health of people who are caring for family members with dementia.

Helen Whately:

Our focus on supporting carers during the pandemic has included providing carers with guidance which includes advice on their health and wellbeing; funding to Carers UK to extend their support phonenumber; providing funding to the Carers Trust to make onward grants to provide support to unpaid carers experiencing loneliness; and providing funding for mental health charities to support children, young people and adults who are struggling with their mental wellbeing.

We are working with the National Health Service, Public Health England, carers' organisations and others to assess the potential longer-term mental health impacts of COVID-19. We have also commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research on how to manage or mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on people with dementia and their carers living in the community. Concise advice based on this research for people with dementia and their carers is available at the following link:

<http://www.idealproject.org.uk/covid/>

Andrew Rosindell:**[180435]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of covid-19 lockdown restrictions once herd immunity has been reached.

Jo Churchill:

We have made no such assessment.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions**Dame Angela Eagle:****[175719]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason his Department used consultants from Deloitte to draft answers to written parliamentary questions; how many answers were drafted by those persons; and what the associated cost to the public purse was.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 13 April 2021]: The Department's contract included a general clause for Deloitte to provide support in responding to Written Questions, Freedom of Information requests and media queries. They have not been directly responsible for drafting replies.

■ DNACPR Decisions: Coronavirus

Esther McVey:

[\[183133\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Care Quality Commission's report Protect, respect, connect - decisions about living and dying well during covid-19, what estimate he has made of the number of patients who died as a result of a Do Not Resuscitate order at the beginning of the covid-19 outbreak.

Helen Whately:

In October 2020, the Department asked the Care Quality Commission to review how Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions were made during the COVID 19 pandemic. The review focused on whether DNACPR decisions had been inappropriately applied. The Department does not hold data on the numbers or assessment of DNACPRs.

■ Eating Disorders

Ian Mearns:

[\[179038\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to increase (a) diagnosis, (b) treatment and (c) support for people suffering from eating disorders in the UK.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We have announced that in 2021/22 the National Health Service will receive approximately an additional £500 million, which will support people with a variety of mental health conditions, including eating disorders. Of this extra funding, £79 million will be used to significantly expand children's mental health services, including allowing 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services. £58 million will be allocated to accelerate the adult community support to bring forward the expansion of integrated primary and secondary care for adults with severe mental illness, including eating disorders. In addition, NHS England has announced additional early intervention services for young people aged 16 to 25 years old with eating disorders in 18 areas across the country, so young adults seeking support could be contacted within 48 hours and begin treatment within two weeks.

In addition, the Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement, Health Education England and other partners to procure eating disorder training courses that will improve understanding and identification of this condition and increase the capacity of the existing workforce to allow them to provide evidence-based treatment to more people.

■ Females: Health Services

Dawn Butler:

[\[182017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to support (a) women's health issues and (b) women with womb related health concerns including fibroids and endometriosis.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 21 April 2021]: The Government has embarked on the first Government-led Women's Health Strategy for England. To ensure the strategy reflects what women identify as priorities, we launched a call for evidence on International Women's Day which will run for twelve weeks.

The call for evidence seeks to examine women's experiences of the whole health and care system, including conditions that affect women, female-specific issues such as pregnancy and postnatal support and gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis and fibroids.

■ General Practitioners: Centene**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[180946\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the closure of the Centene-owned surgery in Harlow in 2018, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of Centene's acquisition of GP surgeries in England on the provision of GP services.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: No assessment has been made. It is for local commissioners to arrange the provision of appropriate services, by contracting with providers, in order to best serve the needs of their patient population.

■ General Practitioners: Mental Health Services**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**[\[181082\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of every GP practice having a fulltime mental health support worker.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

From April 2021, Primary Care Networks (PCNs) will be able to offer an embedded mental health practitioner service. Mental health practitioner roles have been added to the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme that enables PCNs to secure additional staff to ensure a satisfactory provision of health services under the Directed Enhanced Services.

■ Health Professions: Labour Turnover**Catherine West:**[\[174207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what attrition rates have been for NHS (a) doctors, (b) nurses and (c) midwives since March 2020.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 13 April 2021]: NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and

clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care or in general practice surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The official statistics on joiners and leavers for the period March 2020 to March 2021 will be published in July.

■ Health Professions: Resignations

Catherine West: [\[174203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the attrition rate was for NHS (a) doctors, (b) nurses and (c) midwives since March 2020.

Helen Whately:

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care or in general practice surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The official statistics on joiners and leavers for the period March 2020 to March 2021 will be published in July.

■ Hospitals: Temporary Employment

Neil Coyle: [\[174139\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost to NHS hospitals in London of using (a) agency and (b) bank staff was in each year since 2015-16.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 13 April 2021]: The following table shows expenditure data for agency and bank staff in National Health Service trusts in London for the previous five financial years.

EXPENDITURE TYPE	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Agency staff	£837,109	£714,955	£528,216	£498,228	£482,386
Bank staff	£646,595	£761,432	£909,542	£972,708	£1,020,580
Total	£1,483,704	£1,476,387	£1,437,758	£1,470,936	£1,502,966

■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Medical Treatments

Rosie Cooper: [\[178935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2021 to Question 142842 on Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Medical Treatments, what plans his Department has to ensure that the NHS RightCare inflammatory bowel

disease (IBD) scenario is implemented throughout England to help reduce variations in IBD care.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement promote RightCare scenarios to the health system through their website, events, bulletins, trade media articles and social media and are planning to resume these communications as they begin to resume normal services, following from the response phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RightCare scenarios should be used as an improvement tool that highlights the difference between a suboptimal pathway of care and an optimal one. The scenarios support local systems to identify where patient outcomes, quality of life and service costs can be improved as the result of shifting the care pathway from a suboptimal journey to an optimal one that consistently delivers timely, evidence-based excellence of care.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[178936\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2021 to Question 142842 on Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Medical Treatments, what the timeframe is for the NHS RightCare inflammatory bowel disease scenario to be released to stakeholders for consultation.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: Progress on the inflammatory bowel disease RightCare scenario has been delayed due to COVID-19 pressures. A working draft has been reviewed and commented on by NHS England and NHS Improvement's working group and by Crohn's and Colitis UK. NHS England and NHS Improvement are in the process of updating the original working draft based on these comments. It is anticipated that a revised version will be ready to be share with IBD UK and their partner organisations for consultation in May.

■ **Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[181208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 175736, on Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Independent Review, whether he has had discussions with the Prime Minister on implementing the recommendations made in the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, First Do No Harm.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 20 April 2021]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has regular discussions with all Cabinet colleagues to discuss Departmental priorities, including the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review.

■ Mental Health Services: Young People

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[181083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what mental health support is available for young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We are introducing new models of care that will give 370,000 adults, including young adults with serious mental illness greater choice and control over their care, and that will support them to live well in their communities. These models include access to employment support.

■ NHS Test and Trace: Databases

Chris Green: [\[181014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to close the NHS Test and Trace database system once the covid-19 outbreak in the UK has ended.

Chris Green: [\[181015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of using the information held in the NHS Test and Trace database system for other purposes.

Chris Green: [\[181016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to close the NHS Test and Trace database system once the covid-19 pandemic has ended.

Chris Green: [\[181017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to use a development of the NHS Test and Trace database system to improve public services beyond what is necessary to tackle the covid-19 outbreak.

Chris Green: [\[181018\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been ringfenced for developing (a) the NHS Test and Trace and (b) other database systems.

Chris Green: [\[181021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential for the NHS Test and Trace database system to have wider uses beyond its current application.

Chris Green: [\[181294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has allocated any financial or other resources from his Department's budget to investigate potential future uses by his Department of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Chris Green: [\[181295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to use the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Jo Churchill:

No assessment or decisions have yet been made on the use of NHS Test and Trace data systems for other purposes beyond those related to COVID-19. Any work to assess potential future uses of these data systems would be met from within the financial resources already allocated to NHS Test and Trace for the 2021/22 financial year.

Chris Green: [\[181023\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on future uses of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Chris Green: [\[181296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on future use by his Department of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Jo Churchill:

No such discussions have taken place.

■ NHS: Pay

Dan Carden: [\[179417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the proposed one per cent pay rise for NHS staff on staff retention.

Dan Carden: [\[179418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the OBR's inflation forecast of his Department's proposed one per cent pay rise for NHS staff.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: The Government has committed to providing National Health Service staff with a pay uplift in 2021/22, in order to recognise the unique impact of the pandemic. The level of pay award has not yet been set and we are looking to the independent pay review bodies for a recommendation.

We have submitted our written evidence to the review bodies, which sets out what is currently affordable and also provides information on recruitment and retention in the NHS. In reaching their recommendations the review bodies will consider evidence from a range of parties, including NHS unions. They will also consider factors such as the economic context including inflation, recruitment and retention, affordability and value for the taxpayer. We have asked the review bodies to report in the spring and will carefully consider their recommendations when we receive them.

■ NHS: Zero Hours Contracts**Dr Matthew Offord:****[180474]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of the number of people employed directly by the NHS on zero hours contracts as at 13 April 2021.

Helen Whately:

This information is not collected centrally.

■ Palliative Care**Liz Twist:****[155309]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support (a) end of life care for people dying at home and (b) their family members during the national covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021.

Helen Whately:

A second national hospice grant of up to £125 million was provided until 31 March 2021 with provision to support 46,500 community contacts per day, which included supporting people at the end of their life within their own home. There are a range of resources available to support family members on providing end of life care in a variety of settings. This includes the end of life care toolkit for carers at home, created by the Helix Centre in conjunction with colleagues at the Central North West London NHS Trust which is available at the following link:

<https://helixcentre.com/project-end-of-life-toolkit>

■ Police Custody: Females**Ms Lyn Brown:****[181220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the (a) number and (b) proportion of women in police custody who have been screened by Liaison and Diversion services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not held in the format requested.

Ms Lyn Brown:**[181221]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of women in police custody screened by Liaison and Diversion services were found to have mental ill-health in the most recent period for which data is available.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ Social Services: Older People**Rosie Cooper:** [\[181212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to widen the range of social care options for older people to allow that new models, including housing-with-care, to play a bigger role in complementing care homes, homecare and other existing options.

Rosie Cooper: [\[181213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to set up a cross-government task force alongside the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to examine how housing-based social care options can be expanded to provide more choice to older people.

Helen Whately:

The Department of Health and Social Care, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and local government are committed to further improving the diversity of housing options available to older people, including housing-with-care and are engaging closely with both the sector and a range of other stakeholders on this issue.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Paul Maynard:** [\[168873\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the introduction from 15 February 2021 of requirements for all passengers travelling to England to take mandated covid-19 tests on day 2 and day 8 of the quarantine period, how many and what proportion of those passengers have tested positive for covid-19 on (a) day 2 and (b) day 8 of that quarantine period; and how many of those positive test results identified a variant of concern to the Government.

Jo Churchill:

Data relating to testing within the managed quarantine scheme is not yet available.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Applications****Jack Lopresti:** [\[180954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to reinstate face to face interviews for asylum and refugee applications.

Kevin Foster:

We recommenced face to face substantive interviews on 21 September 2020.

■ Asylum: Military Bases**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[181324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress her Department has made in ending the use of former barracks to accommodate people seeking asylum.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[181327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration's key findings from site visits to Penally Camp and Napier Barracks on 15 February 2021, what the safeguarding procedures and requirements are for housing asylum seekers in contingency accommodation.

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[181328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration findings in his inspection of the use of contingency hotel accommodation and from site visits to Penally Camp and Napier Barracks of 15 February 2021, what mental health support is being provided to asylum seekers who are or were residents of either of those sites.

Kevin Foster:

The use of contingency accommodation continues to be essential as we work to fix the broken asylum system. We must ensure our statutory obligations can always be met and ensuring we treat all asylum seekers humanely and with the dignity they deserve.

Penally provided emergency capacity in response to pressures put on the asylum estate during the pandemic. As those pressures have eased, we have decided not to extend emergency planning permission beyond six months and close Penally. Napier Barracks will remain in operation in accordance with current needs.

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration announced an inspection of contingency asylum accommodation on 25 January 2021. The department acknowledges the ICIBI's decision to publish on 8 March the initial findings from site visits to Napier Barracks and Penally.

The ICIBI's inspection continues and a full inspection report will follow. The duration of the inspection is a matter for the ICIBI and upon its conclusion, following standard procedure set out in the UK Borders Act 2007, the Department will issue a formal response alongside the inspection report as it is laid before Parliament and published on Gov.UK.

Napier is being used to accommodate single, adult males. All asylum seekers are subject to an initial screening process by UK Visas and Immigration, which includes security and safeguarding checks and we are taking great care to ensure those with identified vulnerabilities are moved to appropriate accommodation. We will also take swift action in relation to any new safeguarding issues as they emerge (for example the identification of previously unknown vulnerabilities). Further checks are made, to

confirm suitability for transfer to the accommodation, before individuals are moved to sites and asylum seekers will be briefed by the accommodation provider in advance of their move.

We work closely with our accommodation providers to ensure all asylum seekers in supported accommodation are aware of, and have access to, Migrant Help's helpline. This service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, if individuals need help, advice or guidance, including signposting to relevant mental and medical health services.

Regular welfare checks are conducted on individuals, including behavioural monitoring of those who show signs of vulnerability, and where appropriate safeguarding referrals are made to relevant bodies.

■ **British Nationality: Afghanistan**

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[181232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the Government's policy is on offering British citizenship to Afghan interpreters who have served the armed forces as a part of the UK withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Kevin Foster:

The UK Government recognises the vital role of interpreters in operations in Afghanistan.

There are two dedicated schemes designed to help them relocate to the UK: the ex-gratia scheme and the new Afghan relocations and assistance policy. Over 1,300 former Afghan interpreters, and their family members, have been relocated to the UK under these schemes since 2014.

There is no fee for the initial application and Afghan interpreters who relocate to the UK under these schemes can apply for settlement free of charge after five years' residence here.

Afghan interpreters who are granted settlement can stay here permanently and can choose to apply to become British citizens after one year of settlement in the UK.

■ **Extradition: EU Nationals**

Jim Shannon:

[\[180980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to ensure that EU nations continue to extradite criminals to the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (the 'TCA') delivers a comprehensive package of capabilities which ensures we can work with counterparts across Europe to tackle serious crime and terrorism – protecting the public and bringing criminals to justice. This includes streamlined extradition arrangements

Some EU Member States have long-held constitutional bars against the extradition of their own nationals to non-EU countries, which is why the TCA allows for offenders to face justice via another route, even where a country will not extradite their own nationals.

Where someone has been sentenced, if they are arrested in their state of nationality, the authorities there may decide to enforce the sentence at home.

For those wanted to face a trial the Agreement provides for a mechanism where a person could be extradited, face trial, and then be returned to serve their sentence. If this is not available, a State is able to refer the case to its own prosecution authorities. In these cases the Agreement establishes an obligation to provide appropriate support to victims and witnesses.

■ Fraud: Telephone Services

Emma Hardy:

[181408]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to reduce scam phone calls.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office and DCMS are in regular discussion with the telecommunication industry on ways to tackle fraud and protect the public.

The Government has taken a range of actions to reduce the number of these calls. For example, we have supported the National Trading Standards Scams Team to roll out call blocking devices to vulnerable people. DCMS have provided over £1 million in the last 3 years to National Trading Standards for distribution of call blocking devices to vulnerable people. This funding has helped to protect some of the most vulnerable in society from nuisance calls and scams.

In addition, the City of London Police, the lead force for Economic Crime, has partnered with Law Enforcement and Industry to combat call centre fraud from overseas jurisdictions.

However, the best way to tackle this problem is to try and identify the sources of these calls and stop them. We are encouraging the public to forward suspicious text messages to 7726 (which is free of charge) and continue to encourage anyone who has been targeted by a scam to report it. Action Fraud is the central police reporting point for all victims of fraud and can be contacted by phone on 0300 123 2040 or through their website: http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud.

If you have received a scam call, rather than text message, you can also log an information report on the site. Using the information collected from these reporting platforms, law enforcement partners are able to spot patterns of calls/compromised numbers. Using this information, City of London Police (the National Lead Force for fraud, who manage the Action Fraud system), the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Crime Agency are able to facilitate numbers being used for scam calls/texts being blocked or removed.

However, the Government recognises there is more to do and is working closely with communications providers, law enforcement, regulators and consumer groups to consider further legislative and non-legislative solutions.

■ Passports

Sir Edward Leigh:

[\[180923\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what feedback her Department has received on the quality of the manufacture and printing of new UK passports; and what estimate she has made of value for money in the award of the contract for the manufacture and printing of those passports.

Kevin Foster:

The new British passport is a highly secure document containing some of the most sophisticated security technologies. Its components are rigorously tested to simulate normal passport handling over its ten-year lifespan.

Her Majesty's Passport Office undertakes routine quality assurance, and remains content the latest version of the British passport, including the personalisation process, continues to meet its requirements. The current contract to design, manufacture, and personalise the British passport continues to ensure good value for the taxpayer, with expected savings of approximately £140m compared to the previous contract awarded in 2009.

JUSTICE

■ Administration of Justice: Coronavirus

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[181356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to speed up the judicial process following the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the justice system.

Chris Philp:

We have taken decisive action to address the impact of the pandemic on how quickly cases can be heard in the courts. We spent over a quarter of a billion pounds on recovery last financial year, making court buildings safe, rolling out new technology for remote hearings, recruiting an additional 1,600 HMCTS staff and opening 60 Nightingale courtrooms. These measures have helped get more cases heard and we've reached the same level of cases completing as before the pandemic in most jurisdictions: for example, in the Crown Courts, we are completing around 2,000 cases each week.

As announced at last year's Spending Review we have allocated £275m to increase capacity in courts and reduce delays driven by the pandemic, and an additional £40m for victims and support services, recognising the impact that COVID has had on victims of crime.

We will continue to maximise use of our existing physical estate, and we are finalising plans for sitting days this financial year, where we expect to increase them to a record level in total across all jurisdictions.

■ Crime: Victim Support Schemes

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[181355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to improve the support available to victims of crime.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to ensuring that victims of crime receive the help and high-quality support they need to cope and, as far as possible, recover. Last year, we rapidly identified the impact the pandemic would have on victims and took targeted action. In May 2020, we provided over £20m in emergency funding to help domestic abuse and sexual violence support services to meet COVID-19-driven demand. In November 2020, MoJ reallocated £10m from within existing budgets to continue to meet rising levels of demand.

In 2021-22, we will provide just under £151m for victim and witness support services. This includes an extra £51m to increase support for rape and domestic abuse victims, building on the emergency funding from this financial year to help services meet COVID-19-driven demand. This compares to a total budget of £48.5m in 2010-2011.

Beyond significant increases in funding to victims' services, the Government has taken a range of actions to ensure that victims and witnesses receive the support they need in the face of delays caused by the court backlogs. Section 28 was rolled out for vulnerable victims in all Crown Courts at pace, supported by an historic communications campaign to raise awareness of support for victims of sexual violence. We continue to lead work across the criminal justice system to encourage victim engagement including the new Victims' Code, which came into force on 1st April. This is a clear and comprehensive framework centered on 12 key rights for victims, setting out the level of service victims can expect to receive from criminal justice agencies. The new Victims' Code now provides a solid foundation on which we can progress the groundbreaking Victims' Law, which we will consult on as a priority this summer.

■ Foston Hall Prison: Pregnancy

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

[\[181261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many women were known to be pregnant while on remand or serving a sentence in HMP Foston Hall in each quarter from 31 March 2015 to 30 September 2020 (a) in total and (b) by ethnicity.

Alex Chalk:

HMPPS does not collect or hold centrally, quality assured data in the form requested.

However, as part of our fundamental review of policy relating to pregnancy, Mother and Baby Units and women experiencing separation from children up to two in prison, we have committed to providing national pregnancy data in the future. We expect to complete this review this summer. Further information on the review, including our findings and resulting reforms regarding data collection, can be found in our summary report published in July 2020:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/905559/summary-report-of-review-of-policy-on-mbu.pdf

■ Pre-sentence Reports

Ms Lyn Brown:

[181216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the (a) The Target Operating Model for probation services in England and Wales and (b) National Probation Service Operating Model, published on 27 September 2016, what changes will be made to the proportions of court reports targeted to be (i) oral delivery reports completed on the day, (ii) written fast delivery reports and (iii) standard delivery reports completed by (A) Probation Services Officers and (B) Probation Officers.

Alex Chalk:

Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) are important tools for the assessment of offenders' risk and individual needs, and for supporting the independent judiciary to consider the appropriate sentence.

In February 2021 the government published an updated Target Operating Model for reforms to probation services in England and Wales. The long-term ambition for PSRs once investment and reforms set out in the Target Operating Model are implemented is to increase the proportion of sentences in which PSRs are requested by the judiciary to 75%, with an emphasis on providing more detailed reports on a targeted basis to inform effective sentencing and to support long term desistance from offending. As part of that ambition, the aim is to achieve 10% of PSR delivery as Standard Delivery Reports, 40% as written Short format reports and 50% delivered in Oral format. This compares to equivalent proportions of 10%, 30% and 60% under the 2016 NPS operating model.

Recognising the experience of disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System as a whole for women and individuals from an ethnic minority background, the intention is that higher proportions of more detailed reports will be completed for these cohorts, together with individuals at risk of a short-term custodial sentence for whom a community sentence might still be appropriate.

■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness

Andrea Jenkyns:

[181358]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to reduce homelessness amongst people leaving prison.

Alex Chalk:

On 29th January, we announced a £70m investment programme to provide stable accommodation for prison leavers. The investment will bring together the work of Approved Premises (AP) and the Bail Accommodation and Support Service (BASS) with a new tier of provision for prison leavers at risk of homelessness. This new accommodation service will provide up to 12 weeks of basic temporary accommodation for prison leavers who would otherwise be homeless.

The service will launch in five of the 12 probation regions in England and Wales, namely the East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, Greater Manchester, Kent Surrey and Sussex, and the North West. All individuals aged 18 and over, either released from prison or moving on from APs or BASS, into those five regions who are at risk of homelessness, will be eligible. HMPPS will work in conjunction with MHCLG's announced funding to support prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rental tenancies as part of plans to secure settled accommodation by the end of the 12-week period.

It is anticipated that the new intervention will commence in Summer 2021 and will provide support for approximately 3,000 service users. It will be in operation during the 2021-22 financial year, with a view to scaling up and rolling out nationally, though the Spending Review 2021 will set out the approach for future years.

We are introducing and testing a new specialist housing advisor role in up to twenty prisons, including HMP Leeds. The new role will seek to strengthen links between prisons, through the gate teams and local authorities to improve accommodation outcomes for those at risk of homelessness.

The recently published Target Operating model for the unified probation service includes information regarding the future performance framework for probation, including a target on the number of individuals being housed on release from custody (90%), together with a measure relating to settled accommodation for all people under supervision (those released from prison and those on community sentences); this will assess the status three months after commencement of supervision (80%).

In preparation for the launch of the new unified probation service, MoJ have published a policy framework in support of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) Duty to Refer process, which will mandate the roles and responsibilities of both prison and probation staff in making effective referrals.

■ Prisons: Coronavirus**Ms Lyn Brown:****[181217]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) number of front-line staff and prisoners across (i) public and (ii) contracted-out custodial estates who have been eligible for a covid-19 test and (b) rate of covid-19 testing take-up among those eligible for each estate since 6 November 2020.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[181218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the monthly cost was of covid-19 testing across (a) public and (b) contracted-out custodial estates since 6 November 2020.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[181219\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether routine covid-19 tests will be required in (a) public and (b) contracted-out custodial estates where a high proportion of staff and prisoners have been vaccinated.

Alex Chalk:

The safety of our staff and those under our supervision remains a top priority, and testing is an important element of our overall set of measures to limit the importation of infection into and between prisons. We have therefore been working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care, the NHS, and health authority colleagues in England and Wales since last summer on providing access to Covid-19 tests in both publicly and privately-run prisons.

Over the course of the pandemic we have expanded the use of testing based on public health recommendations, and we now offer testing routinely to all staff and those prisoners who are moving into or within the prison estate. We also conduct mass testing as part of a multi-agency response to outbreaks. We are constantly seeking to harness the benefits that new testing technologies might be able to offer, as soon as they become available, to strengthen our defences against the virus further.

Whilst testing is ultimately voluntary, we continue to strongly encourage the participation of all those who are eligible. The weekly average uptake of PCR testing in March by those eligible was:

	STAFF (WEEKLY ROUTINE TESTING)	PRISONERS (AT KEY TRANSITION POINTS INCLUDING RECEPTION AND TRANSFER)
Private prisons	46%	76%
Public prisons	43%	82%

We have been delivering this testing within a dynamic context, making use of existing resources wherever possible, and through collaboratively working with a wide range of partners including local health teams. It has therefore not been possible to determine a current costed model of operation.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we will continue to work closely with PHE and PHW to determine the appropriate testing regime in prisons, including any changes due to the effect of vaccination.

■ Reoffenders: Charities

Andrea Jenkyns:

[\[181357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department is taking to build partnerships with charities, similar to its partnership with The Clink, to reduce rates of reoffending.

Alex Chalk:

Our relationship with the third sector is an important part of our work to reduce rates of reoffending. We have and continue to build strong partnerships with charities both at a national and local level.

This includes The Clink, which will expand its partnership with HMPPS over the next three years, extending an award training scheme that has been available in five prisons to an additional 70. Other examples include our partnership with Recycling Lives. This provides training and work experience in eight prison-based workshops, supporting men and women into employment on release. We have also empowered prison governors to establish relationships with local charities to help meet the needs of the men and women in their care.

Our partnership work with charities is built into the way we develop policy. The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) is a formal advisory group to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The RR3 provides valuable advice to Ministers and officials on a range of issues linked to reducing reoffending, from mental health and substance misuse to employment.

We continue to explore new ways of working. The Prison Leavers Project, announced in February 2021, will see test cross-sector approaches to reducing reoffending, working with colleagues from across the public and third sector to test new ideas and ways of working.

TREASURY

■ Bitcoin: Electricity

John Spellar:

[\[180918\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what environmental impact assessment his Department has made of the electricity demand of Bitcoin mining.

Kemi Badenoch:

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 14 April.

John Spellar:

[\[180919\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the environmental impact of the electricity demand of bitcoin mining will be on the COP26 agenda.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government's private finance objective for the upcoming COP26 climate change forum is to ensure that every professional financial decision takes climate change into account. The recovery from COVID-19 will determine the mitigation and adaptation pathways for decades to come.

The finance campaign will provide the conditions for a future that is genuinely greener, more resilient and more sustainable than the past. Action on finance underpins all the other COP campaigns: adaptation and resilience, energy transition, nature and zero-emission vehicles. Without the right levels of finance, the rest is not possible.

The Government has already taken action to ensure the UK is the world-leading centre for green finance including through announcing an intention to make disclosures aligned with the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) fully mandatory across the economy by 2025, making the UK the first country to do so.

Additionally, the Government has committed to the implementation of a green taxonomy. This will allow us to accelerate our work towards a greener financial sector, by providing a common definition for environmentally sustainable economy activities.

The Cryptoasset Taskforce, comprising HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority, and the Bank of England, considers the impact of cryptoassets and assesses what, if any, regulation is required in response. The Government stands ready to respond to emerging risks or changes in the market and will continue to monitor developments in cryptoassets.

■ Households: Finance**Richard Fuller:**[\[181228\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent assessment his Department has made of the proportion of households that have financial reserves to cover basic costs for (i) three months and (ii) six months.

John Glen:

The Government is committed to monitoring and understanding households' personal finances in order to inform policy making to help people manage their money well, encourage them to save and access support if they need to get their finances back on track. As such, the Government works closely with the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and engages regularly with many other stakeholders on their research and findings.

The FCA conducts biennial Financial Lives Survey of 16,000 adults which provides a comprehensive insight into the finances of the UK population. The latest findings from the survey were published in February 2021. MaPS monitor financial difficulty through an annual survey of 22,000 people. MaPS will publish the results of the survey later in 2021.

■ Treasury: Contact Tracing

Chris Green: [\[181297\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has allocated any financial or other resources from his Department's budget to investigate potential future uses by his Department of the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Kemi Badenoch:

We have provided the Department of Health and Social Care with £15bn for NHS Test and Trace this year and they have also established the new UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to lead on future pandemic preparedness. Any questions relating to plans for NHS Test and Trace or the new UKHSA should be directed to the Department for Health and Social Care.

Chris Green: [\[181298\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to use the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Kemi Badenoch:

Throughout the pandemic, covid secure Treasury offices have been operating in line with government workplace guidance including use of the NHS Test and Trace service where appropriate.

Chris Green: [\[181299\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on using the NHS Test and Trace database system.

Kemi Badenoch:

In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of ministerial discussions are not normally disclosed.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Equality

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[183222\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of implementing Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 to help (a) tackle existing disadvantages and inequalities and (b) protect socio-economic rights.

Kemi Badenoch:

Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 would require a public body, in taking strategic decisions, to have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. As a "due regard" duty, this requires no specific action from the public body concerned, and risks becoming a tick-box exercise, complied with to minimise the risk of legal challenge rather than to promote real change in society. It is also wrongly focussed on equalising socio-economic outcomes rather than opportunities.

Instead this Government prefers to progress specific policies and practical actions that will deliver real change. We are promoting social mobility and tackling inequality through a range of initiatives – for example in education, through reforms to the welfare system, and by giving greater developmental devolution in England and rebalancing the economy through schemes such as the Towns Fund.

■ **Gay Conversion Therapy**

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[181130\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to ban LGBT conversion therapies.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has made clear its commitment to banning conversion therapy and will set out proposals shortly. To ensure we get our proposals right, we have undertaken research to understand the prevalence of practices and experiences of those impacted. Furthermore, officials have been speaking with a range of organisations who hold diverse views, to fully inform our next steps.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Child Maintenance Service: Complaints**

Hywel Williams:

[\[183087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints the Child Maintenance Service has received relating to problems with unclear communications to service users since 2019.

Guy Opperman:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: In the year with the most recent data (2019/2020), the Department recorded a total of 1,374 complaints to the Child Maintenance Service about unclear communications.

■ **Employment: Older People**

Stuart Anderson:

[\[176040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support is in place to ensure that older workers have access to the skills and training required to participate effectively in the future workforce.

Mims Davies:

The Department is committed to supporting over 50s jobseekers, and a range of special support is available for this group. As part of the 50 PLUS: Choices agenda we have created a network of 50 PLUS Champions (formerly Older Claimants Champions) throughout all of the 37 Jobcentre Plus districts, who work collaboratively with Work Coaches to raise the profile of over 50s claimants, highlighting the benefits of employing them and sharing best practice.

DWP is also piloting 50+ mentoring circles in England to address any confidence barriers experienced by over 50s claimants and to support them in moving into new jobs, particularly where their sectors have been adversely affected by COVID-19.

More broadly, the department is supporting people of all ages back in to work through the Plan for Jobs. This provides new funding to ensure more people of all age groups get tailored Jobcentre Plus support to find work, including through building new skills. This includes £895m for 13,500 additional Work Coaches; a £150m increase in the Flexible Support Fund to help those facing redundancy; and £10m for the Job Finding Support Service which will provide tailored one-to-one job finding support online to the recently unemployed.

The Government also aims to increase Sector-based Work Academy programme placements, which provide unemployed participants of all ages with training, work experience and a guaranteed interview for a real job. We are also investing £238m into Job Entry: Targeted Support (JETS) to offer enhanced support to those who have been made unemployed for three months.

■ **Kickstart Scheme: Disability**

David Linden:

[\[183259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of Kickstart scheme candidates are disabled.

Mims Davies:

I refer the right honourable member to PQ [143815](#)

■ **Universal Credit**

Justin Madders:

[\[181046\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claimants had wages assigned to different assessment periods in each week from 21 February 2021 to 1 April 2021 under the legislation introduced in response to the judgment in Secretary of State for Work and Pensions v Danielle Johnson, [2020] EWCA Civ 778.

Will Quince:

Weekly figures of Universal Credit claimants who have their monthly-paid wages assigned to different assessment periods as described in the Universal Credit (Earned Income) Amendment Regulations 2020 from 21 February 2021 to the most recent week for which complete data is available is shown in the table below.

The data supplied is derived from unpublished management information and a database which relies on manual input. This was collected for internal Departmental use only and has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. The data should therefore be treated with caution.

WEEK ENDING	VOLUME
28/02/2021	246
07/03/2021	1,635
14/03/2021	1,268
21/03/2021	538
28/03/2021	285
04/04/2021	538

■ **Universal Credit: Landlords**

Grahame Morris:

[\[181243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will introduce a system of universal credit direct payments to landlords in the event that a tenant on universal credit fails to make rent payments.

Will Quince:

A managed payment direct to landlords is already available for claimants who have accrued one month or more rent arrears over more than two months, when it is in their best interest.