

**Daily Report****Wednesday, 28 April 2021**

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 28 April 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:28 P.M., 28 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

ATTORNEY GENERAL

■ Sentencing: Appeals

Peter Kyle:

[\[186192\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, how many and what proportion of victims that contacted the CPS to make a unduly lenient sentence referral had that referral rejected for being outside the 28 day time limit from the point of sentencing.

Lucy Frazer:

Unfortunately, the CPS does not hold this information. The 28-day statutory time limit is absolute; the statute provides no power to extend or to apply for leave to refer sentences to the Court of Appeal out of time. I very much welcome the introduction of the new Victim's Code which was introduced on 1 April 2021 and which places an obligation on Witness Care Officers to notify victims about the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Biofuels

Ben Lake:

[\[184533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169005 on Biofuels, how many meetings (a) he and (b) his Ministers have had on biomass with (i) NGOs, (ii) Drax and (iii) industry representatives since 1 September 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Ben Lake:

[\[184534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169005 on Biofuels, how many meeting requests (a) he and (b) his Ministers have received to discuss biomass or bioenergy with carbon capture and storage from (a) NGOs, (b) Drax and (c) industry representatives since 1 September 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

Sustainable biomass is making an important contribution in our efforts to decarbonise the economy. The Ministerial team have met with a number of organisations to discuss biomass, and biomethane at least 8 times during the period in question. This is a broad and wide ranging area which may also have featured in other ministerial meetings.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy regularly publishes a list of ministerial meetings which can be accessed here,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/beis-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings> .

The previous answer referred to the forthcoming Biomass Call for Evidence. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has now launched a Call for Evidence to seek the views of interested parties on the future role of sustainable biomass. The Call for Evidence, which closes on 15 June, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/role-of-biomass-in-achieving-net-zero-call-for-evidence>.

■ Committee on Climate Change

Ben Lake:

[184531]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169004 on Committee on Climate Change, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that industry representation on the Committee on Climate Change does not advance policies favourable to their specific interests; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) is an independent, statutory body made up of highly esteemed academics and experts across a range of key sectors. BEIS carries out thorough due diligence exercises on each new board member prior to approving their appointment to identify conflicts of interest so that they can be managed appropriately on appointment. In some cases, it will not be appropriate to offer a role if the conflict is too great.

All Committee Members and staff are required to recognise and disclose activities that might give rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The CCC has a formal policy process on conflicts of interest which is reviewed annually. The process for existing Committee members to raise conflicts of interest is managed by the Committee secretariat at the start of every Committee meeting. All members are asked to identify and declare material interests, at the earliest opportunity. The secretariat will review each case to determine whether an individual needs to step down from the Committee to avoid an actual or perceived serious conflict of interest arising or to decide on how to manage whilst remaining in role.

The CCC's conflicts of interest policy, along with a register of interests for Committee members, and the minutes of each Committee meeting are published in the Transparency section of the CCC's website at:

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/about/transparency/>.

Ben Lake:

[184532]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169004 on Committee on Climate Change, what steps his Department has taken to increase civil society and charity sector representation on the Committee on Climate Change; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) is an independent, statutory body made up of highly esteemed academics and experts across a range of key sectors.

In appointing members to the Committee, UK Government and the Devolved Administrations ensure the CCC can draw on experience in and knowledge of a range of backgrounds, so that it is able to provide advice on climate mitigation and adaptation.

In order to do so, the Climate Change Act 2008 requires that national authorities, in UK Government and Devolved Administrations, must have regard to the desirability of securing that the Committee (taken as a whole) has experience in or knowledge of the following: business competitiveness; climate change policy at national and international level, and in particular the social impacts of such policy; climate science, and other branches of environmental science; differences in circumstances between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the capacity of national authorities to take action in relation to climate change; economic analysis and forecasting; emissions trading; energy production and supply; financial investment; technology development and diffusion.

The names of the members of the Climate Change Committee (CCC), with a description of their careers and interests can be found here on the CCC's website: www.theccc.org.uk/about.

■ Committee on Climate Change: Public Appointments**Ben Lake:****[184530]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 23 March 2021 to Question 169003 on the Committee on Climate Change, if he will provide details of the due diligence exercises he undertook on each of the Board Members of the Committee on Climate Change to ensure there is no conflict of interest; and when that process was last reviewed.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

BEIS carries out thorough due diligence exercises on each new board member of the Climate Change Committee (CCC), prior to approving their appointment, to identify conflicts of interest so that they can be managed appropriately on appointment. As part of due diligence checks, Government considers anything in the public domain related to potential members' conduct or professional capacity. This includes undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. In some cases, it will not be appropriate to offer a role if the conflict is too great.

After appointment, all Committee members and staff are required to recognise and disclose activities that might give rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest. The CCC has a formal policy process on conflicts of interest which is reviewed annually.

The CCC's conflicts of interest policy, along with a register of interests for Committee members – both of which are annually updated – and the minutes of each Committee

meeting are published in the Transparency section of the CCC's website at:
<https://www.theccc.org.uk/about/transparency/>.

■ Energy: Billing

Daisy Cooper:

[184552]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future published December 2020, what steps he has taken to progress the planned consultation on opt-out tariff switching for energy customers.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government intends to publish its planned consultation on opt-in switching and testing of opt-out switching soon.

■ Fossil Fuels

Caroline Lucas:

[184414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March to Question 161735 on fossil fuels, what proportion of the 10 to 20 billion barrels or more of oil equivalent is classed in the category of (a) 2C contingent reserves and (b) 2P proven and probable reserves; if the Government will make all data on North Sea oil and gas reserves available in the public domain on a field-level basis to support the development of a Global Registry of Fossil Fuels; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) estimate for proven and probable (2P) UK reserves as at end 2019 is 5.2 billion barrels of oil equivalent, and the estimate for the UK's contingent (2C) resources as at end 2019 is 7.4 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

The OGA does not publish individual field reserves as they are commercially sensitive.

Caroline Lucas:

[184415]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 10 March to Question 161735 on fossil fuels, what estimate he has made of the additional greenhouse gases emitted from the 10 to 20 billion barrels or more of oil equivalent that are (a) discovered and (b) undiscovered; what his policy is on how much of those oil and gas reserves can be extracted while adhering to the UK's commitments under the Paris climate agreement; and if he will make a statement.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

In 2018, upstream oil and gas activities in the UK generated 19 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO₂e): around four per cent of total UK greenhouse gas emissions.

Through the North Sea Transition Deal, the oil and gas sector has committed to ambitious emissions reductions targets, including halving emissions by 2030, on a

trajectory to becoming a net zero basin by 2050. This means an absolute reduction in greenhouse gases to 0.5MtCO₂e in that timeframe. In order to help meet this objective, government, the sector and regulators will work together over the next decade and beyond to deliver the investment, innovation and infrastructure required to decarbonise North Sea production.

Emissions from end-use depend on whether petroleum products are combusted or used for other purposes. Emissions generated in the UK are factored into our 2050 net zero target.

■ **Hospitality Industry: Bury North**

James Daly:

[\[184577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much financial support the Government has provided to the hospitality sector in Bury North constituency during the covid-19 outbreak.

Paul Scully:

The Government has brought forward a substantial package of financial support for the hospitality sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the Budget, my Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a £65 billion three-point plan to provide support for jobs and businesses (including the hospitality sector), with extensions to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, self-employed support, business grants, loans and VAT cuts – bringing total fiscal support to over £407 billion.

■ **Investment: Codes of Practice**

Sarah Olney:

[\[186195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the (a) number received and (b) quality of annual reports submitted by asset managers to the 2020 Stewardship Code.

Sarah Olney:

[\[186196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his department is taking to increase the number of signatories to the 2020 Stewardship Code.

Paul Scully:

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) received 162 stewardship reports from asset managers and service providers by the first deadline of 31 March this year and will receive reports from asset owners at the end of April. This is in line with the target of 200 applications for 2021 as a whole. The FRC is currently assessing the quality of these reports and will announce the outcome of this process in late summer 2021. The FRC carried out an early review of reporting in autumn 2020 and was encouraged by how many investors had already started to engage with the spirit of the Code and were using it to review their practices and reporting.

In November 2020, HM Treasury's Asset Management Taskforce report recommended initiatives to increase the uptake of the Code among pension funds, service providers that support investors, and asset managers. The FRC is supporting these initiatives, including chairing the Stewardship Regulators Group.

■ Renewable Energy: Finance

Alex Cunningham:

[186165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish its responses to the consultations on (a) Contracts for Difference (CfD): proposed amendments to the scheme 2020, (b) CfD: changes to Supply Chain Plans and the CfD contract and (c) CfD for low carbon electricity generation: new Supply Chain Plan questionnaire; whether he has discussed the findings of those consultations with representatives of the Low Carbon Contracts Company; and if he will ensure that responses to those consultations are published ahead of the start of the Contracts for Difference Fourth Allocation Round.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government published its [response to 'Contracts for Difference \(CfD\): proposed amendments to the scheme 2020'](#) on 24 November 2020. The Government will publish responses to 'CfD: changes to Supply Chain Plans and the CfD contract' and 'CfD for low carbon electricity generation: new Supply Chain Plan questionnaire' shortly. The Government has discussed and will continue to discuss these policy changes with representatives of the Low Carbon Contracts Company. The Government responses and guidance on supply chain plans will be published ahead of the commencement of the Contracts for Difference Fourth Allocation Round to ensure that stakeholders have time to review policy changes before submitting applications.

■ Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

Alex Cunningham:

[186162]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last reviewed the (a) procedures and (b) methodology used by the offshore wind industry for reporting local content in offshore wind developments at the capital expenditure stage.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The methodology for measuring the UK content of offshore wind farms was developed by industry via the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC) in 2015. Under the framework, the owners of all UK offshore wind farms achieving final investment decision (FID) report their UK content through the trade association RenewableUK.

Alex Cunningham:

[186163]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he last reviewed the (a) procedures and (b) methodology used by the domestic offshore wind industry to calculate local content over the lifetime of an offshore wind farm development (i) before and (ii) after the final investment decision.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The methodology for measuring the UK content of offshore wind farms was developed by industry via the Offshore Wind Industry Council (OWIC) in 2015. Under the framework, the owners of all UK offshore wind farms achieving final investment decision (FID) report their UK content through the trade association RenewableUK.

Alex Cunningham:**[186164]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what methodology his Department used to set the target of 60 per cent UK content in offshore wind farm projects by 2030 contained in the (a) Offshore Wind Sector Deal and (b) Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan.

Anne-Marie Trevelyan:

The Government did not set the 60% target, however, as part of the negotiations to agree the ambitious Offshore Wind Sector Deal in 2019, the industry conducted its own analysis and agreed to increase the target from 50% to 60% and published this year a *Memorandum on UK Offshore Wind Supply Chain Development* in February this year which sets out the strategic approach to delivering against their target.[1]

[1] <https://www.owic.org.uk/documents>

CABINET OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Rushanara Ali:****[914103]**

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on UK exports to the EU.

Penny Mordaunt:

The latest factual information on exports to the EU can be found in the 13 April report of the Office of National Statistics.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/balanceofpayments/bulletins/uktrade/february2021>.

The vast majority of traders and hauliers have adapted well, and our focus now is on making sure that any business that is still facing challenges gets the support they need.

■ **Car Washes: Coronavirus****Julian Sturdy:****[146871]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason his Department has issued guidance during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021 re-classifying self-serve jet car washes as not fully automatic, and therefore required to close, unlike in previous covid-19 lockdowns.

Penny Mordaunt:

Throughout the pandemic, we have consistently adapted our response as we have learnt more about the virus and how best to tackle it. Automatic car washes were permitted to operate during the most recent lockdown, recognising the low risk of transmission they posed. Jet car washes, including those that are self-serviced, are not fully automatic and were therefore required to close.

The Government published the ' [COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021](#) ', on 22 February, providing a roadmap out of lockdown restrictions in England. As a result of progress made against the virus, England was able to move to Step 2 on 12 April. All car washes, including jet washes, are now permitted to open.

We keep our measures under constant review so as to reflect the latest science and clinical data. Scientific evidence supporting the government response to coronavirus is regularly published here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

Revised guidance for businesses can be found here:

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

■ Caravan Sites and Holiday Accommodation: Coronavirus**Sir Christopher Chope:****[185791]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174724 on Caravan Sites and Holiday Accommodation: Coronavirus, if he will publish the scientific evidence that opening facilities too early or too quickly risks another lockdown.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government published scientific evidence underlying the roadmap in February. The evidence indicated that reopening accommodation and encouraging non essential travel across England raised the risk of transmission, and the Government therefore decided to introduce reopening in phases -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

I refer the hon. Member to the SAGE 81 minutes which can be found [here](#). We have also shared [SPI-M-O: Summary of modelling on roadmap scenarios](#).

■ Companies: Procurement**Dan Carden:****[186006]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether a requirement for (a) company identifiers and (b) spend data is planned to be included in upcoming public procurement reforms.

Julia Lopez:

In its Green Paper on Transforming Public Procurement, the Government has proposed legislating to require all contracting authorities to publish procurement data throughout the commercial lifecycle in a format compliant with the Open Contracting Data Standard. This should include supplier identifiers and spend data. The Government's response to the consultation will be published in due course.

■ Conflict, Stability and Security Fund**Layla Moran:**[\[186018\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs' Written Statement of 21 April 2021 on UK Official Development Assistance departmental allocations 2021-22, Official Report, HCWS935, how much of the Official Development Assistance funding allocated to the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund within Open societies and conflict resolution is allocated to (a) Ukraine, (b) Yemen, (c) Somalia, (d) Myanmar, (e) Afghanistan, (f) Sudan and (g) South Sudan.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs' Written Ministerial Statement of 21 April 2021 sets out the FCDO departmental ODA programme budget allocations. It does not include Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) allocations.

The total CSSF allocation for Financial Year 2021/22 is £874m. CSSF regional and thematic level allocations for 2021/22 will be confirmed to Parliament in a Written Ministerial Statement later in the year.

■ Coronavirus: Social Distancing**Julian Sturdy:**[\[184431\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential to lift all covid-19 restrictions on social contact on or from 21 June 2021.

Julian Sturdy:[\[184432\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the level of covid-19 antibodies in the population that would be necessary to enable the Government to lift all legal limits on social contact from 21 June 2021.

Penny Mordaunt:

In the Government's Roadmap - 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' - we set out four steps for easing restrictions. The Government aims to lift social contact limits at Step 4, which will happen no earlier than 21 June.

The dates for these steps are indicative "no earlier than" dates, which are five weeks apart and wholly contingent on the data and subject to change. Before moving to

Step 4 and lifting legal social contact limits, the Government will examine the impact of the previous Step 3 and the four tests:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

■ Delivery Services: UK Trade with EU

Julian Sturdy: [\[181264\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK businesses exporting to the EU of the decision by European pallet delivery businesses to reduce business to customer deliveries in favour of business to business work in response to new UK-EU trade arrangements after the end of the transition period; and what urgent steps the Government is taking to respond to that decision.

Julian Sturdy: [\[181265\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the effect on UK businesses exporting to the EU of the decision by many European pallet delivery businesses to require EORI numbers from customers for business to customer deliveries, when only businesses have EORI numbers; and what urgent steps the Government is taking in response to that decision.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government maintains regular contact with the logistics industry both in the UK and in the EU. Logistics companies - on both sides of the Channel - will make their own commercial decisions on customer deliveries.

Individuals can obtain EORI numbers in order to import or export goods, although EORI numbers are not required if they are importing for their own personal use.

Further to the [answer](#) to PQ 175723 on 19 April 2021, the Government is continuing to support businesses and hauliers in navigating new systems and processes.

■ Exports: Small Businesses

Stephen Morgan: [\[186009\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the effect of the UK leaving the EU on SMEs and their ability to export internationally outside of the EU.

Penny Mordaunt:

On 13 April, the Office for National Statistics released the latest statistics on EU-UK trade which show a welcome growth in the value of trade with the EU, with goods exports close to the average 2020 level.

The vast majority of traders and hauliers have adapted well, and our focus now is on making sure that any business that is still facing challenges gets the support they need. We are continuing to monitor and assess the situation, including any potential change in trade patterns.

We have made an additional £20m available to support SMEs with new requirements when trading with the EU. More info can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-20-million-sme-brexit-support-fund>

■ G7: ICT**Preet Kaur Gill:**[\[182082\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174934, how many companies applied for the contract to support the physical and digital delivery of the G7 Summit.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[182083\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174933, how many and which G7 Engagement Groups have (a) bid for and (b) been awarded outreach funding to help increase the reach of their activity and develop the evidence base for their recommendations.

Preet Kaur Gill:[\[182084\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174933, as of 16 April 2021 how much funding has been (a) committed and (b) disbursed to G7 Engagement Groups in outreach funding to help increase the reach of their activity and develop the evidence base for their recommendations.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has recently appointed a production company, through a detailed tendering process which was open to companies on the Crown Commercial Services Communication Services Framework (RM3796). Three companies bid for the contract to support the physical and digital delivery of the G7 Summit. Information relating to the successful bidder, estimated contract value and the terms will be available through Crown Commercial Services contracts finder.

Information relating to the grants awarded to some G7 Engagement Groups for outreach activity will be published through the usual grants transparency process in due course.

■ Gender Based Violence: Victim Support Schemes

Caroline Lucas: [\[185843\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant the Answer of 29 March 2021 to Question 172053 on Gender Based Violence: Victim Support Schemes, and with reference to the Green Paper Transforming Public Procurement, if he will publish a White Paper containing criteria setting out when it is appropriate for grant funding to be used for specialist provision for Violence Against Women and Girls services and for procurement rules to not apply.

Julia Lopez:

The government has no plans to legislate in this area and so will not publish a White Paper. The published Grants Functional Standard provides clear guidance, alongside Managing Public Money, on the use of grant funding, and is available to government departments and arm's length bodies. Decisions on the use of grants as a funding mechanism are carefully considered and informed by the purpose and expected outcomes of individual schemes.

■ Government Departments: Procurement

Dan Carden: [\[186238\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to (a) rectify and (b) prevent breaches of transparency obligations in public procurement; and if he will make a statement.

Dan Carden: [\[186239\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when the Government plans to resume undertaking procurement competitively for all contracts.

Dan Carden: [\[186241\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that the use of emergency procurement procedures are subject to parliamentary oversight.

Dan Carden: [\[186242\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, (a) in what way and (b) to whom was the high-priority lane for covid-19 contracts advertised.

Julia Lopez:

There are well-established procedures set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the legal framework governing public procurement, to enable contracting authorities to procure goods, services and works with extreme urgency in exceptional circumstances.

Indeed, being able to procure at speed has been critical in providing the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However we have always made it clear that all contracts, including those designed to tackle coronavirus issues, must

continue to achieve value for money for taxpayers, use good commercial judgement and the details of any awards made should be published in line with Government transparency guidelines.

We have issued further updated guidance, Procurement Policy Note – Procurement in an Emergency ([PPN 01/21](#)) reminding contracting authorities of the options available to them when undertaking procurements in an emergency

Along with the above, we have recently published detailed proposals for a new and improved regulatory regime for public procurement, taking advantage of new freedoms now that we have left the EU. While these proposals have long been in development, they include specific measures to strengthen transparency throughout the commercial lifecycle

The Government has published a statement on [gov.uk](#) following the National Audit Office report.

■ Home Shopping: VAT

Daisy Cooper:

[\[183298\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if his Department will launch a public education campaign that would alert consumers to their potential liability for (a) customs charges, (b) import VAT and (c) increased courier handling charges when making purchases from online marketplaces that fulfil orders from within the EU.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government is already communicating the practical changes that follow Brexit for citizens and businesses and has been doing so since last year. This public information campaign has reached 99.7% of UK adults.

The Government has worked with the retail industry to ensure that they take the actions necessary to comply with new rules now that the UK has left the EU. This includes ensuring that their customers are aware of any charges if goods are sourced from within the EU or from further afield.

■ Lord Frost

Emily Thornberry:

[\[184393\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which aspects of (a) trade policy and (b) ongoing trade negotiations require the co-ordination of cross-Government positions with the support of the Minister of State in the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[184394\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what support the Minister of State in the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost provides to the Department for International Trade on the co-ordination of cross-Government positions on trade issues.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[184395\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, for what reason the decision was taken to give responsibility to the Minister of State in the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost for supporting the co-ordination of cross-Government positions on trade issues; and when that decision was taken.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[184396\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether his Department has received additional (a) staff, (b) budget and (c) other resources to enable the Minister of State in the Cabinet Office, Lord Frost to provide support on the co-ordination of cross-Government positions on trade issues; and whether those resources were transferred from other Government departments.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Prime Minister appointed Lord Frost as Minister of State for the Cabinet Office on 1 March 2021. Lord Frost works closely with colleagues across Government, including the Department for International Trade, to maximise the benefits to the United Kingdom, both from the trade deal with the EU, and the UK's newly independent trade policy. Full details of Lord Frost's responsibilities are outlined on Gov.uk.

The EU Secretariat, based in the Cabinet Office, has been established to provide direction and coordination of the UK's relationship with the EU and its member states. This unit integrates officials from Taskforce Europe and the Transition Taskforce.

■ UK Trade with EU

Neil Coyle:

[\[175882\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to tackle delays at UK customs on EU imports.

Penny Mordaunt:

The Government has provided comprehensive guidance on the new arrangements for trade with the EU following the end of the Transition Period. Officials are monitoring trade flows at the border to identify any issues and to resolve them when they arise to allow goods to continue flowing freely.

We have delayed the implementation of full border import controls until January 2022 to minimise disruption and give traders a chance to prepare. Until these controls take effect, most importers of most goods are not required to file a customs declaration at the point of entry.

DEFENCE

■ **Armed Forces: Officers****Derek Twigg:**[\[186134\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many officer cadets from the UK who entered training at Sandhurst were from ethnic minorities, in each year since 2010.

Leo Docherty:

The table below shows the Regular Army UK BAME intake to the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) from 2010 – 30 Sept 2021, by financial year.

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF PERSONNEL FROM THE UK
FY 2010/11	20
FY 2011/12	20
FY 2012/13	20
FY 2013/14	20
FY 2014/15	10
FY 2015/16	20
FY 2016/17	10
FY 2017/18	20
FY 2018/19	10
FY 19/20	20
FY 20/21 up to 30 Sept	10

Source: Analysis (Army)

Table notes:

1. The figures are for the UK Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, Army Reserve and all other Reserves, but includes those personnel that have transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP.
2. Ethnicity has been extracted from the Joint Personnel Administration System.
3. There are a number of people with unknown ethnicity, a proportion of who may be BAME.

4. Figures above include those personnel who join the Pre-RMAS (PRMAS) and Leadership Development Course (LDC) schemes prior to starting RMAS. This means that the latest figures may differ slightly from those supplied in previous PQ answers which excluded the PRMAS and LDC elements.
5. There were ~20 additional personnel whose primary nationality is not British.
6. Figures have been rounded to 10 as a means of disclosure control to protect individuals; numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.
7. Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.

■ **Army: Coronavirus**

Royston Smith:

[\[187274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate the rollout of the covid-19 vaccine for serving soldiers.

James Heappey:

Defence is working closely with other Government Departments to ensure Service personnel are not disadvantaged in their access to the COVID-19 vaccine, whether serving in the UK or overseas. All deploying personnel will be offered vaccinations either in the UK or during their deployment in line with the national vaccines roll-out.

■ **Defence: Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Deidre Brock:

[\[185915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 18 January 2021 to Question 135975 on Armed Forces: Carbon Emissions, what the timetable is for the completion of the work on developing a methodology to expand the scope of defence greenhouse gas emissions reporting to include overseas activities.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is intending to extend the scope of defence greenhouse gas emissions reporting in the Department's Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22.

■ **Military Aircraft: Deployment**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[186138\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish details of the overseas (a) exercises and (b) deployments undertaken by (i) RAF Typhoon and (ii) F-35B forces in (A) 2019, (B) 2020 and (C) 2021; and if he will publish the number of aircraft on each of those (a) exercises and (b) deployments.

James Heappey:

The attached table contains the requested overseas exercises and deployments of the Typhoon and Lightning Force. In addition, Typhoon and Lightning have

conducted a number of overseas exercises in the Airspace of neighbouring NATO countries while operating from their home bases in UK, often with the support of Voyager Air-to-Air Refuelling.

Attachments:

1. 186138 - Typhoon Lightning Overseas Deployments [Typhoon Lightning overseas deployments 2019-2021.docx]

■ **Oman: Visits Abroad**

Martyn Day:

[\[186190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list all the Chiefs of the Defence staff that attended the Sultan's Privy Council in Oman while serving in the UK. UK.military.

James Heappey:

I can confirm the following Chiefs of Defence Staff have attended the Oman Privy Council whilst serving in the UK military:

Gen Sir Charles Guthrie GCB LVO OBE ADC Gen

Gen Sir Nicholas Houghton GCB CBE ADC Gen

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach GBE KCB ADC Gen

Gen Sir Nick Carter GCB CBE DSO ADC Gen

■ **Type 26 Frigates: Procurement**

Luke Pollard:

[\[184544\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the change to the timescale for the Type 26 construction programme of gearbox delays.

Jeremy Quin:

The Type 26 construction programme is sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes to the delivery of equipment without unduly impacting the in-service dates of the ships.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Artificial Intelligence: Gender**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[187144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle gender disparities in artificial intelligence technology.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[187146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) gender and (b) racial discrimination is not incorporated into the development of artificial intelligence systems.

Mr John Whittingdale:

We recognise the need to address gender disparities in AI. In 2019, DCMS via the joint DCMS/BEIS Office for AI worked with the Office for Students and DfE to deliver new conversion course Masters courses at Universities across the country, with scholarships for people from underrepresented backgrounds, including women, black, and disabled students. The programme launched last September and the cohort of 1265 students that started included, 40 per cent women, one quarter black students, and 15 per cent disabled students. For those receiving a scholarship, the figures were even more encouraging – with 76 per cent of scholarship students going to women, 45 per cent of the students identifying as black and 24 per cent as being disabled. The upcoming National AI Strategy, being led by the Office for AI, looks to double down on such commitments to further improve diversity.

In addition to improving diversity via the conversion course Masters programme, in 2019, DCMS partnered with the World Economic Forum to create guidelines for responsible public sector procurement of AI systems. In June 2020, the guidelines were published on GOV.UK and operationalised through Crown Commercial Service's AI Marketplace, launched September 2020. The Guidelines, which build on the Government's Data Ethics Framework, recommend that AI procurement in Government be conducted by diverse teams, and stipulate that specific steps be taken to ensure the Public Sector Equality Duty is upheld – including performing an equality impact assessment alongside data protection impact assessments. Crown Commercial Services have implemented a baseline ethical standard for suppliers to be added to the procurement system. These concrete interventions are intended to mitigate against gender or racial bias being incorporated into AI systems procured into the public sector, which at 40% of the economy, sets the standard for AI suppliers in the wider economy.

The Government's Data Ethics Framework and 'Guide to Using AI in the Public Sector', alongside other area-specific guidance available on GOV.UK, support the ethical and safe use of algorithms in the public sector.

Further to this, as part of our commitment in the National Data Strategy, the Cabinet Office are exploring appropriate and effective mechanisms to deliver more transparency on the use of algorithmic assisted decision making within the public sector and to monitor their impact; and are working with leading organisations in the field of data and AI ethics to do so.

The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, in their report into algorithmic bias, make a number of recommendations to Government to reduce or mitigate the propensity for algorithms to encode bias. The Government is currently reviewing those recommendations.

■ Broadband: Windsor and Maidenhead

Adam Afriyie:

[\[184403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what progress has been made on the rollout of full-fibre broadband in (a) Wraysbury, (b) Eton, (c) Old Windsor and (d) Windsor constituency.

Adam Afriyie:

[\[184404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the pace of full-fibre rollout in (a) Wraysbury, (b) Eton, (c) Old Windsor and (d) Windsor constituency.

Matt Warman:

Wraysbury, Eton, Old Windsor and the Windsor constituency fall within areas that are commercially active. Currently 95.5% of the constituency of Windsor have access to Superfast broadband, which is only slightly below the UK average of 96.7%.

An Openreach Superfast contract has been completed to increase the provision of full-fibre broadband to residents and businesses in Windsor. A Gigaclear contract is also in progress and moving forwards, having previously been held up by a wayleave for Windsor Great Park.

Windsor constituents have made use of the national Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme too, having applied for 52 vouchers worth more than £102k. Up to £210 million is available through the new UK Gigabit Voucher, launched on 8 April for any eligible homes or businesses.

Following the launch of Project Gigabit in March, the government will begin the roll out of gigabit-capable broadband to hard-to-reach places in the UK. East Berkshire is part of Lot 26 in phase 2 and Building Digital UK will begin a rolling Open Market Review (OMR) process from June 2021 to give us a national view of commercial build plans for the following three years.

Telecoms providers will be asked to provide existing and planned coverage at an individual premise level and we will use this information, following appropriate due diligence, to create a complete picture of forecast gigabit-capable infrastructure coverage for the UK. The OMR process will validate and update existing maps to account for any amendments to existing coverage and/or plans for broadband infrastructure.

The OMR will be followed by a Public Review to ensure that the views of anyone involved in network building are captured and considered. This will be publicised via Gov.uk and the local authority website.

■ Culture Recovery Fund

Thangam Debbonaire: [185399]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will take steps to ensure that the criteria for the next allocations of the Cultural Recovery Fund will allow applications from organisations which exist within a wider commercial group structure.

Caroline Dinenage:

Last year the government announced the unprecedented £1.57 billion support package for the culture sector. To date, over £1.2 billion has been allocated from the Culture Recovery Fund, reaching over 5000 individual organisations and sites.

In the 2021 Budget the Chancellor announced a further £300 million for the CRF. This funding will continue to support key cultural organisations; to bridge the sector as audiences begin to return; and continue to ensure a vibrant future for the culture sector as the nation recovers from the pandemic. Further details on this funding and its criteria will be announced in due course and we will continue to work closely with the sector to ensure it remains supported.

■ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Corporate Hospitality

Jo Stevens: [185955]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times Ministers in his Department have received hospitality from Camelot UK Lotteries Limited in each of the last 10 years.

Jo Stevens: [185956]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times officials in his Department have received hospitality from Camelot UK Lotteries Limited in each of the last 10 years.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Government departments publish quarterly details of occasions where Ministers and officials are in receipt of hospitality. This is published on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website and covers the last 10 years.

At the following link it is possible to apply filters to search for the documents specifically relating to DCMS and Transparency and Freedom of Information Releases over this period: [https://www.gov.uk/search/transparency-and-freedom-of-information-releases?content_store_document_type%5B%5D=transparency&organisations%5B%5D=department-for-digital-culture-media-sport&order=updated-newest]

Cat Smith: [185964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many times the Minister for Sport and the Olympics received hospitality from Camelot UK Lotteries Limited from May 2010 to October 2013.

Mr John Whittingdale:

Government departments publish quarterly details of occasions where Ministers and officials are in receipt of hospitality. This is published on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website and covers the last 10 years.

The documents show that the Minister for Sport and the Olympics received hospitality from Camelot UK Lotteries Limited once during the period May 2010 to October 2013, on 16 May 2013, as detailed in [this release](#).

Links to all the documents covering the period May 2010 to October 2013 are below.

[Ministerial Hospitality 13 May - 31 July 2010](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality 1 August - 30 September 2010](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality 1 October - 31 December 2010](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality January to March 2011](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality April to June 2011](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality July to September 2011](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality October to December 2011](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality January to March 2012](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality April to June 2012](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality July to September 2012](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality October to December 2012](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality January to March 2013](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality April to June 2013](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality July to September 2013](#)

[Ministerial Hospitality October to December 2013](#)

■ **Events Industry: Coronavirus**

Mr Philip Hollobone:[\[184397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether all participants regardless of their covid-19 vaccination status are tested both prior to and after the event they attend in the large events pilots of the Events Research Programme; when and how those results are published; and if he will make a statement.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Events Research Programme Science Board has planned for testing to take place both before and after each of the event pilots to ensure event safety and to gather evidence on the pilots. This will be for all attendees, regardless of COVID vaccination status, and there will be no requirement for participants to show proof of the vaccine.

The Events Research Programme (including DCMS, DHSC and BEIS) will report at the end of May to the Prime Minister, to feed into wider discussions around Step 4 of the roadmap.

Mr Philip Hollobone:

[184398]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to covid-19 testing at large events pilots taking place as part of the Events Research Programme, whether the test results are planned to be recorded separately for people who have received (a) zero, (b) one and (c) two doses of a covid-19 vaccine.

Nigel Huddleston:

An individual's vaccination status will be included as a variable when analysing test result data relating to the Events Research Programme (ERP). This will enable analysis of whether vaccinations have impacted on any potential transmission at the events.

The Events Research Programme (including DCMS, DHSC and BEIS) will report at the end of May to the Prime Minister, to feed into wider discussions around Step 4 of the roadmap.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[185467]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he has taken to provide financial support for businesses within events and exhibitions sector that will be affected by the covid-19 outbreak over the next 12 months.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[185468]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what further financial support seasonal businesses in the exhibition industry that are affected by the covid-19 outbreak will receive from April 2021 to the end of 2021.

Nigel Huddleston:

Events and exhibition businesses will continue to be able to apply for Government support during this period, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which has been extended until September. Events businesses can apply for a variety of generous Government backed loan schemes, including the Recovery Loan scheme from 6 April. In addition, the discretionary Additional Restrictions Grant guidance for Local Authorities specifically refers to mobile businesses and suppliers in the events sector.

We continue to engage with stakeholders, including through the Tourism Industry Council and the Events Industry Senior Leaders Advisory Panel, to monitor the situation facing the sector.

■ Football

Jamie Stone: [\[183246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will facilitate a roundtable discussion with sports broadcasters and football fan associations to discuss the European Super League proposals.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has been vocal in its opposition to these proposals, which are not in the interests of the game, and I was glad to see the withdrawal of all English teams from the project.

This is the right result for football fans, clubs and communities across the country.

Clive Efford: [\[184353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on how many occasions in the last year he, or officials in his Department, have discussed the prospects of the formation of a European Super League with relevant stakeholders; and what the (a) parties to, (b) date and times of and (c) outcomes of those discussions were.

Clive Efford: [\[184355\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with representatives of (a) the English Football League and (b) the National League on the implications for football of the creation of a European Super League.

Rachael Maskell: [\[184522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the creation of a European Super League on football clubs in the National League North division.

Nigel Huddleston:

The Government has been vocal in its opposition to the European Super League, which would have been to the detriment of the whole football pyramid including the English Football League and the National League System.

Before the announcements on 19th April, the department had not had any discussions on these proposals. Once announced, the Government met with multiple football stakeholders, including the Football Association, to discuss the issue and what action was needed.

The Government was pleased to see the withdrawal of all English teams from the project - the right result for football fans, clubs and communities across the country.

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport announced an independent fan-led review of football governance on 19 April. This will be chaired by the Honourable Member for Chatham and Aylesford.

■ Football: Coronavirus

Kate Osborne:

[\[186273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, with reference to the decision to allow fans inside the Crucible to watch the World Snooker Championship, if he will allow spectators back to grassroots football games in outdoor stadiums.

Nigel Huddleston:

The government recognises the importance of spectators to competitive sport, and to football in particular, as our national game, from the grassroots to the Premier League.

We welcome the return of spectators at selected sporting events as part of the science-led Events Research Programme (ERP). The ERP is running a series of pilots in April and May to inform decisions around the safe removal of social distancing at Step 4 of the Roadmap. The pilots will be run across a range of settings, venues, and activities, including football games, so that findings will support the full reopening of similar settings across multiple sectors.

The government has published the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' setting out the roadmap out of the lockdown restrictions for England, and which explains how restrictions will be eased over time.

Step 2 of the Government's roadmap sets out that spectators are not permitted to attend sporting events taking place on private land, other than for safeguarding purposes for or providing care or assistance to a person with disabilities participating in an organised sporting event or activity. They should maintain social distance and not mix with other households. This does not prevent people from viewing recreational or organised sport that is taking place in a public space, e.g. a park, in groups of up to 6 people or 2 households.

Sporting events that are intended to attract spectators (including ticketed events), or events that are likely to attract a significant number of spectators (e.g. a major marathon) should not take place in a public space, or on private land, until Step 3.

■ Gambling Act 2005

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[186251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish the findings of its review of the Gambling Act 2005.

Mr John Whittingdale:

The Review of the Gambling Act 2005 was launched on 8 December with the publication of a Call for Evidence. This closed on 31 March and received approximately 16,000 submissions from a broad range of interested organisations and individuals.

We are considering the evidence carefully with the aim of setting out conclusions and any proposals for reform in a white paper by the end of the year.

■ Musicians: EU Countries

Ms Harriet Harman:

[\[186125\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 16 April 2021 to Question 178768, which Ministers have spoken to which heads of missions in EU countries on reciprocal touring rights for musicians; and whether he plans to report on the progress of bilateral negotiations on that matter.

Caroline Dinenage:

DCMS is working closely with the FCDO and other departments on our engagement strategy with EU member states regarding touring issues. As part of this, DCMS Ministers are speaking to our Heads of Mission in EU Member States, and as part of the process they will also be speaking to Member States directly in support of FCDO engagement.

As conversations are ongoing, it is not appropriate to share details at this time.

The UK has significantly more generous arrangements for touring professionals than many Member States, and should Member States be willing to change their rules to match ours we will have those discussions and encourage them to do so.

■ Sport Winter Survival Package: Football

Dan Jarvis:

[\[186289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much and what proportion of additional funding provided through the Government's Sport Winter Survival Package has been provided to elite level football clubs for (a) women and (b) men in the UK since that support package was announced.

Nigel Huddleston:

The £300 million Sport Winter Survival Package announced in November 2020 has provided a lifeline to organisations that would otherwise not survive the winter as a result of the restriction on spectators announced from 1 October. To date we have publicly announced more than c.£212 million of support.

This includes £11.5 million for 39 clubs at steps 1 and 2 of the men's National League System. A further £2.9 million has been provided for women's football (Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship, including awards to 6 clubs).

Approximately 5.4% of the total Sports Winter Survival Package funding announced to date has therefore been allocated to men's National League football steps 1 and 2, and 1.4% for women's football. It should be noted that funding for men's football has been distributed across a greater number of individual clubs.

This support has been provided alongside the multi-billion pound package of Government support that has been made available to the sector during the coronavirus emergency.

■ Telecommunications: Billing

Daisy Cooper:

[\[184553\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of requiring telecoms suppliers to offer their best value tariffs to existing customers when they reach the end of introductory fixed price deals.

Matt Warman:

The Government has recently strengthened Ofcom's telecoms consumer protection powers. In February 2020, Ofcom introduced new rules to ensure that customers receive important information about their communications service when their contract is due to end.

As the contract end date approaches, providers must inform their customers on: the date their contract ends; the services currently provided and the price paid; any changes to the service and price paid at the end of this period; and information about the notice period required to terminate the contract. Providers must also include information on prices available to other customers, such as new customers. This is to ensure that customers do not have to negotiate in order to find out what their provider's best price is, and means people can see if they are losing out and whether to switch provider.

■ Tourism: West Midlands

Stuart Anderson:

[\[184547\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps his Department is taking support the tourism and wider visitor economy to reopen safely as covid-19 restrictions are eased in (a) Wolverhampton South West constituency and (b) throughout the West Midlands.

Nigel Huddleston:

My Department is taking a number of steps to encourage tourism across the country once restrictions are eased, including in Wolverhampton and the West Midlands.

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

We are working with VisitBritain, VisitEngland and local partners to champion the UK's diverse tourism offer through the Escape the Everyday campaign.

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

The March Budget included £700m of extra funding to support our world-leading arts, culture and sporting institutions - protecting the venues which make the UK an attractive destination to visit.

In total, over £25bn has been provided to the tourism, leisure and hospitality sectors in the form of grants, loans and tax breaks.

■ **Travel: Coronavirus**

Bell Ribeiro-Addy:

[\[186265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if he will make an assessment of adding touring artists to the list of jobs that qualify for covid-19 travel exemptions.

Caroline Dinenage:

The Government is committed to supporting our world-leading creative industries and to help them to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 travel exemptions are kept under review and any changes are driven by the public health risks.

EDUCATION

■ **Apprentices: Social Mobility**

Karin Smyth:

[\[185415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the reduction in apprenticeship starts at Levels 2 and 3 on social mobility in deprived areas.

Gillian Keegan:

We want to ensure that more people from disadvantaged backgrounds can undertake apprenticeships, particularly those that offer higher wage returns and progression opportunities, and we continue to look at how the programme is supporting those from deprived areas.

Employers decide which apprenticeships they offer and when in order to address their skills needs. High-quality apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 remain an important part of our programme, supporting people from all backgrounds to gain the skills they need to begin or progress in their career. In the first half of 2020/21 academic year, there were 110,500 apprenticeship starts at levels 2 and 3 - over two-thirds of all starts in this period.

We are supporting more people from disadvantaged and under-represented backgrounds to access apprenticeships through our Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network of over 85 employers. The Network promotes best practice in recruiting and supporting apprentices from diverse backgrounds. In addition, our Apprenticeships Support and Knowledge programme supports schools across England to provide students from diverse backgrounds with information on apprenticeships.

Smaller employers play an important role in providing apprenticeship opportunities across the country, particularly for young people and those in deprived areas. To

support more smaller employers to offer apprenticeships all SMEs can now reserve funding for up to 10 new apprenticeship starts in 2021-22 financial year. Employers of all sizes can also benefit from the increased incentive payment of £3000 for taking on an apprentice as a new employee.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are also providing a range of support to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds access high-quality training to develop the skills, experience, and confidence to obtain an apprenticeship. We are supporting the largest-ever expansion of traineeships, providing funding for an additional 30,000 places in 2020/21 academic year, and we are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to enable Kickstart placements to turn into apprenticeships where that is the right thing for the employer and the young person. We have made a special provision to allow employers taking on Kickstarters as apprentices to be eligible for the incentive payment, supporting a pathway between the schemes.

■ Apprentices: Standards

Karin Smyth:

[\[185413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to improve the quality of traineeships.

Gillian Keegan:

We know that traineeships have significant positive outcomes for young people. 66% of trainees progressed into work, an apprenticeship or further learning in 2018/19 academic year, the year after they completed their traineeship.

We are supporting the largest ever expansion of traineeships, providing funding for an additional 30,000 places in 2020/21 academic year, to ensure that more young people have access to high-quality training. We have extended the £1,000 incentive payments for employers who offer traineeship work placement opportunities to July 2022. We are also providing an additional £126 million to create a further 43,000 places in 2021/22 academic year.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak we have also introduced flexibilities to enable traineeships to support more young people into work wherever possible. These include extending the maximum duration from 6 to 12 months and extending the programme eligibility to include young people with level 3 qualifications who require support to access an apprenticeship or other employment.

We are working with employers to develop new traineeships which will provide young people with a tailored springboard into their chosen industries. From May 2021 we will start to deliver the first ever traineeships developed alongside trade bodies and employers specifically for construction and rail, with further sectors to follow in the summer. These traineeships will be aligned to apprenticeship standards and will significantly increase the opportunities for young people to progress into apprenticeships or other employment.

To help improve traineeship quality and share best practice, we run provider webinars through the Association of Colleges and the Association of Employment

and Learning Providers. We have introduced one-to-one meetings with providers to discuss their programmes and achievements with them.

■ **Assessments: Coronavirus**

Nick Fletcher:

[181466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the cancellation of exams for summer 2021, for what reason schools are being billed fees by exam boards.

Nick Gibb:

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

The Department and Ofqual launched joint consultations on 15 January 2021 on how to award grades for both general qualifications and vocational and technical qualifications in 2021 so they are robust and fair. We received over 100,000 responses from pupils, parents, teachers, head teachers and other stakeholders. There was widespread support for our approach.

In terms of fees from exam boards, awarding organisations will need to cover their costs which, for example, will include the provision of assessment and support materials, managing the quality assurance and appeals processes. We expect they will make commercial decisions on fees and refunds on that basis. Given the unusual circumstances this year, it is not possible for them to have certainty about their 2021 costs in advance.

The Government will provide funding to awarding organisations with respect to formal appeals of teacher assessed grades submitted to them by state-funded providers and any providers on behalf of private candidates. These centres will not need to pay a fee to awarding bodies when submitting their appeal.

■ **Camps International: Educational Visits**

Alberto Costa:

[185967]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has provided guidance to schools on pre-booked overseas trips with Camp International.

Nick Gibb:

In line with the Government's COVID-19 response roadmap, the Department advises against all domestic and international residential educational visits until at least Step 3 and no earlier than 17 May. Guidance is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#educational-visits>.

The Department will update guidance in line with the timetable set out in the roadmap, including advice on international educational visits, after the Global Travel Taskforce has reported its findings.

Any disputes regarding travel provider, and/or travel insurer, performance or behaviour should be resolved in line with the contractual arrangements and in line with the relevant industry and sector representative body disputes process.

The Association of British Insurers provide information and support at:

<https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/topics-and-issues/coronavirus-hub/travel-insurance/>.

■ Children: Disability

Grahame Morris:

[182038]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by the Disabled Children's Partnership entitled Loneliest lockdown, if he will ensure that the Government's education recovery, led by Sir Kevan Collins, will include a dedicated recovery policy for disabled children and their families that addresses the physical and mental health impacts of the covid-19 pandemic on those groups.

Nick Gibb:

The Department is committed to helping all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), make up education lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We recognise that extended school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education, health and wellbeing. We are committed to supporting them and their families.

We have and continue to develop plans for COVID-19 recovery. Sir Kevan Collins has been appointed as the Education Recovery Commissioner and is considering how schools and the system can more effectively target resources and support at pupils in greatest need. In the development of this recovery plan, Sir Kevan is regularly meeting with a variety of stakeholders including disabled young people and their families. Sir Kevan is reviewing how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact that the COVID-19 outbreak has had not just on academic outcomes, but on the physical and mental health of children and young people.

As part of this plan, both special schools and alternative provision will be able to access funding to provide summer schools and the National Tutoring Programme. We recognise the additional costs associated with offering provision to pupils in specialist settings, and eligible pupils in special schools, special units in mainstream primary and secondary schools and alternative provision settings will attract a higher rate of funding for summer schools. We have also consistently prioritised children who attend specialist settings by providing additional uplifts both in the 2020 Catch-up Premium and in the 2021 Recovery Premium.

Young people with SEND aged 19 to 24 who have an education, health and care plan will be eligible for support via the 16 to 19 Tuition Fund, where they meet the fund criteria. Colleges are asked to have regard for the needs of students with SEND when prioritising students that would benefit most for small group tuition.

Furthermore, the proposals to support early language and literacy catch up will benefit all children including those with SEND.

In addition, £200 million will be available to all secondary schools, including specialist settings, to deliver face to face summer schools. Schools will be able to target provision based on pupils' needs. We also announced, on 10 February 2021, over £42 million SEND funding for the 2021-22 financial year to continue funding projects to support children with SEND. This investment will ensure that specialist organisations around the country can continue their work to help strengthen local area performance, support families, and provide practical support to schools and colleges. It will strengthen participation of parents and young people in the SEND system – ensuring they have a voice in designing policies and services and have access to high quality information, advice, and support.

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

■ **Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

Chris Green: [\[182059\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has allocated (a) financial and (b) other resources from his Department's budget to investigate potential future uses by his Department of the NHS Test and Trace system.

Chris Green: [\[182060\]](#)

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

Chris Green: [\[182061\]](#)

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

Nick Gibb:

NHS Test and Trace data is used by the Department for Education to routinely monitor and report to Ministers on the take-up of COVID-19 testing in schools and colleges, and to support operational delivery. For example, the Department has used the data to proactively identify schools that required additional support to report test results for their setting during the initial on-site testing phase of the programme.

■ **Curriculum**

Ms Diane Abbott: [\[182007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what consultation his Department has undertaken with (a) schools, (b) teachers and (c) relevant stakeholders on diversifying curricula.

Nick Gibb:

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain.

The Department regularly engages with teachers and other stakeholders on the curriculum, including on diversity and inclusion. There is already a wide range of high-quality resources on teaching a culturally diverse curriculum content, including those produced by education publishers, voluntary organisations, subject associations, and remote education resources from the Oak National Academy.

The Government is considering the recommendations in the report by the Commission for Race and Ethnic Disparities, including on curriculum resources, and assessing the next steps for future policy. In recognition of the extensive scope of recommendations, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has established a new Inter Ministerial Group. The group will be chaired by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

■ Curriculum: Media

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[183073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of adding media literacy to the school curriculum in England.

Nick Gibb:

All state-funded schools are required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

The National Curriculum, which focuses on the key knowledge that schools should teach, enables children to acquire a secure understanding of core concepts and provide them with the understanding they need to participate fully in society.

Media literacy can be taught through the compulsory computing and citizenship curriculum and in the statutory relationships and health education curriculum.

■ Department for Education: Racial Discrimination

Justin Madders:

[\[181043\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many complaints relating to allegations of racism were made to his Department in (a) 2018, (b) 2019 and (c) 2020.

Nick Gibb:

We are clear there is no place for racism in our society or education system. The Department does not keep a central record of all complaints made to us directly. However, from July 2020, the Department's School Complaints Unit began recording whether 'racial discrimination towards a pupil' has been cited as a factor in complaints made to, or about, local authority maintained school.

Subsequently, racial discrimination towards a pupil was cited as a factor in eight complaints about local authority maintained schools. At the time of their approach, none of the complainants had attempted to resolve their concerns locally, using the schools' own complaints procedure, so were advised to do so.

Whilst complaints about a school can be made to the Department, in most cases complainants should follow the local complaints procedure in the first instance. All schools are required to have a complaints procedure in place and we have published guidance on this for maintained schools, academies and independent schools:

Maintained schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>.

Academies: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-up-an-academies-complaints-procedure>.

Independent schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulating-independent-schools>.

■ Education: Children

Karin Smyth:

[185407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the Association of Colleges survey which found that three quarters of 16 to 18 year olds are performing below normal expectations, as a result of the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps he is taking in response to that matter.

Gillian Keegan:

We are currently looking at a wide range of proposals that will support education recovery across all age groups, working with the Education Recovery Commissioner, Sir Kevan Collins. The department is working closely with the Association of Colleges and other sector representative bodies to develop these proposals.

I am meeting with the Association of Colleges very soon and will be discussing the findings from their survey.

■ Education: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[183163]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on education outcomes in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Nick Gibb:

Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the attainment and progress of all students is a key research priority for the Government. We have commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to provide a baseline assessment of catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England and to monitor progress over the course of the year. This research is based on assessments that schools are already using over this academic year. Initial findings from the research were recently published on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year-interim-report>.

In reading, pupils in Years 3 to 9 in England were on average 1.6-2 months behind where we would expect them to be in Autumn 2020 in a 'normal' year. In

Mathematics, pupils in Years 3 to 7 in England were on average around 3.2 months behind in Autumn 2020.

Once adjusted for historic differences in pupil progress, pupils in the West Midlands were on average around 1.6 months behind where we would expect them to be in Autumn 2020 in a 'normal year' in primary reading and on average around 2.1 months behind in secondary reading.

Due to small sample sizes, we are unable to produce robust regional estimates in Mathematics nor produce robust estimates at the local authority and constituency geographical levels.

The Government recognises school and college restrictions have had a substantial impact on children and young people's education and is committed to helping pupils make up education lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

To address this challenge, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister committed to working with parents, teachers, and education providers to develop a long-term plan to help schools, colleges, and nurseries support pupils to make up their education over the course of this Parliament.

Sir Kevan Collins was appointed as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on the development of the long-term recovery plan. Sir Kevan will engage with parents, pupils, and teachers in the development of this broader approach and review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had on education. Further details will be shared in due course.

£1.7 billion has been made available in funding to support education recovery. In June 2020, we announced a £1 billion catch-up package including a National Tutoring Programme and a Catch-up Premium for this academic year. In February 2021, we committed to further funding of £700 million to fund summer schools, expansion of our tutoring programmes and a Recovery Premium for next academic year. Funding will support pupils across early years settings, schools, and providers of 16-19 education.

■ Engineering: Females

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[187145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to encourage women to (a) study and (b) take jobs in engineering.

Michelle Donelan:

The government is committed to tackling the gender imbalance in some science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Around half of all science A levels are taken by girls. There has been an increase of around 30% in the number of science A level entries taken by girls in England between 2010 and 2020, and we are funding programmes to further increase take-up.

The government funds extracurricular school programmes, delivered by UK Research and Innovation, to inspire young people to consider STEM studies and careers and to

support the creation of a more diverse current and future STEM workforce. These include the STEM Ambassadors scheme, which supports over 20,000 STEM Ambassadors, over 40% of which are women, and the CREST Awards. Further information on the CREST Awards is available here: <https://www.crestawards.org/>. Engineering UK launched the Tomorrow's Engineers Code in October 2020, an initiative to get organisations working together to increase the diversity and number of young people entering careers in engineering.

The department funds interventions to boost girls' participation and representation in the STEM pipeline. We are investing in programmes to address female participation, particularly in subjects like computing, physics and mathematics, which can support later study and jobs in engineering. This includes the Stimulating Physics Network, which has a specific strand focusing on increasing the number of girls studying a physics A level.

■ Further Education: Expenditure

Rachel Hopkins:

[186288]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179740, on Further Education: Expenditure, what the average total (a) programme funding and (b) student funding will be for 16 to 19 year olds in (i) further education colleges and (ii) other colleges and schools in 2021-22.

Gillian Keegan:

Funding allocations for providers of 16-19 education for the next academic year 2021 to 2022 have yet to be finalised. While we have now issued allocations to individual schools and colleges, we are still considering business cases from providers where their allocation has been impacted by major data errors in their School Census or Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data returns. Until this process is complete, funding allocations are still subject to change. However, funding rates for 2021 to 2022 will be maintained at the same levels as 2020 to 2021, so we expect that average funding per student next year will be similar to this year.

■ GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments

Nick Fletcher:

[181465]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help ensure that children are assessed fairly in their upcoming GCSE and A Level assessments.

Nick Gibb:

Fairness to young people is fundamental to the Department and Ofqual's decision making. We want to ensure all young people have the confidence that, despite exams not going ahead, they will receive a grade that reflects their ability and enables them to progress.

Pupils will receive grades determined by their teachers, with assessments covering what they were taught, and not what they missed. Teachers have a good

understanding of their pupils' performance and how they compare to other pupils this year and in previous years. They are best placed to undertake an assessment of the level of learning loss of individuals as they know their pupils best.

Entitlements to reasonable adjustments should be taken into account by teachers when deciding which evidence to use, with flexibility to use or discount evidence. The range of evidence can be tailored to an individual pupil according to coverage of the specification.

Teachers have been provided with grade descriptors and exemplar materials to support them in making an evidence-based judgement of the grade at which each pupil is performing. Pupils will also have multiple chances to show what they know and can do and will be able to see the evidence their teacher plans to submit for them.

Exam boards have set out clear requirements for quality assurance to centres. Every centre will need to produce a policy setting out their approach to assessment and quality assurance, and exam boards will check these. Heads of Centre will also be required to provide a formal declaration about the accuracy and integrity of the grades submitted and the processes supporting them.

Every pupil will have the safety net of the option to appeal their grade if they wish to. If a pupil believes their grade is wrong, they will be able to ask their centre to check for errors and make sure they have followed their own process correctly.

■ Mental Health Services: Curriculum

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[187152\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including mindfulness in the national curriculum for all school ages in England.

Vicky Ford:

The department wants to support all young people to be happy, healthy, and safe. We want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society.

Health education is now compulsory for pupils in all state funded schools. Health education gives schools the opportunity to drive up the consistency and quality of pupils' mental wellbeing and physical health knowledge by delivering clear content through evidence based teaching.

The department is committed to supporting all schools to deliver Relationships and Sexual Health Education, which includes a range of specific teaching requirements on mental health and wellbeing. A mental wellbeing teacher training module and implementation guidance have been published for the new curriculum to help subject leads and teachers understand what they should teach, as well as improving their confidence in delivering mental wellbeing as part of the new curriculum.

It is up to schools to decide how to teach this subject and what additional pastoral provision to put in place. To support schools to make evidence-based decisions

about how to best support their pupils' mental health and wellbeing, the department is funding a large scale programme of randomised control trials of mental health interventions in schools. The aim of this programme is to provide robust evidence on what works to support children and young people's mental health and wellbeing and whether programmes can be delivered effectively in schools.

The programme is testing the effectiveness of five different approaches to supporting pupil mental health and wellbeing in primary and secondary schools across England. It includes a programme of brief mindfulness exercises to be run by teachers in the classroom, which provides teachers with a short training session and materials to run brief mindfulness exercises with their classes.

The department remains committed to long term improvements to support children and young people's mental health, set out in the government's response to its green paper and NHS Long Term Plan. This includes the roll out of mental health support teams and the provision of training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges.

■ Overseas Students: Immigration

Daniel Kawczynski:

[\[186142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether students who have pre-settled status will be categorised as home students and required to pay the same tuition fees as home students.

Michelle Donelan:

EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals, and their family members who are covered by the Withdrawal Agreements will continue to have access to home fee status and student financial support on broadly the same basis as now. Generally, this covers those who:

- started living in the UK by 31 December 2020, having exercised a right to reside under EU law, the EEA Agreement or the Free Movement of Persons Agreement; and
- continue to live in the UK after 31 December 2020.

Such persons will generally have applied for pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme before 30 June 2021, apart from Irish citizens, who are not required to apply as their rights will be protected by the Common Travel Area arrangements.

In practice, the Student Loans Company will accept pre-settled status, together with identification documentation, as evidence for the purposes of awarding student support to EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members. We anticipate that providers will take the same approach when awarding home fee status where the student has 3 years' residence in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA, Switzerland, or the British/EU overseas territories.

■ Postgraduate Education: Coronavirus

Caroline Lucas: [\[186146\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 27 January 2021 to Question 140273, on Postgraduate Education: Coronavirus, whether the Minister of State for Universities plans to make a financial support package of similar value available to PhD students who are not funded through UK Research and Innovation; and if he will make a statement.

Michelle Donelan:

Providers have flexibility in how they distribute hardship funding to students, in a way that best prioritises those in greatest need. Support can include help for students facing additional costs arising from having to maintain accommodation in more than one location, assistance to help students access teaching remotely or help for students that have already applied for hardship funding previously but need additional support. The funding can be distributed to a wide population of students, including postgraduates (whether taught or research-based) and international students. In addition, we have provided £11 million of quality-related funding provided for universities to support their PhD community, including those not funded via UK Research and Innovation.

English students are also eligible for the doctoral degree loan and can access one loan up to the maximum amount that was available when they started their course.

There are no plans to create a financial support package specifically for PhD students who are not funded through UK Research and Innovation, other than the available funding mentioned above.

■ Primary Education: Assessments

Caroline Lucas: [\[185844\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 8 March 2021 to Question 158900, how data that is collected via Reception Baseline Assessments for four year olds will be used to measure whether children have caught up on expected learning during the covid-19 outbreak; and if he will make a statement.

Nick Gibb:

The reception baseline assessment (RBA) will assess all children on entry to primary school to enable a new progress measure to be created at the end of Key Stage 2 that takes into account the progress made by pupils throughout their time in primary school.

Data from the RBA is intended to be used solely for analysis concerned with the primary accountability progress measure and will not be used to measure whether children have caught up on education lost during the COVID-19 outbreak. The new progress measure will, however, recognise more clearly schools doing well with a challenging intake, including those who have been more affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Following the RBA, teachers will receive a series of short, narrative statements on how each child performed, which will assist them in understanding where pupils are starting from and can be used to inform teaching alongside other in-school assessments.

■ Pupil Exclusions

Derek Twigg: [186131]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate he has made of the number of school age children who have been off-rolled since April 2020.

Derek Twigg: [186133]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many pupils in each local authority area have been expelled from their school in each year since 2010; and of those pupils how many have been expelled more than once.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested about pupils being off rolled is not held by the Department and cannot be estimated from current data sources.

However, the Government is clear that informal and unofficial expulsions are unlawful, and off rolling is unacceptable in any form. The Department will continue to work with Ofsted to define and tackle it. Ofsted already considers records of children taken off roll and revisions to the framework in September 2019 strengthened the focus on this. Where inspectors find off rolling, this will always be addressed in the inspection report, and where appropriate, could lead to a school's leadership being judged inadequate.

A pupil's name can lawfully be deleted from the admission register only on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8. This should be done as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

The Department publishes annual figures from the school census on the number of pupils permanently excluded from schools in England. Local authority figures for the period from 2010/11 to 2018/19 can be found in the publications listed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-exclusions>.

Robert Halfon: [186147]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many and what proportion of pupils have been off-rolled from schools in England the last academic year.

Robert Halfon: [186148]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent estimate his Department has made of the number of schools that have off-rolled pupils in England in the last academic year.

Nick Gibb:

The information requested is not held by the Department and cannot be estimated from current data sources.

The Government is clear that off rolling is unacceptable in any form. The Department will continue to work with Ofsted to define and tackle it. Ofsted already considers records of pupils taken off roll and revisions to the framework in September 2019 strengthened the focus on this. Where inspectors find off rolling, this will always be addressed in the inspection report and, where appropriate, could lead to a school's leadership being judged inadequate.

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School Day**Jim Shannon:**[\[180977\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to page 38 of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report, published in March 2021, what plans he has to extend the school day to help white working-class boys and those from disadvantaged ethnic minority backgrounds achieve their full potential.

Nick Gibb:

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities was launched to conduct a detailed, data-led examination of inequality across the entire population, and to set out a positive agenda for change. It is now right that we consider their recommendations on education in detail and assess the implications for future government policy. The Department remains committed to providing world-class education, training and care for everyone, whatever their background, and taking the action needed to address disparities.

In February 2021, we appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise how to help pupils make up their education over the course of this Parliament. The Commissioner will engage with parents, pupils, and teachers in the development of this broader approach which will examine a range of options, including time in education, to help education settings use evidence-based interventions to support their pupils to make up lost education. We shall share further details on this in due course.

As an immediate step, we have invested a further £700 million to support education recovery measures, bringing total investment in catch up to £1.7 billion. This includes tutoring, summer schools in 2021 and additional support for schools, and includes significant funding aimed at addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

■ Schools: Air Pollution

Ruth Jones:

[185486]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of schools that are located in areas with fine particulate matter over levels recommended by the World Health Organisation; and what steps he is taking to protect pupils from air pollution.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has made no such specific estimate as local authorities are responsible for air quality in their area and must ensure that it meets the standards set in local air quality action plans.

If there was concern about the air quality in a school building, it would fall to the body responsible for the school to check and establish what measures needed to be taken to improve air quality. This would generally be the local authority, academy trust or governing body.

In 2018, the Department published Building Bulletin 101 (BB101), establishing guidance for school design on ventilation, thermal comfort, and indoor air quality. This guidance sets out the World Health Organisation's air quality guidelines and Air Quality Standards Regulation 2010 for indoor air quality. BB101 requires the indoor environment of new or refurbished school buildings to be monitored by recording temperature and levels of carbon dioxide.

The Department is collaborating with other government departments and several academic institutions on air quality projects. The findings from these projects will, in due course, inform our guidance and standards for school buildings.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Robert Halfon:

[185855]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many schools have claimed Government grant funding for increased infection control and prevention measures.

Robert Halfon:

[185856]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that schools and educational care facilities are purchasing high quality disinfection products that are effective in preventing the transmission of covid-19.

Robert Halfon:

[185857]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure effective infection control protocols are in place in schools in the UK.

Robert Halfon:

[185858]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to increase training and education on cleaning and disinfection in schools and educational care facilities.

Nick Gibb:

The Department has worked closely with Public Health England (PHE) to develop guidance based on the 'system of controls' that are required in schools to effectively reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Maintaining enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, is one element of the system of controls that schools are putting in place to reduce risks.

The guidance includes information on the enhanced cleaning measures that should be in place in schools and can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-coronavirus-covid-19-operational-guidance#system-of-controls>.

PHE has also issued detailed guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>.

Implementing the system of controls in line with a wider risk assessment creates an inherently safer environment for staff and pupils. The Department continues to work with PHE to ensure that these measures are based on the latest medical and scientific advice. We have always been clear that we are committed to continuing to update these measures to ensure that we reduce risks as far as possible.

The Department continues to provide information to the sector on the guidance, and any changes to it, through regular departmental communications. We also continue to work with the sector to understand the impact of the system of controls on staff, pupils, and parents.

Whilst we do not have a grant specifically for infection control and prevention measures, we have provided additional funding to schools to help them to remain open and safe. Schools have continued to receive their core funding throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, regardless of any periods of reduced attendance, as part of the three-year increase to core funding.

Through the Exceptional Costs fund, schools were able to claim for three specific categories of additional spend between March to July 2020, including additional cleaning costs required due to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases. We have paid schools £138 million for all claims within the published scope of the fund.

The Department has also made over £100 million available to support secondary schools, colleges, and specialist settings deliver onsite testing, and in doing so, break the chains of transmission of COVID-19 in schools and colleges. The Education and Skills Funding Agency make these payments automatically and retrospectively, with no requirement to make a claim to receive the funding for Test and Trace reported testing.

■ Schools: Expenditure

Rachel Hopkins:

[186287]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 15 April 2021 to Question 179739, on Schools: Expenditure, what the average per pupil funding is for 11 to 16 year olds in England; and if he will publish that data for the latest year in which figures are available.

Nick Gibb:

Per pupil funding figures for 5–16-year-olds across England is published annually. The latest publication, from January 2021, is available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics#dataBlock-10b3bbd5-58b1-401d-9aaf-9daaa184a6df-tables>. A breakdown of the published school funding statistics for 11–16-year-olds specifically is not available.

The majority of schools' revenue funding is allocated through the schools national funding formula (NFF). As part of the NFF, a "Secondary Unit of Funding" is calculated for each local authority which determines the amount of funding allocated to local authorities in respect of secondary pupils through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). This is published annually and the most recent was published in July 2020 for the financial year 2021-22, when the average Secondary Unit of Funding was £5,934.86: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-funding-formula-tables-for-schools-and-high-needs-2021-to-2022>.

The secondary unit of funding does not include premises funding and growth funding that is allocated through the DSG, nor does it include funding through other grants such as the pupil premium. Furthermore, local authorities can set their own local funding formulae, so the amount of funding received by schools in respect of 11-16 pupils in their 2021-22 budgets may be different.

■ Schools: Gender Recognition

Tonia Antoniazzi:

[183248]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to issue national guidance to schools on how to protect the rights of (a) children experiencing gender dysphoria and (b) the peers of those children.

Nick Gibb:

We believe all children should be supported whilst growing up so they can thrive and reach their potential in a safe and respectful environment. Schools are best placed to work with pupils, parents and professional services to decide what is best for individual children.

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate against a pupil because of a characteristic protected by the Act. State-funded schools are also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Department has published guidance to support schools to fulfil their duties under the Equality Act:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf.

Our statutory guidance on Relationships, Sex and Health Education is clear that all pupils should receive teaching on LGBT content, at a timely point, during their school years: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

■ Schools: Protective Clothing

Caroline Lucas:

[185840]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish details of the review that took place over the Easter holidays to assess the evidence on whether the covid-19 advice on the wearing of face coverings in secondary schools can be eased.

Nick Gibb:

It is vital that all pupils can attend school to minimise the long-term impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on their education, wellbeing, and wider development, which is why enabling face-to-face education for all pupils remains a national priority.

To support the return to full attendance on 8 March, the Department published updated guidance for schools, which included updated advice on face coverings. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>.

As the guidance outlines, where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated, we recommend that face coverings should be worn by staff and pupils when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

Since 8 March and following an ongoing review of the available evidence and in line with public health advice, we also continue to recommend that face coverings should be worn in classrooms by staff and those in Year 7 and above unless social distancing can be maintained.

The best available scientific evidence is that, when used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of COVID-19 droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.

We have worked closely with Public Health England to consider a range of evidence, balancing both the health and educational considerations. This includes the latest public health advice, the most recent scientific evidence, as well as stakeholder intelligence gathered by the Department on the experiences of face covering use in classrooms.

The latest data on testing, outbreaks in schools and Office for National Statistics data on COVID-19 infections and population prevalence that was considered is information that is publicly available and can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/973176/Weekly_COVID-

[19 and Influenza Surveillance Graphs W12.pdfhttps://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/covid19schoolsandinfectionsurveyround2england/december2020](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/covid19schoolsandinfectionsurveyround2england/december2020)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionsurveysurvey/26march2021#age-analysis-of-the-number-of-people-who-had-covid-19>

The decision to continue with this additional measure is a cautious approach that will help limit the risk of transmission. The Department will seek to remove face coverings at the first safe opportunity given the negative impact they may have on communication in the classroom.

It is expected that face coverings will no longer be required to be worn in classrooms, or by pupils in other communal areas, at step 3 of the roadmap, which will be no earlier than 17 May. At this point, the next stage of easements, including increased social contact indoors, will be confirmed following a review of the latest data on infection and vaccination rates.

■ **Schools: St George's Day**

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has plans to ensure that schools are celebrating St. George's Day on 23 April 2021.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[180935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on requiring schools to fly the St. George's cross on St. George's Day.

Nick Gibb:

Schools are free to celebrate St George's Day, although there were no plans from the Department to ensure that they did so. This is a matter for schools to decide.

Schools play an important role in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. This involves supporting pupils to understand the society in which they grow up and develop their sense of British identity. Schools in England are free to display the national flag of the United Kingdom, or the St. George's cross, and the Department does not provide any specific guidance on these matters.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Facilities**

Sir Greg Knight: [\[185293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the availability and adequacy of education facilities for children diagnosed with autism and other special needs in each county; what plans he has to ensure that future demand for such facilities is met; and if he will make a statement.

Vicky Ford:

We are investing £300 million of capital funding in the 2021-22 financial year to support local authorities to deliver new places and improve existing provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or who require alternative provision. This funding is on top of the £365 million we have invested through the Special Provision Capital Fund from the financial years 2018-19 to 2020-21, and our continued investment in the free schools programme. We are also providing an increase in revenue funding for those children and young people with more complex needs, of nearly a quarter (24%) over 2 years, bringing the total high needs budget to more than £8 billion in the 2021-22 financial year.

The department will continue to work with local authorities to better understand future demand for SEND provision, including for children with autism, as it considers how it can best support the sector going forwards. Funding for places required in future years will be subject to the outcomes of the next government Spending Review, where we will have a chance to consider how we can best support the sector in the round.

The SEND review is looking at ways to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high quality, and integrated across education, health and care. It is also considering measures to make sure that money is being spent fairly, efficiently and effectively, and that the support available to children and young people is sustainable in the future.

■ Supply Teachers: Expenditure

Robert Halfon: [185853]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the schools budget spent on supply teachers in England in 2019-20 for which figures are available.

Nick Gibb:

The Department publishes annual income and expenditure, including on supply teachers, for local authority-maintained schools and academies.

Published schools' Consistent Financial Reporting and Academies' Accounting Returns are available at the following link: <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/Help/DataSources>.

Spending on supply teaching staff comprises the following categories: supply teaching staff, plus supply teacher insurance, plus agency supply teaching staff, minus receipts from supply teacher insurance claims.

■ T-levels: Social Mobility

Karin Smyth: [185414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of the T-level roll out for 2021-22 on social mobility in deprived areas.

Gillian Keegan:

T Levels are new, gold standard qualifications that, when fully rolled out, will boost access to high-quality technical education for thousands of young people so they can progress to the next level, whether that is getting a job, going on to further study or an apprenticeship. Designed by over 250 leading employers, T Levels will have real currency in the labour market and help more young people from all backgrounds to access skilled work.

From September 2021, over 100 providers situated across the country will deliver T Levels and we have ensured they are represented in Opportunity Areas. The rollout of T Levels will continue with all 24 subjects available by 2023. T Levels started in September 2020, so students have yet to complete their courses. The department has an evaluation programme in place to assess the impact of T Levels, which will include consideration of the impact on disadvantaged students and groups, but it will take some years to assess the full impact of the programme for disadvantaged students and for social mobility.

Universities: Students**Stephen Morgan:**[\[186011\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment he has made of the number of students who go to university from (a) Portsmouth South constituency and (b) the rest of England.

Michelle Donelan:

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) publishes data on the number of 18 year olds accepted to full-time undergraduate higher education (HE) courses in the UK by domicile and parliament constituency.

The attached table shows the number of 18 year old accepted applicants to UK HE providers, the population estimates for the number of 18 year olds and the entry rate of 18 year old accepted applicants to UK HE providers for the Portsmouth South constituency and England.

In 2020, the entry rate of 18 year old accepted applicants to UK HE providers for Portsmouth South was 26.9%, compared to 37.9% for England, a difference of 11 percentage points.

Attachments:

1. PQ_186011_table_applicants_to_higher_education [PQ 186011 - table showing 18 year old accepted applicants to higher education courses in Portsmouth South and England.pdf]

Vocational Education: Teachers**Karin Smyth:**[\[185416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take to increase the number of teachers required to deliver the measures outlined in the Skills for Jobs.

Gillian Keegan:

The reforms set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper cannot succeed without outstanding teachers and teaching. The measures announced in the Skills for Jobs white paper come with a total investment of over £65 million in financial year 2021-22, allowing us to deliver greater support for teacher recruitment, retention, and development.

As set out in the white paper, we will launch a national recruitment campaign for teachers in further education (FE) settings and will strengthen Initial Teacher Education so that it is based on clear employer-led standards. We will also continue to offer financial support for FE teacher training in priority subjects and our Taking Teaching Further programme will continue to help industry experts retrain as FE teachers.

In addition to our continuing T Level Professional Development programme, we will also increase the provision of high-quality professional development, including early career and post-COVID-19 support for online and a mixture of remote and face-to-face teaching. We will also facilitate a stronger relationship between industry and education and training providers through the introduction of a new national Workforce and Industry Exchange programme.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS**■ Assistance Animals: Travel****Sarah Olney:**[\[186197\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps is he taking to remove the internal border for assistance dog owners between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has been formally 'listed' as a 'Part 2' third country for the purposes of the EU pet travel regulations, which means that new rules apply to pet movements from Great Britain to the EU and also – under the Northern Ireland Protocol – to the non-commercial movements of pets into Northern Ireland. The health and documentary requirements for such pet travel are set out under the EU Pet Travel Regulations; there are no derogations for assistance dogs under these regulations.

We will continue to press the European Commission on securing Part 1 listed status and in regaining recognition of our freedom from the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis*, as achieving these would alleviate some of these new requirements for pet owners and assistance dog users. We meet all the animal health requirements for this, and we have one of the most rigorous pet checking regimes in Europe to protect our biosecurity.

The Government is engaging with the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) to explore means to streamline pet travel between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, recognising the high standards of animal

health that we share. Current guidance on pet travel to Northern Ireland is available on DAERA's NIDirect website. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has also written to the European Vice-President seeking to ensure that an agreement can be made to address the barriers imposed on pet travel between Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland.

We are proactively engaging with the assistance dog community and relevant stakeholders on the impacts on dog movements from Great Britain to the EU and to Northern Ireland. We will continue to work closely with assistance dog organisations to share the latest advice and guidance (in accessible formats) with their members on pet travel requirements.

■ Eggs: Sales

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[184493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to ban the sale of eggs produced from caged hens.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government is examining the future use of cages for all laying hens and I welcome the commitment from our major retailers, with positive support from our egg producers, to stop retailing eggs from enriched colony cage production systems by 2025. I am pleased to state that the UK already has a much larger free-range sector by far than any EU country, with over 50% of our hens kept in free range systems.

The UK is rightly proud of the high animal welfare standards we expect of our farmers. In examining the future use of cages, we will consider the most appropriate tools available to ensure our animal welfare objectives are achieved.

■ Fishing Vessels

Jim Shannon:

[\[184448\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many fishing enforcement vessels are staffed and recorded in UK waters.

Victoria Prentis:

Fisheries 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 Marine Management Organisation (MMO) regularly reviews levels of enforcement capacity and the best options for delivering this based on its assessment of risk and available intelligence. At present, the MMO staffs two commercial enforcement vessels, along with additional fisheries enforcement provision by the Royal Navy. There is an established commercial framework in place, through which the MMO can procure additional surveillance assets at short notice if required.

■ Gardens: Community Development

Mark Pritchard: [\[184400\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to expand community garden kitchens in urban areas to increase food sustainability.

Victoria Prentis:

Defra has committed in the 25 Year Environment Plan to introduce stronger new standards for green infrastructure and to support local authorities to assess local provision against these new standards. This includes greenspace such as community gardens. The Framework of Green Infrastructure Standards will help all local authorities, developers and communities to improve provision in their area.

Later this year, the Government will produce a Food Strategy White Paper. This will support the development of a food system that is sustainable, resilient and affordable, and provide a response to Henry Dimbleby's independent review of the food system, which is due to be published this summer.

■ Hill Farming

Tim Farron: [\[184405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the effect of the Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024 on (a) uplands and (b) hill farming businesses.

Victoria Prentis:

I recognise that the uplands and hill farming businesses face specific issues and challenges. That is why we have designed policies to allow for a managed adjustment, a seven-year transition, that will give farmers and land managers, including in upland areas time to adapt to the changes.

We published two assessments, one in 2018 and again in 2019, and we are planning to publish further analysis by autumn this year. This will analyse farm incomes and how these will change between now and 2027.

Our latest preliminary findings are consistent with previous analysis that is publicly available, and we find that uplands farmers are reliant on Direct Payments, to the extent that their Direct Payments make up essentially all of their annual profit or farm business income.

The analysis also shows that there are opportunities for upland farmers. For instance, uplands farmers currently receive a relatively high proportion of their income through environmental land management environment payments. They are therefore well placed to benefit as more public money is provided through such schemes. In designing these schemes, we know that the payment rates need to be attractive to achieve the levels of uptake and environmental outcomes we need to see as well as set at a fair rate.

There is significant potential for upland farmers to reduce costs and improve businesses practices and we are providing grants and targeted resilience support to

facilitate that, as well as investing in longer term measures such as research and development. We also anticipate rent adjustments which could benefit upland tenant farmers.

■ Incinerators

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[184484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to announce a moratorium on the incineration of waste to help meet the Government's climate objectives.

Rebecca Pow:

Waste is a devolved area of policy.

There are no plans to announce a moratorium on the incineration of waste in England.

Through the Resources and Waste Strategy we committed to monitoring residual waste treatment capacity. The Government intends to revisit waste projections to help understand future residual waste infrastructure capacity needs, taking account of waste prevention measures, our high recycling ambitions and municipal waste landfill reduction goals. This capacity analysis will also help us to further develop our preferred options for residual waste treatment as we move towards a circular economy and focus on delivering our net zero ambitions.

Dr Lisa Cameron:

[\[184485\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what the Government's policy is on waste incineration.

Rebecca Pow:

Waste is a devolved area of policy.

Government's ambition for the future of waste management in England, as set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy, is to ensure that we preserve material resources through a reduction in the generation of waste and by moving towards a circular economy. We also want to manage any residual waste in a way that maximises its value as a resource whilst minimising environmental impacts.

Our view is that waste incineration with energy recovery should not compete with greater waste prevention, re-use or recycling, however, it does play and should continue to play an important role in diverting waste from landfill and is generally the best management option for most residual waste.

The Resources and Waste Strategy also set out an ambition to increase the efficiency of energy from waste (EfW) plants, by encouraging use of the heat the plants produce and working with industry to increase the number of EfW plants that are formally recognised as achieving recovery status.

■ Meat: Consumption

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[184426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of considering the production and consumption of cellular meat as part of the National Food Strategy.

Victoria Prentis:

In 2019, the Government asked Henry Dimbleby to carry out an independent review of the food system. Part one of that review was published in July 2020 and contained recommendations in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic with chapters on trade, health and food insecurity. Part Two of the report will be published in Summer 2021 and will include a root and branch examination of the food system. The findings of the review will inform the Government's food strategy, to be set out in a Food Strategy White Paper due to be published in the 6 months following the final report.

The Food Strategy White Paper will support the development of a food system that is sustainable, resilient and supports people to live healthy lives. We recognise the importance of innovative approaches and novel technologies in this pursuit, and already have a base for the Food Strategy to build upon through the 2013 Agri-Tech Strategy and Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan which was published on Monday 30th November 2020.

■ Rabbits: Furs

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[186266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will take steps to prevent rabbit fur from being sold as a by-product of rabbit meat; and if he will make a statement.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world, which clearly reflect public attitudes to the treatment of animals.

Fur farming is a cruel practice that has been banned in England and Wales following the introduction of The Fur Farming (Prohibition) Act of 2000, and since 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Under this legislation it is an offence to keep animals solely or primarily for slaughter for the value of their fur. The Government has made clear its commitment to raising animal welfare standards now that the UK has left the EU, and we are actively considering further steps that can now be taken in relation to fur.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[186268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the value of rabbit fur, produced in the UK, in each year since 2015.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government does not hold this information centrally. Under existing domestic legislation is it an offence to keep animals solely or primarily for slaughter for the value of their fur.

Rabbits: Furs and Meat**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[186267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on the number of rabbits bred and killed in Great Britain for their (a) meat and (b) fur.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government does not collect this information. According to the RSPCA, any rabbit farming industry in the UK is fairly small-scale, with greater numbers reared in other European countries.

Rabbits: Meat Products**Kenny MacAskil:**[\[186269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the value of rabbit meat produced in the UK in each year since 2015.

Victoria Prentis:

The Government does not hold this information centrally.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**Bahrain: Political Prisoners****Brendan O'Hara:**[\[186181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the outbreak of covid-19 at Jau Prison in Bahrain, and to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' call for the release of all prisoners of conscience due to the heightened risk posed to them in detention, what representations the Government (a) has made and (b) plans to make to the Bahraini Government on the release of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience.

James Cleverly:

We regularly discuss the challenges of managing Covid-19 in prisons with senior members of the Bahraini Government. We understand there are currently no active cases of Covid within Jau Prison.

Borneo: Coronavirus**Alberto Costa:**[\[185968\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of (a) risk to travellers to Borneo during the

covid-19 pandemic, and (b) Borneo's categorisation in the international travel Traffic Light System.

Nigel Adams:

FCDO travel advice related to COVID-19 is based on the country assessments of Public Health England and the National Travel Health Network and Centre, the organisation mandated to provide health advice to British nationals travelling overseas. They judge the risks of exposure to COVID-19 in each country/territory. All FCDO travel advice pages remain under constant review to ensure they reflect the latest threat assessment to British nationals and include up-to-date information and advice.

The Government will set out in May which countries will fall into which category, as well as confirming whether international travel can resume from 17 May 2021. As the 3 countries of Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia govern different parts of Borneo, FCDO travel advice and traffic light ratings will be set out separately under each respective country.

■ **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Human Rights**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[186145\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with international counterparts on the implementation of reforms by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, including compliance with the 2009 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* on bringing the constitution and laws of those countries in line with the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; and if he will make a statement.

Wendy Morton:

Our Ambassador in Sarajevo is in constant dialogue with the Bosnian authorities and international partners to promote the reforms needed for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to achieve a prosperous and inclusive future. Our project funds focus on supporting citizen-focused reforms. BiH's implementation of the *Sejdic and Finci* set of judgments by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) is central to these discussions. Any changes to the electoral system in BiH need to implement ECtHR judgements, move the country closer to international standards and be for the benefit of all, not harden ethnic division. There must be political will, local ownership and compromise from all sides in order to find lasting and inclusive solutions. We urge the political leaders and elected representatives of BiH to work together in the best interests of their country and its people.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Coronavirus

Sam Tarry:

[[187352](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to arrange additional flights for UK nationals stranded in covid-19 red list countries to return to the UK.

Nigel Adams:

British nationals currently in red listed countries can make use of the commercial options available if they need to return to the UK. We continue to carefully monitor the situation, including flight availability. British nationals are advised to regularly check travel advice and follow local guidance until they return to the UK. The FCDO continues to offer tailored consular assistance to British nationals overseas in need 24/7.

■ British Nationals Abroad: Homicide

Ellie Reeves:

[[186205](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many British nationals were murdered abroad in each year since 2017.

Nigel Adams:

Information on the number of cases where consular officers provided assistance following a British national's death abroad through murder or manslaughter is published on GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/consular-data>) on a monthly basis by country.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Claire Hanna:

[[186283](#)]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what (a) practical assistance and (b) expertise has the Government recently offered to other countries to help the global fight against the covid-19 pandemic.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response to COVID-19. We have committed up to £1.3 billion of aid spending to counter the impact of the pandemic, and have adapted existing bilateral programmes to support communities affected in partner countries. For example, we have made a significant contribution to government-led efforts in preventing and responding to cases of COVID-19 in South Sudan, including support for infection prevention and control, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene activities. In Bangladesh, we are helping to maintain essential humanitarian services, supporting Rohingya and host communities for COVID-19 preparedness in refugee camps. We are also providing direct assistance, for example with an FCDO-funded package of 495 oxygen concentrators and 200 ventilators to support India's COVID-19 response, following the recent surge in cases there.

On technical expertise, the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (PHRST), funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and operated by Public Health England (PHE) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, is looking at studies and innovative engineering to provide treatment in low-resource settings. This is supporting the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to convene experts to discuss and progress modelling, data collection, and research with African partners.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Julian Sturdy:

[\[184433\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the Government's progress towards the Prime Minister's G7 commitment in February 2021 to collaborate globally on cutting the development time for new vaccines by two-thirds within 100 days.

Wendy Morton:

The rapid development of vaccines for COVID-19 has demonstrated the power of science, collaboration, and innovation across the public and private sectors. On 20 April, the UK Government launched a new Pandemic Preparedness Partnership (PPP), chaired by the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance, which will advise the UK G7 Presidency on how to meet the Prime Minister's ambition to slash the time for developing and deploying high quality vaccines from 300 to 100 days. The PPP is bringing together industry, international organisations, and leading experts, and met for the first time on 20 and 21 April for a two-day virtual Pandemic Preparedness Partnership Conference. The Partnership will report to leaders at June's G7 Summit in Cornwall, with a roadmap outlining the steps the G7 could take to protect people against future pandemics, including on this ambitious target for vaccine development.

This is backed by additional funding from the UK Government to support CEPI's work on global vaccine supply. The £16 million investment will fund global vaccine manufacturing capacity, and critical research and development to rapidly respond to the threat of new strains, supporting the development of new variant-specific vaccines. CEPI's work to coordinate research, development, and manufacturing of vaccines will aid efforts to have millions of vaccines available for emergency use within 100 days of a variant of concern being identified.

■ **COVAX**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[186199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Prime Minister's comments to the G7 on the 19 February 2021, what recent steps he has taken to deliver on the commitment to send the majority of any future surplus vaccines to the COVAX scheme; and what the timetable is for those donations.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to rapid, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, treatments, and tests globally. We have already contributed £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment, a mechanism to support access for over 100 countries. The Prime Minister has confirmed that the UK will share the majority of any surplus vaccines with COVAX. However, it is too early to determine how many doses of the vaccines that the UK has ordered will not be needed for the UK population. This is under constant review.

■ Developing Countries: Education**Layla Moran:**[\[186019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to his Written Statement of 21 April 2021 on UK Official Development Assistance departmental allocations 2021-22, Official Report, HCWS935, what the breakdown and allocation is of Official Development Assistance spending within the girls education budget.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary laid a statement before the House of Commons on 21 April 2021, setting out how he is directing the FCDO's aid portfolio this year. He announced that the FCDO will spend £400 million on girls' education, which will help achieve the global target to get 40 million more girls into education, and 20 million more reading in the next 5 years. FCDO will now work through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities outlined.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is reported on a calendar year basis. The FCDO National Statistics publication, 'Statistics on International Development,' next year will contain detailed breakdowns of the UK's ODA spend for 2021, including an activity level dataset. FCDO publishes regular open data through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). This operational data covers current live programmes, and will include 2021 spend once business planning is concluded. The raw data can be accessed at IATI Registry, and is shown on the Development Tracker website at <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Flags**Henry Smith:**[\[182037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if his Department will fly the Commonwealth flag from his Department's building permanently.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO UK estate flies the Commonwealth flag on the second Monday in March to celebrate Commonwealth Day and our Posts in Commonwealth countries can do so on Commonwealth Day as well where the Post has sufficient flagpoles to do so. It is not the practice to fly the flags of organisations of which the UK is a member on a permanent basis. FCDO flag policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Pay

Lisa Nandy: [\[181266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many and what proportion of officials employed by his Department receive remuneration as a result of working for an organisation or company outside of government.

Nigel Adams:

This information is not held centrally.

The Civil Service Management Code sets out, at paragraph 4.3.4, the requirement that civil servants must seek permission before accepting any outside employment which might affect their work either directly or indirectly. The applicable principles are those set out in the Business Appointment Rules. The Civil Service Management Code is published at www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-servants-terms-and-conditions. The requirements are also mirrored in the Diplomatic Service Regulations.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[181377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether any Ministers in his Department receive remuneration for paid work for organisations or companies outside of government.

Nigel Adams:

All Ministers have a responsibility to declare their interests in line with the Ministerial code. Details of this, including for FCDO Ministers, are available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/parliamentary-commissioner-for-standards/registers-of-interests/register-of-members-financial-interests/> and www.gov.uk/government/publications/list-of-ministers-interests.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[181378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if any officials within his Department receive any remuneration for paid work for organisations or companies outside of Government.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[181379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will publish his Department's internal rules on the declaration of external remunerated appointments.

Preet Kaur Gill: [\[181380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many members of the Senior Civil Service in his Department had additional remunerated appointments outside the Civil Service, by grade, as of 15 April 2021.

Preet Kaur Gill:

[181381]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) he and (b) the Permanent Secretary in his Department has written to any civil servants on external remunerated appointments since 1 April 2021.

Nigel Adams:

On 23 April, the Cabinet Secretary wrote to the Chair of the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on the management of outside interests in the Civil Service. The Committee published this letter on 26 April and it can be found online at <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/5623/documents/55584/default/>. The Cabinet Secretary's letter sets out a series of steps to improve processes. This programme of work will also take account of any recommendations that emerge from Nigel Boardman's review.

The Civil Service Management Code sets out, at paragraph 4.3.4, the requirement that civil servants must seek permission before accepting any outside employment which might affect their work either directly or indirectly. The applicable principles are those set out in the Business Appointment Rules. The Civil Service Management Code is published at www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-servants-terms-and-conditions. The Permanent Under-Secretary at the FCDO has not written to highlight this guidance specifically in April 2021.

Where the civil servant is a member of the departmental board any outside employment, as well as other relevant interests will be published as part of the Annual Report and Accounts or other transparency publication.

■ **Francis Maude Associates**

Lisa Nandy:

[181267]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether (a) he or (b) civil servants in his Department have met representatives from Francis Maude Associates in the past 2 years.

Nigel Adams:

Details of external ministerial meetings can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/fco-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-april-to-june-2020. Details of FCDO transparency returns for senior UK officials can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/pus-data.

■ **Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[186201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the 2021-22 allocation of Official Development Assistance to government departments on the UK's financial support for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary's review of ODA spend for 21/22 confirmed that Global Health remains one of the UK's top ODA priorities. The UK is a committed supporter of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, TB & Malaria. The UK is the second biggest donor to the Global Fund's 6th replenishment period. As with all the UK's global health partners, we will be working closely with the Global Fund to ensure the UK's funding is used for maximum impact on health outcomes.

■ Global Partnership for Education: Finance**Marion Fellows:**[\[186188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, if he will take steps to allocate £600 million to the Global Partnership for Education to deliver on his commitment of 12 years of quality education for all girls.

Wendy Morton:

The Prime Minister and President Kenyatta of Kenya will co-host the Global Education Summit: Financing the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in London in July 2021. No decision has yet been taken on the UK's next contribution to GPE, and details will follow in due course.

As co-hosts of the Summit, we are using all the means at our disposal to help the Global Partnership for Education secure its five-year rolling financing target of up to \$5 billion (2021-2026). A well-funded GPE will be central to delivering our two ambitious global objectives of getting 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by age 10 in the next 5 years.

■ HIV Infection: Disease Control**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:**[\[186204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the 2021-22 allocation of Official Development Assistance to government departments on the UK's bilateral international investment in the fight against HIV.

Wendy Morton:

The majority of UK investments on efforts to end the AIDS epidemic, are through support to multilateral organisations, particularly our substantial investment in the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

In recognition of the critical role that civil society organisations play in the AIDS response to address inequalities and hold governments to account we are also supporting the Robert Carr Fund. The UK is proud to be a founding member of this Fund and has committed £15 million since its start. We will make an announcement on future investments to the Fund later this year.

■ HIV Infection: Medical Treatments and Research

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[186203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the 2021-22 allocation of Official Development Assistance to government departments on the UK's participation in global HIV (a) research and (b) treatment development.

Wendy Morton:

The seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK economy has forced us to take tough but necessary decisions, including temporarily reducing the overall amount we spend on aid to 0.5 per cent of GNI. Despite this, the UK remains a development superpower, with an ODA budget on track to exceed £10 billion this year. Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) ODA will be targeted to addressing seven global challenges facing the world poorest which includes global health security and research and technology.

FCDO will now work through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities we have identified.

■ Hong Kong: British National (Overseas)

Andrew Rosindell:

[\[185808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his German counterpart on that country's decision not to recognise the new BN(O) passport for Hong Kongers.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware that the Hong Kong SAR Government recently wrote to several foreign Consulates urging them not to accept BN(O) passports for visa applications. The Hong Kong Government has no authority to dictate which passports foreign governments recognise as valid. We will continue to issue BN(O) passports, which are valid travel documents. The German Interior Ministry has confirmed that BN(O) passports continue to be recognised by the German authorities for the purposes of entry and stay in Germany under domestic regulations.

■ India: Blasphemy

Imran Ahmad Khan:

[\[184571\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the application of blasphemy laws in that country.

Nigel Adams:

India has a proud history of religious tolerance and we look to the Government of India to address concerns raised about articles in the Indian Penal Code which relate to religion. Human rights forms a regular part of our dialogue with the Government of India. On 15 March, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State

responsible for Human Rights and South Asia, discussed the situation for Christians with India's Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kishan Reddy. Our Acting High Commissioner in New Delhi also discussed UK Parliamentary interest in minorities in India with officials from India's Ministry of External Affairs on 5 January, and a senior FCDO official discussed the situation for India's religious minorities with the Indian High Commissioner on 29 December 2020

Staff in our diplomatic network across India regularly meet religious representatives and have run projects promoting minority rights. Over the last three years, they have worked with local NGOs to bring together young people of diverse faith backgrounds to work together on social action projects in their local communities and promote a culture of interfaith tolerance. This year, they supported an interfaith leadership programme for a cohort of emerging Indian faith leaders, creating an opportunity to exchange expertise on leading modern, inclusive faith communities.

■ India: Coronavirus

Claire Hanna:

[\[186276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support his Department is providing to India to help tackle the increase in covid-19 cases in that country.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has been the first country to deliver life-saving medical equipment to India at a difficult time for them in this pandemic. The UK assistance package includes ventilators and oxygen concentrators from surplus stocks. The first shipment of equipment left the UK on Sunday 25 April 2021, arriving in New Delhi in the early hours of Tuesday morning. It will be used by the Government of India to provide vital medical treatment to those suffering from COVID-19 in India. More than 600 pieces of vital medical equipment, including oxygen concentrators and ventilators, will be sent to India to support the country in its fight against COVID-19.

We stand side by side with India as a friend and partner during what is a deeply concerning time in the fight against COVID-19. The UK is working closely with the Government of India to identify further assistance we can provide in the coming days, based on their most pressing needs.

Claire Hanna:

[\[186282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department has had with the Indian Government on the provision of (a) practical assistance and (b) expertise from the UK to help in the fight against the most recent covid-19 pandemic surge in India.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has been the first country to deliver life-saving medical equipment to India at a difficult time for them in this pandemic. The UK assistance package includes ventilators and oxygen concentrators from surplus stocks. The first shipment of equipment left the UK on Sunday 25 April 2021, arriving in New Delhi in the early

hours of Tuesday morning. It will be used by the Government of India to provide vital medical treatment to those suffering from COVID-19 in India. More than 600 pieces of vital medical equipment, including oxygen concentrators and ventilators, will be sent to India to support the country in its fight against COVID-19.

We stand side by side with India as a friend and partner during what is a deeply concerning time in the fight against COVID-19. The UK is working closely with the Government of India to identify further assistance we can provide in the coming days, based on their most pressing needs.

■ **International Financing Facility for Education**

Marion Fellows:

[\[186187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what his Department's plans are for the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) initiative; and what proportion of the £300 million the UK committed to IFFEd in 2019 has been spent to date.

Wendy Morton:

We are committed to innovative means of aid financing that provide financial leverage for every pound of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) in education. The International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) is such a mechanism - that is why the Prime Minister committed £300 million towards IFFEd at the UN General Assembly in September 2019, consisting of £100 million in grant funding, and £200 million in paid-in cash and guarantees.

We await sufficient interest from other donor countries to share the fiduciary risk of this promising innovation.

■ **Iran: International Cooperation**

Tom Hunt:

[\[184554\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what progress has been made on negotiating a new international agreement restricting Iran's (a) nuclear programme, (b) ballistic missile programme and (c) financial support for terror groups.

James Cleverly:

The UK is committed to finding a diplomatic way forward that brings the US back into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), returns Iran to compliance with its commitments, and restores the benefits of the deal. Our diplomats are working hard to negotiate a solution and we welcome the constructive discussions in Vienna so far. But we have always been clear that any sustainable solution will need to address a range of issues, in particular Iran's nuclear programme but also regional security concerns, including Iran's ballistic missile programme and destabilising activity throughout the region. This includes political, financial and military support to a number of militant and proscribed groups. We are committed to engaging regional partners in any future negotiations on regional security.

Iran: Nuclear Power

Andrew Percy: [\[184417\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to refer Iran's non-compliance with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal to the United Nations Security Council.

James Cleverly:

The UN Secretary-General issues a six-monthly report on the implementation of UNSCR 2231, which underpins the JCPOA. The most recent report, the tenth, was discussed by the Security Council in December 2020. We continue to engage closely with the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council to address Iran's non-compliance and stand ready to bring the issue to the Council as necessary. We strongly urge Iran to return to compliance with its Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action commitments without delay.

Israel: Palestinians

Caroline Lucas: [\[185339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the targeting of 58 Palestinian structures and subsequent displacement of 81 people, including 42 children, by the Israeli authorities in March 2021.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises the demolition of Palestinian property with the Government of Israel. The Fourth Geneva Convention, which applies to all occupied territories, prohibits demolitions or forced evictions absent military necessity. 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.

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.

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[186193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Israeli counterpart on reports of the ill-treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli detention.

James Cleverly:

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised the issue of Palestinian children in detention on 23 February with the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention.

Marsha De Cordova:[\[186252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when he last made representations to the Government of Israel on the reports of ill-treatment of Palestinian minors and Palestinian human rights defenders in Israeli military detention.

James Cleverly:

We repeatedly call on Israel to abide by its obligations under international law and have a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation, including the treatment of Palestinian children. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children. We remain concerned about Israel's extensive use of administrative detention which, according to international law, should be used only when security makes this absolutely necessary rather than as routine practice and as a preventive rather than a punitive measure. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to the practices surrounding children in detention.

The UK is aware of the challenges facing human rights defenders (HRDs) and organisations operating in Israel and the OPTs.

The UK continues to urge the Israeli Government to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), of which the FCDO is a fervent champion everywhere. We have been clear that a strong, vibrant civil society is in Israel's own interest and have raised concerns with the Palestinian Authority about the treatment of HRDs in the West Bank. Officials from the British Embassy in Tel Aviv last raised the issue of HRDs on 23 February with the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

■ Lebanon: Overseas Aid**Anna McMorris:**[\[186208\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the reduction in overseas

development assistance in 2021-2022 on (a) the humanitarian response, (b) health, (c) poverty alleviation, (d) food security and nutrition and (e) conflict resolution in Lebanon.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO's aid budget has been allocated in line with the UK strategic objectives set out in the Integrated Review, amid the challenging financial climate of COVID. We have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world. Allocation decisions took into account a range of factors, including qualitative and quantitative analyses of draft business plans and sectoral analysis of key trends. Impact on beneficiaries of UK aid, supply partners and equalities were all considered.

Anna McMorris:

[\[186209\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when his Department plans to publish the 2021-22 official development assistance funding allocation for Lebanon.

James Cleverly:

As The Foreign Secretary set out at the International Development Committee last week, budgets would not normally be set out this early in the year. The normal process is for country allocations to be published by the Statistics for International Development. That process will not take place until 2022.

■ Middle East and North Africa: Internally Displaced People and Refugees

Anna McMorris:

[\[186217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the reduction in Official Development Assistance funding on humanitarian and health programming for refugee and internally displaced communities in the Middle East and North Africa region.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO has prioritised our reduced Overseas Development Assistance funding in the Middle East and North Africa so that the UK remains a force for good across the region against the challenging financial climate created by COVID-19. We are prioritising essential humanitarian assistance to those worst affected by conflict and COVID-19, notably in Syria and Yemen. We are continuing to focus on education and getting vulnerable girls into school and will also continue to support conflict resolution and stabilisation, open societies. Alongside our current programmes, we will also begin new programming to tackle climate change.

■ Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[186029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance his Department is providing to Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe since her sentence ended in March 2021; and for what reason a representative from the British Embassy in Iran did not attend her most recent court hearing with her.

James Cleverly:

Iran's decision to sentence Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe on further charges is totally inhumane and wholly unjustified. This government remains committed to doing all we can to secure Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's return home. We requested access to the 14 March hearing, which was refused - Iran routinely denies our requests to attend the hearings of dual British nationals, because they do not recognise them as dual British nationals.

We continue to raise Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe's case at the most senior levels in the Iranian Government and are doing all we can to bring her home as soon as possible. The Foreign Secretary regularly presses Foreign Minister Zarif for her release, most recently on 3 April, and the Prime Minister has raised this with President Rouhani, most recently on 10 March. Our Ambassador in Tehran consistently raises the subject of our detainees with the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, most recently on 27 April.

■ Nigeria: Christianity**Hilary Benn:**[\[184362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the threat to Christians following killings in Nigeria.

James Duddridge:

The UK Government condemns all violence against civilians in Nigeria, irrespective of religion. In the North East of the country, terrorist groups, including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa, continue to cause immense suffering to both Muslim and Christian communities, including during recent attacks. These groups seek to undermine the right to freedom of religion or belief by indiscriminately attacking those of all faiths who do not subscribe to their extremist views. The UK Government is providing a comprehensive package of humanitarian and stabilisation assistance to support communities affected by the conflict.

Intercommunal violence across multiple states, including in the Middle Belt, also has a devastating impact on both Christian and Muslim communities. The underlying drivers of violence are complex, and frequently relate to competition over resources and increasing criminality. On 15 February, I [Minister Duddridge] tweeted my concerns about intercommunal violence and welcomed President Buhari's renewed commitment to protect all religious and ethnic groups in the country. On 26 and 27 April I [Minister Duddridge] met with a range of Nigerian interlocutors, including Governors from some of Nigeria's northern states, and Nigerian Government representatives, including the Foreign Minister. I [Minister Duddridge] raised the need for all communities to be protected amidst increasing insecurity. The British High Commissioner also regularly raises concerns over rising insecurity across Nigeria with the Federal Government. We will continue to encourage the Nigerian Government to take urgent action to protect all communities, and to implement long-term solutions that address the root causes of violence.

■ Occupied Territories: Overseas Aid

Anna McMorris: [\[186207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the 2021-22 reduction in official development assistance on (a) the humanitarian response, (b) health, (c) poverty alleviation, (d) food security and nutrition and (e) conflict resolution in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO's aid budget has been allocated in line with the UK strategic objectives set out in the Integrated Review, amid the challenging financial climate of COVID. We have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world. Allocation decisions took into account a range of factors, including qualitative and quantitative analyses of draft business plans and sectoral analysis of key trends. Impact on beneficiaries of UK aid, supply partners and equalities were all considered.

■ Overseas Aid

Justin Madders: [\[185938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what proportion of existing projects have been reduced following the decision to reduce the official development assistance budget.

Nigel Adams:

We are currently in the process of finalising programme portfolios at a country level. Full Official Development Assistance budgets, along with final audited spend for 2020/21, will be published in the Annual Report and Accounts in due course.

Justin Madders: [\[185940\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many no-cost extensions for projects funded by the Official Development Assistance budget have been refused since December 2020.

Nigel Adams:

To date, since Dec 2020, FCDO has not refused any no cost extensions to contracts.

■ Pakistan: Counter-terrorism

Dan Jarvis: [\[186166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his department continues to fund the Counter-terrorism Associated Prosecutorial Reforms Initiative programme in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

The Counter-terrorism Associated Prosecutorial Reforms Initiative (CAPRI) programme works to improve the capacity of the police and criminal justice sector in Punjab. We remain committed to working together with the Government of Pakistan

to combat the terrorist threat and the extremism that sustains it, in a human rights compliant manner.

Dan Jarvis:

[186167]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his department continues to fund efforts to reform the prosecution of terrorism cases in Pakistan.

Nigel Adams:

The Counter-terrorism Associated Prosecutorial Reforms Initiative (CAPRI) programme worked to improve the capacity of the police and criminal justice sector in Punjab. We remain committed to working together with the Government of Pakistan to combat the terrorist threat and the extremism that sustains it, in a human rights compliant manner.

■ Robert Carr Civil Society Networks Fund

Claire Hanna:

[186277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect of the change in the level of Official Development Assistance in 2021-22 on the UK's financial support of the Robert Carr Fund.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO assesses the Robert Carr Fund annually, as we do for all our programmes, and the reviews are available on the Development Tracker at <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>

The UK is proud to be a founding member of this Fund which has done so much to reach the people most left behind by the HIV response and empower them to claim the changes they need to lead healthy and fulfilled lives. It does this by building strong networks that amplify people's voices, helping them to address harmful policies, challenge human rights abuses and shape services; all critical to helping achieve the targets in the Global AIDS Strategy 2021-26. An announcement on future support will be made at the Robert Carr Fund recommitment event later this year.

Claire Hanna:

[186278]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of the Robert Carr Fund in advancing HIV and health outcomes for inadequately served populations.

Claire Hanna:

[186279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the Government has made of the effectiveness of the Robert Carr Fund in advancing human rights of inadequately served populations.

Claire Hanna:

[186280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment the UK Government has made of merits of a fully-funded Robert Carr Fund

in supporting the achievement of the targets included in the UNAIDS Global AIDS Strategy 2021-26.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO assesses the Robert Carr Fund annually, as we do for all our programmes, and the reviews are available on the Development Tracker at <https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>

The UK is proud to be a founding member of this Fund which has done so much to reach the people most left behind by the HIV response and empower them to claim the changes they need to lead healthy and fulfilled lives. It does this by building strong networks that amplify people's voices, helping them to address harmful policies, challenge human rights abuses and shape services; all critical to helping achieve the targets in the Global AIDS Strategy 2021-26. An announcement on future support will be made at the Robert Carr Fund recommitment event later this year.

■ **South Asia: Coronavirus**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[186143]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in official development assistance on the logistics, delivery and rollout of a covid-19 vaccine in (a) Afghanistan, (b) India, (c) Nepal, (d) Pakistan and (e) Bangladesh.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines, committing £548 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), which is the international initiative to support global equitable access to vaccines, of which the UK is among the largest donors.

As the Foreign Secretary set out via Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) to Parliament, global health security remains a priority for UK aid. The FCDO will spend £1,305 million on global health, focusing on the UK's position at the forefront of the international response to COVID-19 through our commitments to COVAX, Gavi, and the WHO. One third of bilateral FCDO Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be spent in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia in support of our deeper engagement in that region. We are now working through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities outlined in the WMS.

■ **South Asia: Overseas Aid**

Yasmin Qureshi:

[185836]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect the reduction in Overseas Development Assistance on health programmes in response to the covid-19 pandemic in (a) Afghanistan, (b) India, (c) Nepal, (d) Pakistan and (e) Bangladesh.

Wendy Morton:

We have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world. In total, the FCDO will spend £1,305 million on global health. We will focus on the UK's position at the forefront of the international response to COVID-19, through our commitments to COVAX, GAVI and the WHO. As the Foreign Secretary set out via Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament, one third of FCDO bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be spent in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia, in support of our deeper engagement in the region.

The portfolio agreed by the Foreign Secretary will focus our investment and expertise on issues where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. We will now work through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities we have identified.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[185837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect the reduction in Overseas Development Assistance on humanitarian and health programming for refugee and internally displaced communities in (a) Afghanistan, (b) India, (c) Nepal, (d) Pakistan and (e) Bangladesh.

Wendy Morton:

Global health security and responding to humanitarian crises remain two of our priorities for UK aid. The FCDO will spend £906 million on humanitarian preparedness and response, with a £30 million crisis reserve to enable us to respond rapidly to new crises, and £1,305 million on global health. As the Foreign Secretary set out via Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament, one third of FCDO bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be spent in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia, in support of our deeper engagement in the region.

The portfolio agreed by the Foreign Secretary will focus our investment and expertise on issues where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. We will now work through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities we have identified.

Yasmin Qureshi:[\[186144\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the effect the reduction in Overseas Development Assistance on (a) vital programming, (b) NGO ground presence and (c) the experience of in-country staff to delivery programming in (i) Afghanistan, (ii) India, (iii) Nepal, (iv) Pakistan and (v) Bangladesh.

Nigel Adams:

We have prioritised our aid to be more strategic and remain a force for good across the world. As the Foreign Secretary set out via Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament, one third of FCDO bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) will be spent in the Indo-Pacific and South Asia, in support of our deeper engagement in the region.

The portfolio agreed by the Foreign Secretary will focus our investment and expertise on issues where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. We will now work through what this means for individual programmes, in line with the priorities we have identified. Following the move to 0.5% FCDO Ministers engaged with UK civil society, and we will continue to listen to feedback from them on the plan set out. We are monitoring the impacts on supply partners very closely. In-country staff continue to play a vital role in programme delivery, with local presence and knowledge contributing to the success of our programmes.

■ Syria and Yemen: Coronavirus

Anna McMorris:

[\[186210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reduction in official development assistance on the logistics, delivery and rollout of a covid-19 vaccine in active conflict zones in (a) northwest Syria, (b) northeast Syria and (c) Yemen.

James Cleverly:

Despite financial pressures, the UK remains a leading humanitarian donor, having committed over £3.7 billion to the Syria crisis and more than £1 billion to the Yemen responses since the conflicts began. COVID-19 continues to pose a particularly significant threat in Syria. The UK is one of the leading donors supporting UN and International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) partners to deliver vital healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene activities across Syria, all which help to mitigate the threat posed by COVID-19. UK support to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility has seen the first batch of 203,000 vaccine doses delivered to Damascus and 53,800 doses to north west Syria on 22 April.

In Yemen, in partnership with the World Bank and WHO, the UK will fund roll out costs for nearly 2 million doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine allocated to Yemen via the COVAX facility. The first batch of 360,000 doses was delivered on the 31 March.

■ Taiwan: World Health Assembly

Anthony Mangnall:

[\[185493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he will support Taiwan's attendance at the forthcoming 74th session of the World Health Assembly as an observer.

Nigel Adams:

The UK has been consistently clear that it supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations where statehood is not a prerequisite. This includes at the World Health Assembly, where Taiwan can make a valuable contribution.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Sir Paul Beresford:

[\[184350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of aligning his Department's advice on travel for cruising with current advice for the aviation sector.

Sir Paul Beresford:

[\[184351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department's travel advice against travelling on cruises will be removed for countries that are given green status under the new traffic light system.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO remains fully committed to working closely with the Department for Transport and key industry leaders following the publication of the second Global Travel Taskforce report. International cruises will restart alongside the wider restart of international travel in line with the "traffic light" system. This will be subject to continued satisfactory evidence from the domestic restart and cruising in other countries. Travel advice will continue to be informed by the latest public health risk assessments.

For now, national restrictions on international travel remain in place, including only permitting travel abroad for a limited number of reasons set out in law. Holiday travel is not included.

Caroline Nokes:

[\[184428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether Government advice against travelling on cruises will be removed for destinations that are given green status under the new traffic light system.

Nigel Adams:

The FCDO remains fully committed to working closely with the Department for Transport and key industry leaders following the publication of the second Global Travel Taskforce report. International cruises will restart alongside the wider restart of international travel, in line with the "traffic light" system. This will be subject to continued satisfactory evidence from the domestic restart and cruising in other countries. Travel advice will continue to be informed by the latest public health risk assessments.

For now, national restrictions on international travel remain in place, including only permitting travel abroad for a limited number of reasons set out in law. Holiday travel is not included.

■ UNAIDS

Lloyd Russell-Moyle:

[\[186202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the 2021-22 allocation of Official

Development Assistance to government departments on the UK's financial support for UNAIDS.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is a long-standing, committed supporter of UNAIDS which plays a vital role in tackling HIV/ Aids around the world. In 21/22 the UK will provide £2.5 million to UNAIDS. As with all the FCDO's ODA programmes, we will be working closely with UNAIDS to ensure the UK's funding is used for maximum impact on health outcomes.

■ **West Bank: Demolition**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[185340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many UK-funded humanitarian aid structures in the West Bank including East Jerusalem have been demolished or seized by the Israeli authorities since 1 January 2020.

James Cleverly:

The UK regularly raises the demolition of Palestinian property with the Government of Israel, including over the repeated confiscation and demolition of donor-funded assistance and structures at Humsa al Bqai'a. We continue to monitor the situation in Humsa al Bqai'a closely. Officials from the British Consulate General in Jerusalem most recently visited on 16 February. UK and European UN Security Council members delivered a joint statement on 25 February, calling for unimpeded access for the delivery of vital humanitarian aid to the community. The UK Ambassador alongside European Ambassadors urged an end to demolitions in Humsa Al-Baqai'a in a meeting with Israeli authorities on 25 February. There have been no further demolitions or confiscations in the community since 22 February.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ **Air Pollution**

Geraint Davies:

[\[185270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that health care professionals communicate the risks of air pollution to their patients.

Ruth Jones:

[\[185476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to communicate the effects of air pollution on health to patients and their carers.

Ruth Jones:

[\[185477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that air pollution and its health effects are covered in (a) undergraduate and (b) postgraduate level medical education.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: The Department continues to engage with organisations such as Health Education England and the Royal Colleges to ensure that healthcare professionals are equipped to provide information and advice to those vulnerable to the health impacts of air pollution. The Chief Medical Officer has also discussed this matter with the Royal Colleges during a recent meeting. This will allow patients and their carers to take steps to reduce their exposure to air pollution and give them greater power to manage their condition.

The NHS Long Term Plan committed to improve outcomes asthma outcomes for children and young people. The Children and Young People's Transformation Programme has asked local systems to prioritise local improvements in asthma care. This will include supporting clinicians to discuss the short and long-term adverse effects of air pollution in children with asthma and any mitigation strategies.

■ Bereavement Counselling: Coronavirus**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[184475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on bereavement services in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England; and what steps are being taken across Government to support (i) bereavement services and (ii) people bereaved during the pandemic.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: The Government recognises that the effects of COVID-19 have increased the demand on bereavement services across England. Since March 2020, the Government has provided over £10.2 million to mental health charities across England, including bereavement support charities, to support adults and children struggling with their mental wellbeing due to the impact of COVID-19.

We will continue to work closely with bereavement services to ensure support is available and assess what is needed to provide further support during this difficult time, so that people bereaved during the pandemic receive the support they need.

■ Blood: Contamination**Jim Shannon:**[\[185359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his timeframe is for timescale for the allocation of increased payments to victims of the contaminated blood scandal.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

We anticipate that increases to payments will be made by the end of the calendar year.

■ Brain: Tumours

Alex Sobel:

[\[179487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the progress made on (a) preventing and (b) treating all types of brain tumours.

Jo Churchill:

The Government, through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), announced £40 million of funding over five years for brain tumour research as part of the Tessa Jowell Mission. This funding will help the Tessa Jowell Centres of Excellence to develop a one-year curriculum to train specialist brain tumour oncologists. The NIHR is also collaborating with key medical research charities to bring together industry and researchers and ensure that patients continue to benefit from charity-funded research.

The NIHR is also engaging with UK Research and Innovation colleagues, to maximise the effectiveness of Government budgets, in generating and translating these new scientific discoveries as into new treatments and diagnostics for patients. A 2018 review of evidence suggested that approximately 2.5% of brain and central nervous system cancers are attributable to modifiable causes. The majority of these are attributed to excess weight.

Public Health England supports local authorities and the National Health Service to commission weight management services that are based on and align with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidance for weight management. These types of activities may help prevent brain tumours attributable to modifiable causes.

Treatment decisions for brain tumours should always be made by doctors based on a patient's individual clinical needs and preferences. Brain tumours can be treated using a number of treatment modalities, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, as appropriate to the tumour type, size and position. These treatments fall within the scope of NHS England direct commissioning responsibilities for specialised services.

■ BSL Health Access: Finance

Hilary Benn:

[\[178825\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS England will continue to fund BSL Health Access; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned a rapid review into access to British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation in the National Health Service which is near completion.

All NHS providers must comply with the public sector equality duty set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Accessible Information Standard to ensure that deaf

people who wish to communicate using BSL can do so. NHS England and NHS Improvement have extended access to BSL interpretation of their 111 service via Interpreter Now.

■ Cerebral Palsy: Databases

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[187250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if the Government will use the digitization of the red book to facilitate the creation of a national cerebral palsy register by April 2023.

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[187251\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will use the digitisation of the red book from April 2023 to improve data collection on babies and children with (a) cerebral palsy and (b) other neuro disabilities.

Helen Whately:

The Personal Child Health Record is constantly under review, overseen by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. NHS England has advised that there are currently no plans to establish a national register of children with cerebral palsy. NHS England and NHS Improvement will be meeting in due course to consider the recommendations to improve early detection and treatment pathways for cerebral palsy set out in the report, 'Early identification, intervention and pathways of care of infants and young children with cerebral palsy: The case for reform and investment', published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cerebral Palsy in March 2021.

■ Children: Anxiety

Sir Mark Hendrick: [\[185282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what long-term support his Department plans to provide to children that suffer from social anxiety.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government's £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme has supported education staff to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a result of COVID-19.

In the longer term, mental health support teams are being deployed in schools and colleges to support the mental health needs of children and young people in primary, secondary and further education and provide early intervention on some mental health and emotional wellbeing issues, such as mild to moderate anxiety.

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[176000\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 167938, on Coronavirus: Screening, what assessment he has

made of potential effect on the rate of transmission of covid-19 in early years settings of not making that assessment.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[176001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 March 2021 to Question 167938, on Coronavirus: Screening, what estimate has been made of the number of additional covid-19 cases which may arise from the decision to not provide testing.

Jo Churchill:

Due to the number of analytical assumptions that would be required, no estimate of the number of additional cases that may arise from not testing in early years settings has been made. Testing alone does not reduce the chains of transmission and we have provided extensive guidance to the early years sector to minimise the risk of transmission.

Serious COVID-19 related illness is extremely rare in young children and the transmission from children to staff and households in those settings is likely to be less frequent. Testing has always been available in early years and nursery settings. Early years staff, as critical workers, have had priority access to polymerase chain reaction testing since April 2020, if they develop symptoms. Regular asymptomatic testing was periodically provided in January and March 2021 for the workforce in all state-maintained, private, voluntary and independent nurseries as well as childminders. Staff who have not been able to access this testing have been able to collect lateral flow device tests through the community testing programme.

Justin Madders:

[\[184497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 179196 on Coronavirus: Screening, what the names of the companies are who (a) are responsible for the operation and (b) have legal ownership of the (i) 328 mobile screening units in service and (ii) 60 mobile screening units in reserve.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: England's mobile testing units contracted directly by NHS Test and Trace are operated by a number of service management providers. These are Mitie, Serco, G4S Sodexo and Levy. NHS Test and Trace has contracted LeasePlan to manage the leasing arrangement for the mobile testing units and contracts the units directly from them.

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[186028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to minimise the time taken to receive PCR covid-19 test results.

Jo Churchill:

Almost all in-person polymerase chain reaction test results are received the day after the test is taken - 98.6% for week 8 to 14 April. This improvement in turnaround times has been a result of continued focus on operational improvements, including the use of robotics.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[137117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations his Department has received on potential liability relating to patients who receive a first dose of the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine, and who have their second dose postponed or cancelled.

Nadhim Zahawi:

A search of the Department's correspondence database showed that more than 11,600 cases were received relating to COVID-19 vaccines, as of 1 April. However, information relating to the number of cases on this specific issue could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Helen Hayes:

[\[179302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of guidance issued by his Department to unpaid carers on how to prove eligibility for covid-19 vaccinations at vaccination centres; and what steps he is taking to ensure that unpaid carers receive clear guidance on proving eligibility in advance of vaccination appointments.

Nadhim Zahawi:

Unpaid carers are not required to prove their eligibility for COVID-19 vaccinations. This is made clear in the COVID-19 vaccine deployment programme unpaid carers Standard Operating Procedure which states that "A person may be asked to prove their identity for the purpose of vaccination but not to prove their status as an unpaid carer. For example, unpaid carers will not be required to provide proof of receipt or entitlement to a carer's allowance".

Daisy Cooper:

[\[179572\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the (a) MHRA and (b) JCVI have plans to examine the study undertaken by Pfizer on the safety and efficacy of covid-19 vaccinations for children.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: The Pfizer study is not being conducted in the United Kingdom, therefore the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) currently do not have any data on the study. The MHRA will review any submission to allow vaccination of children if and when it is received from Pfizer. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation will be examining the study undertaken by Pfizer on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccinations for children in due course.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[183101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2021 to Question 154863 on Coronavirus: Vaccination, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including Registered Public Service Interpreters in the

list of occupations the Government classes as key workers for the purposes of priority access to covid-19 vaccination.

Nadhim Zahawi:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: Registered Public Service Interpreters working in healthcare settings are eligible for vaccination as frontline healthcare workers in line with the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's advice. Registered Public Service Interpreters working in non-healthcare settings will be prioritised for vaccination according to their age and clinical risk, along with the rest of the population. They will not be prioritised based on their occupation.

Holly Lynch:

[\[186189\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many women under the age of 30 have received the Oxford/AstraZeneca covid-19 vaccination to date.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The information is not currently held centrally held in the format requested.

■ **Criminal Proceedings: Females**

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[181222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to page 10 of the Liaison and Diversion Standard Service Specification 2019, published on 20th November 2019, what steps he is taking to monitor adherence with the commitments for all services to (a) develop a gender specific female pathway to holistically address the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system, (b) nominate a dedicated female practitioner and (c) offer all females who come into custody a choice of gender for their practitioner or support time recovery worker who will provide a gender sensitive approach to screening and support effective onward referrals to gender specific services.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Dedicated female practitioner leads were nominated for each Liaison and Diversion Service in 2018. In 2019 self-report questionnaires were issued to all Liaison and Diversion Female Pathway Leads to assess progress made against developing effective female pathways. Having analysed the returns, bespoke advice was offered to providers.

In November 2020 NHS England delivered a virtual Maternal and Perinatal Pathway Workshop to commissioners and providers of Liaison and Diversion services. NHS England regional Health and Justice commissioning teams monitor Liaison and Diversion providers performance against the service specification requirements to ensure that they are delivering a gender specific approach within Liaison and Diversion Services and that they have effective pathways in place for onward referrals to gender specific community based services.

■ Dental Services: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[183164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support dental services in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England during the covid-19 outbreak.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: Dental practices throughout England have been able to open for face to face dental care from 8 June 2020, including 32 general dental practices in Coventry. A personal protective equipment (PPE) portal is available to provide National Health Service dental and orthodontic providers with critical COVID-19 PPE free of charge.

NHS dentists throughout the country have been asked to maximise safe throughput to meet as many prioritised needs as possible. The revised unit of dental activity threshold has been set at 60% and the unit of orthodontic activity threshold has been set at 80% for full payment of the NHS contractual value, based on data that indicates the capacity practices are safely able to achieve.

As usual, where a practice under-delivers by up to 4%, they are able to carry this forward into the next financial year. Dental practices are also able to deliver less than 60% cumulative dental activity and 80% orthodontic activity with a reduced level of clawback. NHS commissioners have the discretion to make exceptions, for instance in cases where a dental practice has been impacted by staff being required to self-isolate.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Disclosure of Information

Wera Hobhouse:

[\[183236\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has written guidance on cost limits to the public purse on legal proceedings over whistleblowers.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

The Government does not issue any specific written guidance on cost limits on legal proceedings over whistleblowers.

■ Dermatology: Out-patients

James Wild:

[\[179618\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to NHS Digital's publication on Hospital Outpatient Activity 2019-20, how many patients with (a) psoriasis and (b) atopic dermatitis attended outpatient appointments in (i) England and (ii) each commissioning region.

Jo Churchill:

The information is not available in the format requested.

■ Emergency Calls

Justin Madders: [\[186182\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what mapping programmes 999 call centres have access to in order to clarify the location of emergency reports.

Edward Argar:

Ambulance emergency operations centres use mapping technology within their computer aided despatch system. Information from ordnance survey, national databases such as the Royal Mail and local intelligence are held on a gazetteer. In addition, all English ambulance services use What3Words which is an application which has mapped every three metre square location to a unique combination of three words. These three words can be provided by the caller to help enable ambulance services to locate the incident.

■ Epilepsy: Death

Mr Ben Bradshaw: [\[178742\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish data on epilepsy deaths in 2020.

Helen Whately:

Data on deaths from epilepsy is published by the Office for National Statistics.

■ Food: Advertising

Bob Blackman: [\[180955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential for a distortion in competition between aggregators and other food delivery businesses as a result of the proposed restrictions on the online advertising of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar.

Jo Churchill:

In addition to our 2019 and 2020 consultations on further advertising restrictions for high fat, salt and sugar products, we have engaged with stakeholders from all sectors throughout this process, including aggregators and other food delivery businesses. We have heard how the proposals could impact different businesses and in the 2020 consultation we asked whether our proposal for a total online restriction would confer a competitive advantage to any particular operator or segment of the online advertising environment. These views have been taken into account whilst developing the final policy position which will be outlined in our consultation response and final impact assessment due to be published later this year.

Bob Blackman: [\[180957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with industry and business on the proposed online ban on advertising food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt; and if he will meet representatives from the takeaway pizza industry to discuss the effect of those proposals on that industry.

Jo Churchill:

The Department has ongoing discussions with the food and drink industry and other stakeholders on the proposed introduction of restrictions on the online advertising of products high in fat, salt and sugar, including through stakeholder engagement to assist businesses in responding to the consultation. The takeaway pizza industry has been included in these discussions through their industry bodies and as individual companies.

Food: Marketing**Craig Whittaker:**[\[179006\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to ensure adequate opportunity for parliamentary scrutiny of (a) proposed restrictions on promotion and placement of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar and (b) advertising restrictions on those products in the context of the differing proposed legislative vehicles for those policies.

Craig Whittaker:[\[179007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason his Department's Tackling obesity strategy is using primary and secondary legislation to introduce proposed restrictions on advertising of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar, and promotion and placement of those products, respectively.

Ben Bradley:[\[179491\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to ensure opportunities for parliamentary scrutiny of the proposed restrictions on the (a) promotion and placement of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar that will be introduced as secondary legislation under the Food Safety Act 1990 and (b) advertising of those products that will be introduced in the Health and Care Bill.

Ben Bradley:[\[179492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's Tackling obesity strategy published in July 2020, for what reason restrictions on the promotion and placement of products that are high in fat, salt and sugar proposed in that strategy are (a) set out separately from the proposed restrictions on advertising of those products and (b) not contained in the Health and Care Bill.

Jo Churchill:

We have been careful to consider the views of stakeholders and experts as we developed our plans for implementing the healthy weight strategy, including restrictions on advertising and promotions. This process will continue as these measures pass through Parliament ensuring there is adequate time for scrutiny. Different legislative approaches being pursued reflect the current legislative framework and implementation routes available to the Government. For the promotions restrictions, we intend to use powers in the Food Safety Act (FSA) 1990

to lay secondary legislation before Parliament by mid-2021. The statutory instrument will be subject to the affirmative parliamentary procedure.

Subject to the outcome of the consultations on further advertising restrictions on TV and online, we intend to legislate through the Health and Care Bill. For online advertising restrictions primary legislation has to be used because there is no existing legislation on which to build. The decision was taken that the TV aspect should also be implemented through primary legislation because the two policies are closely aligned.

■ Health Services: Learning Disability

Gareth Thomas: [\[178774\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the covid-19 outbreak on the ability of people with learning disabilities to receive annual health checks; and if he will make a statement.

Helen Whately:

The delivery of annual health checks for people with a learning disability remains a priority for the National Health Service. During the pandemic there has been regular communication and guidance to local systems and general practitioner practices to support national expectations and requirements. For the rolling 12 month period to the end of December 2020, 167,919 annual health checks took place, compared with 165,326 for the same 12 month period to the end of December 2019.

■ Health Services: Staff

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[184487\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is working with the providers of discount schemes for the health service and carer workforce to ensure that all eligible staff are able participate in those schemes.

Helen Whately:

The Department does not currently work directly with providers of discount schemes. However, individual employers are free to develop their local reward offer through discount schemes with providers of their choice.

■ Health: Disadvantaged

Karin Smyth: [\[185419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the backlog of care caused by the covid-19 pandemic on health inequalities; and what steps he is taking to tackle those health inequalities.

Jo Churchill:

We are continuing to monitor and address the effect of the backlog of care caused by the pandemic on health inequalities. NHS England has committed to inclusive

recovery in its 'Implementing phase 3 of the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic' published in July 2020. The National Health Service has set eight actions to reduce inequalities in its restoration of services, including reporting on providing services to the 20% poorest neighbourhoods and black and Asian patients, which are available at the following link:

https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/C0716_Implementing-phase-3-v1.1.pdf

Karin Smyth:

[185422]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of the Health Foundation report, Build Back Fairer: The Covid-19 Marmot Review, that health was deteriorating, life expectancy stalling and health inequalities widening over the last decade and that this impacted case fatality ratios of covid-19 on the poorest in society.

Karin Smyth:

[185423]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Health Foundation's report, Build back fairer: the covid-19 Marmot review, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the links between (a) poverty and (b) higher covid-19 mortality rates; and what steps he is taking to tackle that matter.

Jo Churchill:

We are determined to address the long-standing inequalities that exist in many areas. NHS England has committed to inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the National Health Service has set eight actions to reduce inequalities in its restoration of services including reporting on providing services to the 20% poorest neighbourhoods.

Regular discussions continue to take place with Cabinet colleagues. The Minister for Equalities (Kemi Badenoch MP) is leading work to take forward the response to tackle COVID-19 disparities experienced by individuals from an ethnic minority background. There is also wider work underway across Government to consider the impact the virus has had on other groups, such as disabled people.

■ Healthy Start Scheme

Christina Rees:

[181079]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out his timetable for the roll-out of a digital pre-paid card scheme to replace paper Healthy Start Vouchers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority are leading the work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme on behalf of the Department to facilitate families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits. The NHS Business Service Authority will provide all new users applying to the digital scheme and all existing users every opportunity to transition to pre-paid cards by 31 October 2021.

Christina Rees:

[\[181080\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what pilots are currently underway in connection with the Government's plans to replace paper Healthy Start Vouchers with digital cards.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority is leading the work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme, on behalf of Department, to make it easier for families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits.

The NHS Business Services Authority is running a private pilot in Tower Hamlets. This group will be the first to transition to digital pre-paid cards.

Alex Norris:

[\[181094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's timeframe is for introducing digital cards to replace paper Healthy Start Vouchers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 19 April 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority are leading the work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme on behalf of the Department, to facilitate families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits. The NHS Business Services Authority will provide all new users applying to the digital scheme and all existing users every opportunity to transition to pre-paid cards by 31 October 2021.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[183062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many external suppliers his Department is working with on the development of a digital card scheme to replace paper Healthy Start Vouchers.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority are leading work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme, on behalf of the Department, to make it easier for families to apply for and use Healthy Start.

The NHS Business Services Authority has a contract with Xerox to provide pre-paid cards for the new Healthy Start service, with certain elements provided by Allpay. The new card is branded with the National Health Service logo.

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[183063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of replacing the existing paper Healthy Start Voucher scheme with a digital card version.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: The NHS Business Services Authority are leading work to digitise the Healthy Start scheme, to facilitate families to apply for, receive and use Healthy Start benefits.

There will be several benefits achieved with the move to a fully digitised system which include greater flexibility to individual families by removing the requirement for the full value to be spent in a single transaction, which is currently the case with paper vouchers and a reduction in the stigma associated with paper vouchers.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[187154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the overall percentage uptake was of Healthy Start Vouchers by people eligible in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

Jo Churchill:

The following table shows the percentage uptake of Healthy Start vouchers by those who were eligible for each four-week cycle period over the last 12 months for which data is available.

CYCLE	START DATE	END DATE	PERCENTAGE UPTAKE
Cycle 219	3 February 2020	1 March 2020	53.7%
Cycle 220	2 March 2020	29 March 2020	53.5%
Cycle 221	1 April 2020	26 April 2020	53.7%
Cycle 222	27 April 2020	24 May 2020	53.1%
Cycle 223	25 May 2020	21 June 2020	48.0%
Cycle 224	22 June 2020	19 July 2020	47.8%
Cycle 225	20 July 2020	16 August 2020	48.6%
Cycle 226	17 August 2020	13 September 2020	47.3%
Cycle 227	14 September 2020	11 October 2020	52.0%
Cycle 228	12 October 2020	8 November 2020	50.9%
Cycle 229	9 November 2020	6 December 2020	50.7%
Cycle 230	7 December 2020	3 January 2021	51.6%
Cycle 231	4 January 2021	31 January 2021	52.5%
Cycle 232	1 February 2021	28 February 2021	54.4%

■ Industrial Waste: Health Hazards

Rosie Cooper: [\[184399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the effect on health of exposure to industrial waste; and what steps the Government is taking to minimise exposure to potential ingestion of contaminated industrial waste.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly discusses a broad range of health issues with Cabinet colleagues. The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are the lead Government department for contaminated industrial waste and consult with experts on matters related to ingestion.

■ Intensive Care

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[179326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of funding mental health support for ICU survivors to ensure they can be emotionally supported through rehabilitation.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [\[179327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to increase access to mental health support services for ICU survivors; and whether he has assessed the potential merits of working with local authorities and local health services to help ICU survivors' rehabilitation via peer support groups.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

In March, we published the Mental Health Recovery Action Plan, with a one-off targeted investment of £500 million to ensure that we have the right support in place over the coming year. This plan outlines our approach to support groups which have been most impacted by the pandemic including expanding capacity of services to respond to the growing number of individuals who may need clinical support as a result of their treatment in an intensive care unit (ICU). For example, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies services, which offer confidential treatment of conditions such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) will expand, supporting 1.6 million more people to access services in 2021/22, backed by an additional £38 million.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also invested £10 million to set up specialist 'long' COVID-19 assessment services in every area across England to assess the physical and mental health needs of patients, including those who have been treated in an ICU. This includes psychological assessments and referral if someone is suffering from mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety or PTSD. No specific assessment has been made of providing peer support groups with

local services. However, expanding peer support is a key part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

■ **Kidney Diseases: Health Services**

Dan Jarvis:

[\[186168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the number of (a) social workers and (b) psychologists employed in kidney units.

Helen Whately:

We recognise the importance of social workers as a core professional group in adult and children's social care and are committed to funding social work education, training, recruitment and retention, ensuring we have enough social workers with the right skills, knowledge and values to support workforce requirements across the range of setting these staff may work in. We continue to provide financial support to students to qualify as social workers, through the £58.5 million Social Work Bursary and £20 million Education Support Grant to deliver practice placements each year.

In line with the NHS Long Term Plan, Health Education England is intending to expand the number of clinical psychology training places by at least 25%, which will in turn, increase the pool of clinical psychologists that could be drawn into specialisms such as kidney units.

■ **Medical Treatments**

Henry Smith:

[\[185850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress he has made on the launch and implementation of the Innovative Medicines Fund; and if he will make a statement.

Jo Churchill:

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence are developing proposals for the operation of the Innovative Medicines Fund. Timescales for a public engagement exercise and implementation of the Fund will be confirmed in due course.

Henry Smith:

[\[185851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his Department has had with (a) NICE and (b) NHS England and NHS Improvement on setting levels of ambition in the NICE Methods Review.

Jo Churchill:

Departmental Ministers and officials regularly discuss a range of matters with colleagues in the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and NHS England and NHS Improvement, including the NICE methods review. However, NICE is an independent body and is therefore responsible for its own methods and processes.

NICE is currently engaging with stakeholders and exploring options. However it is too soon to comment on the potential outcomes and any changes to its methods.

■ Medicare Products

Bill Esterson: [186155]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when the contracts were awarded to supply NHS PPE with Medicare Products Ltd and when those contracts are due to expire.

Jo Churchill:

The Department does not hold any contracts with Medicare Products Ltd. Medicare Products Ltd is on a NHS Supply Chain framework contract for the supply of examination and surgical gloves into the National Health Service. The Contract Award Notice for this framework contract, which lists Medicare Products Ltd amongst the other suppliers, is available at the following link:

<https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:445390-2019:TEXT:EN:HTML>

This framework contract started on 30 March 2020 and ends on 29 March 2022. There is an option to extend for an additional 24 months.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [183103]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 8 January 2021 on support for dentists purchasing ventilation systems, reference MR/ZA55081.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 22 April 2021]: We replied to the hon. Member on 27 April 2021.

Justin Madders: [186185]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Ellesmere Port and Neston of 7 October 2020 on hidden disabilities.

Jo Churchill:

We replied to the hon. Member on 27 April 2021.

■ Mental Health Services: Expenditure

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan: [179325]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a breakdown of spending before 31 March 2021 under the £1.4 billion Future in Mind strategy.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

Funding under the Future in Mind strategy has been added to clinical commissioning groups' (CCGs) baseline allocations. Spend by CCGs, as well as total spend nationally and regionally, on mental health services is published annually in the NHS

Mental Health Dashboard Quarter 4 publication. This will include the funding from the £1.4 billion Future in Mind strategy. The Dashboard covering 2020/21 is expected to be published in August 2021.

■ Midwives

Marsha De Cordova: [\[179521\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made on implementing the continuity of care model of midwifery for women (a) of Black and Asian ethnic backgrounds and (b) living in the most deprived decile lower layer super output areas.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[179522\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of new mothers from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds was offered the continuity of care midwifery model in (a) 2019-20 and (b) 2020-21.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 15 April 2021]: NHS England and NHS Improvement's latest survey of 108 trusts indicated that in October 2020, services had continuity of carer teams in place to offer continuity to 15.9% of women. That represents 2,322 midwives offering continuity of care to an estimated 94,000 women. Of these teams, over 60% or 214 were reported as being placed in areas of deprivation and approximately half or 165 in areas with high proportions of black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups.

Information on the proportion of new mothers from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds offered continuity of carer in 2019-20 and 2020-21 is not available. NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with trusts to improve the quality of data recorded in maternity information systems, so provision of continuity of carer can be evidenced nationally from routine care records of all women, including those that are of black, Asian and mixed ethnic groups, or living in deprived areas.

■ Motor Neurone Disease: Research

Charlotte Nichols: [\[186275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will increase the allocation of funding from the public purse for motor neurone disease research to above £5 million per year.

Edward Argar:

Over the past five years, the Government has spent a total of £55 million on motor neurone disease (MND) research. In 2019/20, the Department, through the National Institute for Health Research, spent £2.7 million on MND research. Additionally, UK Research and Innovation, through the Medical Research Council, spent £13.4 million on MND research in 2019/20. We are currently working on ways to significantly boost further research on dementia and neurodegeneration, including MND.

■ Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome

Stella Creasy: [\[185870\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients who have been prescribed anti-psychotic drugs who go on to develop Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome (NMS); and what information he holds on the number of people whose autopsy revealed NMS as a cause of death and who had not received a diagnosis for that disorder.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 27 April 2021]: The information requested is not held.

■ NHS Test and Trace

Navendu Mishra: [\[181148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2021 to Question 140313, which (a) public and (b) private organisations have received contracts relating to NHS test and trace.

Navendu Mishra: [\[181149\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2021 to Question 140313, what the value was of each of the 217 contracts awarded to public and private companies.

Navendu Mishra: [\[181150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 24 March 2021 to Question 140313, how many contracts have been awarded relating to test and trace since 18 January 2021.

Jo Churchill:

Details of NHS Test and Trace contract awards, including the value, are published on the Government's Contracts Finder site. We have Memorandums of Understanding with public sector organisations, which set out the working arrangements between the Test and Trace programme and those organisations.

Since 18 January 2021, 266 contracts relating to NHS Test and Trace have been awarded.

■ NHS: Coronavirus

Dame Diana Johnson: [\[185322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to support NHS staff who contracted covid-19 while working and who are now unable to work as a result of developing long covid.

Helen Whately:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: For National Health Service staff on national terms and conditions, sick pay support already provides up to six months full pay, followed by up to six months half pay depending on length of service. In addition, in March

2020 we introduced temporary COVID-19 full sick pay for NHS staff, subject to regular review, providing an additional level of support.

Staff experiencing the symptoms of 'long' COVID-19 will also be supported through NHS England and NHS Improvement's 5-point plan which provides support for patients experiencing long-term effects of COVID-19. Further information on the plan is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/post-covid-syndrome-long-covid/>

■ NHS: Private Sector

Rachael Maskell: [184505]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much his Department has spent on using private hospital facilities and clinics for additional care capacity for (a) cancer care, (b) elective surgery and (c) other procedures during the covid-19 outbreak.

Edward Argar:

Total actual costs are expected to be made available by the autumn, subject to contracts being reconciled by both NHS England and NHS Improvement and the independent sector.

Rachael Maskell: [184506]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of private hospital beds were used as a result of providing additional capacity due to the covid-19 outbreak in the last 12 months.

Edward Argar:

This information is not held in the format requested. The contracts entered into by NHS England with independent sector were for the organisational capability of the hospital providers and for clinical services delivered, not the number of beds to be used.

■ NHS: Protective Clothing

Dan Carden: [186007]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure the adequacy of the personal protective equipment (a) stockpile and (b) supply chain.

Jo Churchill:

We have significantly strengthened and diversified our supply chains for personal protective equipment (PPE) by looking to new suppliers abroad as well as boosting United Kingdom manufacturing capability, which has helped build resilience. UK-made supply comprised 82% of the expected demand for PPE in England for the period 1 December 2020 to 28 February 2021, not including gloves, which were explicitly excluded from the September target.

We have almost 32 billion items of PPE on order, the majority of which has been delivered or en route. Since February 2020, the Department has distributed over 10.4 billion items of PPE, predominantly for use by health and social care services in England and by December 2020 we had built a four-month stockpile of all COVID-19 critical PPE. Many millions of items of PPE are now distributed through our PPE portal, which means primary and social care providers are able to order PPE to meet all their COVID-19 PPE needs until the end of March 2022, free of charge. We are confident we have secured enough PPE for the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and that we have the processes and logistics in place to distribute PPE to where it is needed.

Bill Esterson:

[\[186156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps were taken to ensure that modern slavery was not part of the working practices of (a) Ansell Ltd, (b) Supermax Healthcare Ltd, (c) Aurelia Ltd, (d) Unispace Global Ltd and (e) Medicare Products Ltd when awarding contracts to supply the NHS with PPE.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's guidance advises public sector contracting authorities on how to assess suppliers in terms of mitigating the risk of modern slavery. Contracts are normally placed in line with Departmental terms and conditions which include clauses requiring Good Industry Practice to ensure that there is no slavery or human trafficking in supply chains. Suppliers appointed to NHS Supply Chain frameworks must comply with the Labour Standards Assurance System or they can be removed from consideration for future opportunities.

The Department takes all allegations of modern slavery very seriously. Throughout the response to the pandemic the Department of Health and Social Care has engaged with the Home Office and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office regarding modern slavery issues. In the event that allegations of modern slavery are substantiated in relation to a Departmental supplier we will consider all available options. There have been no cases of this to date.

■ Nurses: Recruitment

Lee Anderson:

[\[186259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what progress the Government has made on recruiting additional nurses.

Helen Whately:

We are on target to deliver 50,000 more nurses by the end of this Parliament. The latest published NHS Digital statistics show the number of nurses has increased by almost 10,900 between January 2020 and January 2021, excluding health visitors and midwives.

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[187159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the recruitment of nurses.

Helen Whately:

We are on target to deliver 50,000 more nurses by the end of this Parliament.

The commitment is underpinned by a robust delivery programme which will be achieved through increased domestic recruitment, increased international recruitment and improved retention.

■ **Operose Health: Greater London**

Feryal Clark:

[\[185501\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 30 March 2021 to Question 173161 on General Practitioners: Centene, if he will reconsider his Department's decision to allow Operose Health Ltd to hold contracts to run GP surgeries (a) in general and (b) in north central London; and what assessment he made of the effect of the holding of those contracts by Operose Health Ltd on the pay and conditions of people who work in GP surgeries and in the NHS.

Jo Churchill:

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.

No assessment has been made on the effect of Operose holding general practitioner practice contracts. As self-employed contractors to the National Health Service to provide primary medical services, it is for general practices to determine how to distribute pay and benefits to their staff.

Regardless of whether the contract holder is an individual, a partnership, or an organisation, all contract holders and providers of NHS core primary medical services are subject to the same requirements, regulation, and standards.

■ **Patients: Death**

Justin Madders:

[\[179193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Learning from Deaths programme, what plans he has to publish updated guidance for NHS trusts.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

There are no immediate plans to update the guidance further as trusts are required to review and publish locally the numbers of deaths, evidence of what they have learned and the actions taken to prevent such deaths in future in their annual Quality Accounts.

■ Pharmacy: Coronavirus**Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[184573\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to increase the number of pharmacies in (a) West Yorkshire and (b) England offering lateral flow tests.

Jo Churchill:

On 29 March, pharmacies in England were invited to offer Pharmacy Collect as an opt in service and from 5 April as part of the universal offer for rapid testing for all. To increase the number of pharmacies offering lateral flow tests we have directed NHS England and NHS Improvement to commission the community pharmacy COVID-19 lateral flow device distribution service. Over 90% of pharmacies across England registered to offer lateral flow tests within 10 days of the Pharmacy Collect service launch and this continues to increase.

NHS Test and Trace continues to work closely with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee who work directly with Local Pharmaceutical Committees across the country, including West Yorkshire.

■ Pigeon Racing**Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[185329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect on mental health of restrictions on (a) pigeon racing gatherings and (b) cross-Channel pigeon races.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

No such assessment has been made.

■ Pregnancy: Screening**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[185893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 174841 on Pregnancy: Screening, what the (a) timelines, (b) milestones and (c) success criteria are for the evaluative rollout referenced in that Answer.

Ms Nadine Dorries:

[Holding answer 27 April 2021]: The target date to begin the evaluative rollout of non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) is 1 June 2021. This will include women who are identified, by existing tests, as having a higher chance of having a baby with Down's syndrome, Edwards' syndrome or Patau's syndrome and is expected to be complete in around three years. Once this has begun, the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC) will be updated on monitoring at future meetings.

This is to ensure NIPT screening is clinically safe, cost effective and provides an acceptable service to those women who accept the offer of screening using NIPT. The evaluation data will be reviewed throughout to identify any issues that may arise.

Once areas of uncertainty have been addressed the UK NSC will then review this to consider formally recommending NIPT as a permanent part of the pathway.

■ **Social Services: Coronavirus**

Helen Hayes: [\[133998\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of social care providers paying full occupational sick pay to staff having to self-isolate as a result of covid-19.

Helen Whately:

The information requested is not currently available. We are collating data on pay for self-isolation which will be published in due course.

■ **Social Services: Pay**

Dan Jarvis: [\[186170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the feasibility of increasing pay for all social care staff including direct care workers.

Helen Whately:

The vast majority of care workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay, independent of central government. Local authorities work with care providers to determine a fair rate of pay based on local market conditions.

We are providing councils with access to over £1 billion of additional funding for social care in 2021-22 on top of the significant support provided over the last year to support the sector deal with COVID-19. This funding is designed to ensure key pressures in the system are met, including the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage. An increase in the rate of the National Living Wage means many of the lowest paid care workers will have benefitted from at least a 2.2% pay from 1 April. Additionally, we have ring-fenced over £1.8 billion to support adult social care providers for measures such as helping maintain the normal wages of staff who may need to self-isolate.

■ **Stomach Cancer**

Bim Afolami: [\[184535\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government plans to continue Public Health England's abdominal cancer symptoms awareness campaign that included the ovarian cancer symptom of bloating.

Jo Churchill:

Evaluation of the latest national campaign on abdominal cancer symptoms which ran between November 2020 and January 2021 is currently underway.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Julian Sturdy:** [\[185357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether childcare is a permitted reason to travel abroad during covid-19 restrictions; and whether childcare bubbles can be international.

Jo Churchill:

Anyone who is travelling abroad and who is not exempt from these restrictions should provide a reasonable excuse for doing so. This does not include travel overseas to visit a childcare bubble or travel overseas to provide childcare. However, there are express reasonable excuses such as for access or contact arrangements between parents and children that live in different countries, or where it is reasonably necessary to provide care to a child with an underlying health condition.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Ruth Jones:** [\[157283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the First Minister of Northern Ireland on the potential exemption of maritime key workers from covid-19 quarantine restrictions, in line with previous exemptions granted.

Ruth Jones: [\[157284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the First Minister of Wales on the potential exemption of maritime key workers from covid-19 quarantine restrictions, in line with previous exemptions granted.

Ruth Jones: [\[157285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the First Minister of Scotland on the potential exemption of maritime key workers from covid-19 quarantine restrictions, in line with previous exemptions granted.

Jo Churchill:

The Government continues to work closely with devolved administrations to implement border measures and has discussed the seamen, masters, inspectors and surveyors of ships exemption. We have introduced an exemption from managed quarantine for seamen, masters, inspectors and surveyors of ships to ensure that vital services through freight routes and supply chains can continue, as well as providing for crew welfare.

Fleur Anderson: [\[160828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether (a) minors travelling alone and (b) boarders returning to school are exempt from the covid-19 quarantine rules; and if he will ensure that relevant guidance is updated to take account of those circumstances.

Jo Churchill:

[Holding answer 4 March 2021]: Boarding school students must quarantine within accommodation provided for or arranged by their boarding school. Full guidance for students from 'red list' countries is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarantine-arrangements-for-boarding-school-students-from-red-list-countries>

Other individuals, including children, who have not travelled from or through a red list country in the previous 10 days must quarantine in accordance with the guidance on how to quarantine on arrival in England. Children arriving in England from a red list country should not be travelling alone. If it is not possible to travel with the child, the parent or guardian is expected to join their child in managed quarantine on arrival.

■ York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust: Surgery**Rachael Maskell:**

[184508]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the November 2020 Spending Review, how much of the £1 billion additional funding for elective surgery has been provided to the York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to date.

Edward Argar:

Information on how much of the £1 billion Elective Recovery Fund has been provided to each trust or system is not held centrally, as it will not be distributed through set allocations. As set out in National Health Service planning guidance for 2021-22, systems are asked to deliver activity levels above set thresholds in order to access this additional funding.

HOME OFFICE**■ Asylum: Clothing****Dawn Butler:**

[186141]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 22 April 2021 to Question 183092, on Asylum: Clothing, if he will publish in full the receipts for the expenditure of £5,415.90.

Chris Philp:

This expenditure refers to articles purchased for immediate relief of asylum seekers arriving in small boats, by providing warm and dry clothing which reduces the risk of hypothermia.

■ Asylum: Eritrea**Tim Farron:**

[185826]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the increase in asylum applications from Eritrean nationals in 2020.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office publishes data on the number of applications for asylum in the UK, broken down by nationality, in its quarterly Immigration Statistics release. The number of applications made by Eritreans in each year are available in the Immigration Statistics, Asy_01c:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/961749/asylum-summary-dec-2020-tables.xlsx

All asylum and human rights applications from Eritrean nationals are carefully considered and assessed on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations.

Each individual assessment is made against the background of the latest available country of origin information and any relevant caselaw. The Eritrean Country Policy and Information Notes (available on gov.uk) outlines our position.

■ Asylum: Interviews**Justin Madders:**[\[185945\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average waiting time was for an asylum interview in the most recent period for which figures are available.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office is unable to state the average waiting time for an asylum interview, in the most recent period for which figures are available, as the Home Office does not publish this information and it could only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

However, the Home Office does publish data on the number asylum applications awaiting an initial decision by duration, for main applicants only. This data can be found at Asy_04 of the published Immigration Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2020/list-of-tables>

■ Asylum: Preston**Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[185288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers her Department sent to live in Preston in each month of (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at:

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

Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 25 February 2021.

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in dispersal accommodation for the first time in each quarter in each of the last two years, by local authority. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

■ **Emergency Services Network: Rural Areas**

Craig Williams:

[\[185966\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Extended Area Service are being constructed to a specification where they could be shared between all four Mobile Network Operators as part of the Shared Rural Network.

Kit Malthouse:

The Extended Area Sites (EAS) are being built in the most remote and rural areas of Great Britain to supplement the infrastructure provided for the Emergency Services Network (ESN) by EE.

When an Extended Area Site (EAS) site is activated, it will be able to handle Emergency Service Network calls and data transmission. On the majority of sites, it will also be available for EE's commercial customers to use.

Wherever possible, the design of mast structures will be future-proofed so they can easily be upgraded to offer a commercial service. We will make all 292 EAS sites available, where possible, for mobile network operators to deploy on them as part of the Shared Rural Network although we recognise that, in some cases, upgrades may not be possible due to technical, financial, or other reasons. I can confirm that 117 sites meet the criteria to be utilised as part of the shared Rural Network with work ongoing on the status of the remaining sites.

■ **Hate Crime: Asians**

Apsana Begum:

[\[184563\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's policy is on the use of the term Oriental by the Metropolitan Police in reference to hate crimes against people from East and South East Asia; and whether her Department plans to review the use of that term.

Victoria Atkins:

From 1 April we have asked forces to use the below categories, in relation to recording the ethnicity of victims of hate crime:

Asian

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any Other Asian Background

Black

Black Caribbean

Black African

Any Other Black Background

Mixed

White And Black Caribbean

White And Black African

White And Asian

Any Other Mixed Background

Not Stated

Chinese and other

Chinese

Any Other Ethnic Group

White

White British

White Irish

Any Other White Background

■ **Immigration: EU Nationals**

John Redwood: [185782]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many EU citizens have been granted settled status to remain in the UK.

Kevin Foster:

The latest published information on EU Settlement Scheme applications can be found on the Home Office's 'EU Settlement Scheme statistics' web page available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>

■ **Naturalisation**

Thangam Debbonaire: [185402]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will assess the potential merits of amending the immigration rules to give officials the power in exceptional circumstances to waive the need to have been in the UK at the start of the qualifying period for naturalisation.

Kevin Foster:

On 24 March 2021, as part of the New Plan for Immigration, the Home Secretary announced several proposed changes to British nationality law.

These included a proposal to allow the requirement to have been in the UK at the start of the qualifying period to be waived in exceptional circumstances

■ **Pepper Spray and Weapons: Crime**

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[185289]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of decriminalising the possession of (a) pepper spray and (b) non-lethal self-defence weapons on safety for women.

Kit Malthouse:

Pepper sprays are currently prohibited by law and we have no plans to change this. It has been the view of successive governments that the possession of items such as pepper sprays for personal protection is likely to lead to an increase in levels of violence as they could be used against the owners to incapacitate them, with serious consequences.

■ **Slavery: Victims**

Alison Thewliss:

[185961]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many payments have been made to victims of modern slavery each year since 2009.

Victoria Atkins:

[Holding answer 27 April 2021]: The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) does not publish payments made to victims of modern slavery and this does not currently form part of the published NRM statistics.

All victims who consent to receiving support will receive this via the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) in England and Wales which is delivered by The Salvation Army. Details of the MSVC Contract can be found in a redacted version of the contract requirements here: [Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales \(under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015\) and Non-Statutory Guidance for Scotland and Northern Ireland \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

All victims who consented to support under the previous Victim Care Contract were also eligible for financial support under the same policy and a redacted version of the previous contract requirements can be found here (<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/e03ceb15-27ad-4bad-b8ae-43dbc1e9481e>).

As of September 2019, following a CG decision, financial support needs for those in support are considered in a Recovery Needs Assessment (RNA) as part of a holistic assessment of recovery need, as per the published RNA policy.

■ Visas: Northern Ireland

Jim Shannon: [\[185885\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of visas for frontline health and care workers in Northern Ireland that will be extended.

Kevin Foster:

On 9 April, the Government announced a further renewal of the free extension for eligible people working in Health and Social Care whose visa expires between 1 April and 30 September. This extension applies to all four nations of our United Kingdom.

A broad range of people across several different work routes will be covered by the free extension including those with general work rights. Therefore, it is not possible to estimate the number of workers in Northern Ireland who will benefit.

Since starting the free extensions, we have extended the visas of over 10,000 eligible individuals, across the whole of the United Kingdom.

HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**■ Local Government Finance**

Steve Reed: [\[186175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number of local authorities who used reserves to balance their 2020-21 budgets.

Luke Hall:

Individual local authorities determine the level of reserves that they hold. Data on movements in reserves in 2020/21 will be made available when the Revenue Outturn data is published by the Department in October.

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has monitored the sector's finances closely through a monthly reporting exercise. We will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on local government and would ask any local authority that is faced with an unmanageable pressure or is concerned about their future financial position to approach MHCLG for discussion.

Steve Reed: [\[186176\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to ensure that his Cabinet Colleagues improve their (a) links with and (b) understanding of local authorities and local government finance.

Luke Hall:

The Department has risen to the huge challenges of the pandemic and has been an effective voice for local government, securing an unprecedented £12 billion of direct support for councils to tackle the impacts of COVID-19 as part of an over £36 billion package for local councils, communities and businesses. In doing so, we have

worked collaboratively with key departments to engage regularly and constructively with local authorities on issues of mutual interest.

We value our deep connections with council stakeholders at every level, and have worked closely across government on future plans for adult social care, the levelling up agenda, readiness for each step of the roadmap out of lockdown and other cross-cutting issues, to ensure their needs are understood. This has included the Secretary of State ensuring the needs of local government are considered at a range of meetings attended by Cabinet colleagues, including the COVID-19 Operations Cabinet Committee for issues in relation to the pandemic, alongside his attendance at other Cabinet Committees on matters of interest to local government.

Steve Reed:

[\[186177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking to set out a long-term funding plan for local authorities.

Luke Hall:

Our primary aim during the COVID-19 pandemic has been to continue to support councils in dealing with the immediate impacts and in promoting recovery and renewal at local level; and also to support and maintain critical mainstream services.

We have done this by directing resources to the highest priority areas; by ensuring that we offer as much stability as we can through our approach to funding allocations, within the time horizons of a one-year Spending Review; by giving councils increased flexibility in balancing the contribution of national and local taxpayers in funding local services; and by being measured and realistic in our ambitions for future funding reform.

The Government recognises the importance of providing local authorities with longer-term clarity to enable their forward planning. Decisions about funding beyond this financial year will be made at the Spending Review later this year

Steve Reed:

[\[186178\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he is taking in response to the National Audit Office report, Local government finance in the pandemic, published March 10 2021.

Luke Hall:

The Department engaged closely with the NAO throughout the development of their report. The report sets out that the Government acted swiftly and flexibly in the face of the unprecedented challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and that there was intensive engagement with the sector throughout this period. The Department joins the NAO in acknowledging the invaluable contribution councils have made to the pandemic response. We welcome these and other findings of the report, and have begun to implement the recommendations

■ Planning

Steve Reed: [\[186174\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 22 April 2021 to Question 183159, on Planning, whether training is offered to Ministers without responsibility for the planning portfolio on how they should interact with the planning system.

Christopher Pincher:

Yes, training is offered to Ministers without responsibility for the planning portfolio on how they should interact with the planning system.

■ Sheltered Housing

Dr Lisa Cameron: [\[184492\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department plans to include housing with care accommodation as part of the Government's proposals for senior housing.

Christopher Pincher:

Offering older people a better choice of accommodation to suit their changing needs can help them live independently for longer and feel more connected to their communities. Housing with support and care plays a vital role in enabling older people to live independently, as well as delivering wider benefits to society.

We are investing over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade. This includes the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, where 10 per cent of delivery over the course of the programme will be used to increase the supply of much needed specialist, supported and retirement housing, including housing with care for older people. In addition, the Department of Health and Social Care continue to subsidise new supply of specialist housing for older and disabled people through the Care and Support Specialised Housing (CASSH) Fund.

We are working closely with the sector and across government to look at how we can further support growth and diversity of older people's housing. This includes considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models, including housing with care accommodation.

■ Social Rented Housing: Enfield North

Feryal Clark: [\[184568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what recent estimate he has made of the number of additional council and housing association homes required to meet demand for social housing in Enfield North constituency.

Christopher Pincher:

Our National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that it is for local authorities to assess the housing needs of different groups, including those who require affordable housing, and to reflect this in their planning policies.

Local authorities are best placed to make detailed assessment of the housing needs for different housing types and tenures in their areas, using relevant evidence to produce assessments which are specific to their local circumstances.

JUSTICE**■ Prisoners: Veterans****Imran Ahmad Khan:**[\[184574\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 180635, how many prisoners serving a custodial sentence who were formerly members of the armed forces were sentenced for (a) violent crime and (b) non-violent crime.

Imran Ahmad Khan:[\[184575\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 180635, if he will publish the information on how many prisoners serving a custodial sentence who were formerly members of the armed forces by prison.

Alex Chalk:

The information requested is shown on the attached spreadsheets. These are broken down by offence group and prison service establishment.

The Ministry of Justice publishes a yearly snapshot which estimates the number of former service personnel in the prison population. This takes place in June each year.

Since 2015 all new prisoners coming into custody have been asked if they have a military background as part of the basic custody screening (BCS) interview. The attached data is therefore the percentage of sentenced prisoners within each offence group and prison for which we have a matched response to the BCS armed forces question. Those who entered prison prior to Jan 2015 (and are still in custody) will not have completed the BCS and so we will not have a matched response for these individuals.

Declaring one's military background is not obligatory and there is anecdotal evidence that some offenders may be reluctant to disclose having served in the armed forces. The MoJ is focussed on increasing declaration rates amongst this important group.

We remain committed to ensuring that those who have served in the Armed Forces and who find themselves in the criminal justice system are able to access support, whether they are serving their sentence in custody or in the community. Through the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund, we have committed to support programmes worth £5.7 million targeted at former service personnel in the criminal justice system.

Attachments:

1. Table [PQ 184574 - 184575_final.xlsx]

MEMBERS ESTIMATE COMMITTEE**■ Representative Money****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[186137\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the Members Estimate Committee, how much has been paid from the public purse in Representative Monies to parties whose hon. Members have not taken the oath since those monies originally became payable.

Sir Charles Walker:

The Representative Money allocation and spend breakdown for the previous financial year ending 31 March 2021, together with the allocation scheduled to be paid for the current financial year (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) will be published in due course on the pages below.

Since 2016-17 it has been a requirement to publish the amounts paid for each financial year and these can be found on the Parliament website via the following link:

<https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/foi/transparency-publications/hoc-transparency-publications/financial-information/financial-assistance-to-opposition-parties/>

Budget allocations for Representative Money since 2005-06 are published in Appendix 3 (p34) of the following document:

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN01663>

SCOTLAND**■ Coronavirus: Scotland****Cat Smith:**[\[914686\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with the Scottish Government on the implementation of the covid-19 vaccination programme in Scotland.

Mr Alister Jack:

UK Government Ministers are in frequent contact with Scottish Government Ministers on all aspects of the response to Covid-19, including the vaccination programme.

The UK Government's vaccine taskforce has successfully procured the vaccines we need and ensured they are available to all across the whole of the UK.

■ Television Licences: Scotland

Clive Efford:

[914687]

What assessment he has made of the effect on people over the age of 75 in Scotland of the removal of free TV licences.

David Duguid:

The Government remains deeply disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over-75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit.

We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s in Scotland and the rest of the UK and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021

Paul Blomfield:

[914683]

What recent discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Scottish Government on preparations for COP26 in Glasgow.

David Duguid:

Scotland Office Ministers are in regular discussions with Ministerial colleagues and the Scottish Government on the preparations for COP26 in Glasgow.

My Rt hon Friend the Secretary of State met the COP President last month and Scotland Office Ministers attended the COP26 Devolved Administration Ministerial Group.

TRANSPORT

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Tony Lloyd:

[186135]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the risk of transmission of covid-19 (a) on public transport and (b) in other crowded public spaces; what recent assessment he has made of the efficacy of different types of facemasks in preventing such transmission; and if he will make a statement.

Rachel Maclean:

I refer the hon Member to the answer I gave on 8 March 2021, to Question UIN [159378](#) regarding the risk of transmission of COVID-19 on public transport.

In regard to what assessment has been made of the efficacy of different types of face masks, in 2020 Public Health England's rapid evidence review reported that the published literature indicated that face coverings of varying materials are more effective than no covering, and multi-layered coverings more effective than single-layer. Further information is available here: <https://phe.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-retrieve-file.pl?id=5f043ca658db1188ffae74827fa650d9>

A second review published in January 2021 corroborated the findings of the first review and found consistent evidence that the use of face coverings in community

settings reduced the spread of COVID-19: <https://phe.koha-ptfs.co.uk/cgi-bin/koha/opac-retrieve-file.pl?id=d86880bf65bd6b18eae21aa3bdaf2a4b>

■ Ashington, Blyth and Tyne Railway Line

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [186231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether planning permission has been secured for the proposed Northumberland Line between Newcastle and Ashington.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [186232]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether there are plans to remove Blyth Bebside Station from the Northumberland Rail scheme.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [186233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to continue funding for the Northumberland Line.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Northumberland County Council is in the process of submitting planning applications for the scheme.

There are no plans to remove Blyth Bebside from the programme.

Earlier this year the Government committed £34m for the restoration of passenger services between Newcastle and Ashington. I expect a Final Business Case by the end of the year.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Justin Madders: [185953]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the cost of the provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure for (a) local authorities and (b) social housing landlords.

Rachel Maclean:

The costs and scale of EV charging infrastructure are dependent upon a range of factors, including changing driver charging preferences and advancements in vehicle batteries and charging technology. There are significant uncertainties within these factors and we do not hold estimates for the specified sectors. The role of the commercial market is also expected to grow as the market develops. The government expects to publish an EV charging infrastructure strategy later this year. This will set out our vision and approach to enabling a comprehensive infrastructure roll out.

To support the transition to a fully commercial market the government has committed £1.3 billion over the next four years to support EV charging infrastructure. This includes £275 million to extend support for charge point installation at homes, workplaces and on-street locations and £90 million to fund local EV charging

infrastructure to support the roll out of larger onstreet charging schemes and rapid hubs in England.

Local authorities will continue to have a key role to play, particularly to ensure provision for those without access to off-street parking. To support this, government offers up to 75% funding for the costs of installing public residential chargepoints (the scheme has a cap of £13000 per chargepoint), for those without access to private parking, through the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). The scheme has already supported over 105 different local authorities, and £20 million of funding is available to local authorities across the UK during 2021-22.

The government recognises the desire of people in social housing to charge their electric vehicles at, or near, their homes and that they need additional help to kickstart this sector of the market. That is why we will be transforming the Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme to provide more support for them.

■ **Farms: Recruitment**

Caroline Nokes:

[\[185862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect of delays in driving test appointments on the ability of farms to recruit staff with the required skills.

Rachel Maclean:

Tractor training and testing resumed in England and Wales on 29 March, and on 26 April in Scotland.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has put in place a number of measures to increase practical driving tests. These include offering overtime and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays). The DVSA has also started a recruitment campaign to increase the number of examiners.

It is not within the DVSA's remit to assess the ability of farms to recruit staff but it fully appreciates the challenges that suspending driver training and testing has had, including for those in the agricultural sector. The DVSA's top priority has been to keep everyone safe and only resume its testing services when safe to do so.

■ **Gardens: Community Relations**

Mark Pritchard:

[\[184401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will hold discussions with Network Rail on the potential merits of making available land for community garden kitchens in urban areas.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail run over 100 community schemes across Britain as part of their 'Community Rail' programme. They invite voluntary groups to transform disused

railway land in their area including old platforms, land adjoining stations, and land underneath viaducts. Network Rail keep volunteers safe and make sure that all community schemes coordinate with and complement the existing railway operation.

Network Rail are always happy and open to discussing new ideas for local communities. My right honourable friend can contact Network Rail's public affairs office at publicaffairs@networkrail.co.uk.

■ Public Transport: Bromsgrove

Sajid Javid: [\[187195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to promote the use of (a) the electric shuttle bus scheme in Bromsgrove District and (b) other electric powered public transport.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government is committed to tackling climate change, which is why in Spring this year we will be publishing a bold and ambitious Transport Decarbonisation Plan which will set out how to achieve net zero emissions across all modes of transport. Tackling emissions at a local level will make an important contribution to the decarbonisation of transport. Developing solutions that consider the needs of different locations is one of our six strategic priorities for transport decarbonisation and recognises that different decarbonisation solutions will be required and will work best in different places across the UK.

On 30 March, the Department launched the £120 million Zero Emission Buses Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. The scheme will be open to local transport authorities, including Worcestershire County Council, who can bid for funding introduce single and double decker zero emission buses for local bus services buses and the infrastructure needed to support them.

■ Public Transport: Coronavirus

Sam Tarry: [\[187351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to encourage people to use public transport rather than cars as covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Rachel Maclean:

The Department is working with operators to ensure people feel safe when using public transport. Operators have already enhanced their cleaning regimes at stations and on-board services. We are asking people to plan their journeys so that they travel at less busy times where they can, and we have created a check list for safer travel. The Department mandates the wearing of face coverings on public transport and in transport hubs and compliance remains high. We will continue to work with operators to ensure service levels are high as we begin to ease restrictions so people can keep a safe distance where possible.

■ Railways: Electrification

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[186234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the letter sent to his Department by representatives of rail industry bodies, businesses and campaign groups on the need for an immediate programme of rail electrification.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

I am grateful for the work done by the rail industry to learn lessons from previous electrification, and to support work led by Network Rail to develop options for rail decarbonisation.

As further electrification of the network will play an important role in our plans to decarbonise the railway, the Department will continue to consider carefully rail industry views about how to deliver electrification schemes in a way that is affordable and delivers value for money.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[186235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the total kilometres of electrified rail in the UK by 2040.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In developing the forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) the Department has considered advice from Network Rail and the rail industry about the pace of rail decarbonisation, including through electrification. The TDP will set out the scale and pace of rail decarbonisation necessary to deliver the government's net zero commitment by 2050.

Electrification schemes and the use of other decarbonisation technologies will be developed individually to ensure they are affordable and provide value for money.

■ Railways: North of England

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[186224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 176005, what plans he has to electrify the route between Leeds and Church Fenton via Cross Gates, Garforth, East Garforth and Micklefield.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In July 2020, government released £589m of funding for the Transpennine Route Upgrade Programme. This has enabled further development of electrification design for the section between Church Fenton and York. We are actively reviewing the case for TRU to deliver full electrification on the route, including Cross Gates, Garforth, East Garforth and Micklefield. Construction decisions are to be taken once TRU's full business case is approved.

Further electrification of the network will play an important role in our plans to decarbonise the railway between now and 2050. As we decarbonise the railway, we

will develop individual schemes carefully to deliver both decarbonisation and other benefits in a way that delivers value for money and ensures affordability.

■ Railways: Safety

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[185466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many Personal Track Safety Cards Network Rail has issued to workers in (a) Network Rail, (b) Train Operating Companies including open access companies, (c) freight companies, (d) rail renewals companies and (e) agency companies in the last five years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Personal Trackside Safety (PTS) is a competence required by those who work on or near mainline railway lines for, and on behalf of, Network Rail, which is assured through the Sentinel card scheme. My department does not hold data on the number of Sentinel cards issued, but Network Rail inform me that 26,266 of their employees had been issued cards in the last 5 years. The equivalent figure for Network Rail's supply chain, which includes rail renewal companies and agency companies, is 67,116. The Sentinel scheme does not apply to train operating companies or freight companies, who are responsible for their own track safety training and assurance.

■ Railways: Staff

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[186229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 176010 on Railways: Staff, for what reason he has no plans to publish the information held by his Department; and what assessment he has made of the effect of that decision on the diversity of the workforce.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As confirmed in my answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 176010, the information currently being held by the Department has only been obtained from Train Operating Companies that are on Emergency Recovery Measure Agreements and will be used for indicative analytical purposes. No agreements have been made with those companies to publish this information.

As advised in previous responses, the Government intends to publish a White Paper with details of its plan for rail reform shortly.

■ South Western Railway: Rolling Stock

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[186227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 181387 on South Western Railway: Rolling Stock, what was discussed in those meetings; and whether those discussions confirmed a date for the new class 701 Arterio units to be introduced to the network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The meetings with South Western Railway and officials discuss general progress with delivery of major projects and other franchise performance matters and form a routine part of the contract management dialogue. My recent meeting discussions did not confirm a date for the new Arterio trains to be introduced, although the Department continues to apply pressure to the manufacturer and the operator to begin introducing these trains to the network as soon as possible. The recent end to the dispute between South Western Railway and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers about how these trains will be operated when introduced has removed a significant barrier to this.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:[\[186228\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had discussions with South Western Railway on increasing the number of carriages on their suburban routes to enable social distancing.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department continues to work closely with all operators and Network Rail to ensure that services are appropriate to passenger demand whilst responding to the challenges of COVID-19 and delivering value for the taxpayer. From 12 April, operators have increased provision to around 75 per cent of pre-pandemic service levels and targeted areas of potentially high demand. South Western Railway will increase its peak capacity to approximately 85 per cent of pre-pandemic service levels at the next timetable change on 16 May.

The Department believes that operators know their routes and passengers best. South Western Railway is therefore best placed to deploy its available train fleet to provide sufficient socially distanced capacity on each individual service and to make adjustments in response to any observed increase to passenger numbers using its services.

■ Transpennine Express**Dame Diana Johnson:**[\[184387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 April 2021 to Question 174767 on Railways: North of England, whether the Minister of State, the hon. Member for Pendle, has made any journeys on the TransPennine train from Manchester to Hull since February 2020.

Andrew Stephenson:

I have not made any journeys on the TransPennine train from Manchester to Hull in my Ministerial capacity. I look forward to making many train journeys when restrictions ease.

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Justin Madders:** [\[185952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what impact assessment was conducted on the Global Taskforce's report on International Travel for the travel industry, published on 8 April 2021.

Robert Courts:

The Global Travel Taskforce report was created following extensive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders from the international travel and tourism industries to develop a risk-based framework that can facilitate the return of international travel while managing Variants of Concern.

The taskforce has considered a full range of views from industry stakeholders to inform the final recommendations and we are grateful for their valuable contributions to the development of the report's recommendations.

Afzal Khan: [\[186027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing foreign travel for people separated from their partners regardless of marital status during the covid-19 outbreak.

Robert Courts:

There are a range of border measures in place to protect the UK from the importation of coronavirus and variants of concern (VoCs), including self-isolation, managed quarantine and testing. These measures are kept under regular review.

Restrictions for England introduced on 29 March 2021 remain in place meaning everyone must "Stay in the UK" unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons. The limited number of exemptions from enhanced border measures for travellers are kept under regular review to ensure they are only in place while absolutely necessary.

The government unveiled a roadmap by which international travel restrictions could be lifted no earlier than 17 May 2020. The Global Travel Taskforce (GTT) developed a framework for a safe, sustainable and robust return to non-essential travel, that is risk based and does not compromise UK public health. The government will confirm by early May whether non-essential international travel can resume from 17 May.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy: [\[186264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to exempt people in long-distance relationships from the covid-19 international travel ban.

Robert Courts:

There are a range of border measures in place to protect the UK from the importation of coronavirus and variants of concern (VoCs), including self-isolation, managed quarantine and testing. These measures are kept under regular review.

Restrictions for England introduced on 29 March 2021 remain in place meaning everyone must "Stay in the UK" unless travelling for a very limited set of reasons. The

limited number of exemptions from enhanced border measures for travellers are kept under regular review to ensure they are only in place while absolutely necessary.

The government unveiled a roadmap by which international travel restrictions could be lifted no earlier than 17 May 2020. The Global Travel Taskforce (GTT) developed a framework for a safe, sustainable and robust return to non-essential travel, that is risk based and does not compromise UK public health. The government will confirm by early May whether non-essential international travel can resume from 17 May.

Ian Paisley:

[\[187227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to work with (a) the Home Office and (b) UK Border Force to ensure the the UK Border is (i) prepared and (ii) resourced to undertake the increased checks being mandated by the traffic light framework for the return of international travel.

Robert Courts:

The Department for Transport is working with Home Office, Department for Health and Social Care and Border Force to ensure the UK border is ready for the return of international travel. This includes modelling demand scenarios, flexing resource deployment and increasing automation at the border, including the use of e-gates to increase capacity.

■ Travel: USA

Henry Smith:

[\[185341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with his US counterparts on resuming trans-Atlantic travel at pre-covid-19 pandemic levels as the covid-19 vaccine roll-out continues.

Robert Courts:

As set out in the Global Travel Taskforce recommendations, we are engaging bilaterally with international partners to explore how we can open international travel safely, including the potential piloting of digital and non-digital COVID-19 certification. We continue to work with a range of international partners to look at the technology and evidence as it emerges, assessing if it could be applicable to international travel in the future.

These are diplomatically sensitive discussions, and we cannot comment further at this stage. However, the Department for Transport, with colleagues from across UK Government, is now working at all levels to continue dialogue with the US on the specifics of our future travel arrangements.

TREASURY**■ Building Societies**

Gareth Thomas: [\[185789\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision by regulators not to consider the effect of demutualisation of building societies and friendly societies on the financial crash of 2007-08; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government recognises the vital importance of having a strong and stable financial system. The Government also recognises the value that building societies, friendly societies and other mutually owned organisations bring to the financial services sector.

The Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) is responsible for the prudential supervision of the UK banking sector, including building societies, whilst the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is responsible for supervising the conduct of financial services firms operating in the UK. The FCA and PRA are operationally independent of Government and the Treasury has no general power of direction over the regulators. The Government has not specifically examined the effect of the regulators' decisions over assessing the impact of demutualisation of building societies and friendly societies on the financial crash of 2007-08.

■ Building Societies and Mutual Societies

Gareth Thomas: [\[187132\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether an assessment was made on the effect of the demutualisation of building societies and financial mutuals on the events leading up to the financial crash in 2007-08; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government recognises the vital importance of having a strong and stable financial system. The Government also recognises the value that building societies and other mutually-owned organisations bring to the financial services sector.

The Government has not made a specific assessment on the effect of the demutualisation of building societies and financial mutuals on the events leading up to the financial crash in 2007-08.

■ Business: Taxis

Sarah Olney: [\[186198\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if will he make it his policy to allow taxis taken home by employees to be taxed as a legitimate business expense.

Jesse Norman:

It is a fundamental principle of the employment tax rules that the cost of travel between home and work does not qualify for tax relief, as it is not travel in the performance of someone's duties.

A payment by an employer for a taxi for an employee's journey between work and home is a benefit to the employee and is taxable. However, the benefit can be exempt from tax where certain conditions are met. These are:

- the employee working later than usual and until at least 9pm;
- it occurs irregularly; and
- it is not possible or would not be reasonable to expect the employee to use public transport.

More guidance can be found at www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim21831.

■ Electric Vehicles: Tax Allowances**Nick Fletcher:**[\[187354\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the affordability in terms of public finances of introducing a favourable tax regime for the purchase of electric vehicles.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government currently uses the tax system to encourage the uptake of vehicles with low carbon dioxide emissions to help meet our legally binding climate change targets. This is why zero emission cars and electric vans are liable to pay no Vehicle Excise Duty (VED), and why users of zero and ultra-low emission cars have favourable company car tax (CCT) rates in comparison to conventionally fuelled vehicles.

The Net Zero Review interim report published by HM Treasury in December last year highlighted that structural changes in the economy related to net zero will have fiscal implications. Much of the revenue from fossil fuel-based taxes is likely to be eroded during the transition to a net zero economy. However, there is currently a high level of uncertainty regarding the rate at which receipts decline.

As the UK moves forward with the transition away from petrol and diesel cars and vans, the Government will need to ensure that revenue from motoring taxes keeps pace with this change, so that the Government can continue to fund the first-class public services and infrastructure that people and families across the UK expect. Any changes to the tax system will be considered by the Chancellor and any further steps will be announced in due course.

English Language: Education

Afzal Khan: [\[185473\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what support he is providing to the English language teaching sector to mitigate the effect of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is making sure that people and businesses have access to the support they need as quickly as possible. The Government has supported businesses through the COVID-19 crisis through an unprecedented support package, including grants for smaller businesses, government-backed loans, and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to protect jobs.

An additional £500 million has been made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), announced by the Chancellor on 5 January. This builds on the £1.1 billion already allocated following the second lockdown in November 2020.

This further grant funding is designed to support businesses that are severely impacted by the new Covid-19 restrictions. Local authorities have discretion to use this funding to support businesses in the way they see fit, and to determine which businesses are eligible.

I encourage English Language Schools to make full use of the extensive support available.

Equitable Life Assurance Society: Standards

Alexander Stafford: [\[187375\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of payments made through the Equitable Life Payment Scheme.

Alexander Stafford: [\[187376\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure his Department retains and maintains the data required to make further payments to Equitable Life policyholders.

John Glen:

The methodology for calculating payments to Equitable Life policyholders was published in 2011 and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equitable-life-payment-scheme-design>.

The Equitable Life Payment Scheme closed to claims in 2015 and further guidance on the status of the Payment Scheme after closure is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equitable-life-payment-scheme#closure-of-the-scheme>.

I can assure the Hon Member for Rother Valley that relevant records are currently retained and will continue to be as long as it is legal.

■ Financial Services: Internet

Mark Menzies:

[\[186149\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to (a) increase accountability among digital financial service providers and (b) ensure that (i) PayPal and (ii) other providers of digital financial services process customers' complaints in a timely manner.

Mark Menzies:

[\[186150\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that (a) PayPal and (b) other digital financial services providers have a clearly defined process for next of kin, should a customer pass away, and prevent the withholding of access from next of kin or organisations that the individual was previously involved with.

John Glen:

PayPal currently provides services in the UK through the Temporary Permissions Regime, and is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

The FCA's handbook rules require payment service providers, which includes banks, payment institutions and electronic money institutions, to send a final response to complaints about rights and obligations arising under the Payment Services and Electronic Money Regulations within 15 business days after the day on which it received the complaint. In exceptional circumstances, such as where the respondent cannot send a final response within this period for reasons beyond the control of the firm, a response must be sent within 35 business days.

If a consumer complains to a relevant financial services firm and is unhappy with the response, they may be able to bring their complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS). The FOS provides consumers with a free, independent service that enables the proportionate, prompt and informal resolution of disputes with financial firms

With regards to next of kin procedures for banks, payment institutions, and electronic money institutions, the FCA expects firms to have an effective process for dealing with a deceased customer's accounts from notification of death to the transfer of funds to those who are entitled to receive them. This process is set out in the FCA's handbook rules.

■ Friendly Societies: Reviews

Gareth Thomas:

[\[187133\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will launch a review of the adequacy of legislation on friendly societies; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

The Government has noted the recommendations of the recent APPG for Mutuals report into the demutualisation of LV=Life and Pensions and will work with the regulators to ensure the market continues to function effectively. The Government

currently has no plans to launch a review into the adequacy of legislation for friendly societies but will continue to monitor the situation.

■ Global Anti-corruption Sanctions Regulations

Dan Carden:

[\[187308\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Global Anti-Corruption Sanctions Regulations 2021, what additional resources he will provide to (a) the National Crime Agency and (b) the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation to ensure the proactive enforcement of sanctions and (c) the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office to support the investigation of allegations of corruption.

John Glen:

A number of different agencies are responsible for the enforcement of sanctions in the UK, including the National Crime Agency, and HM Treasury, through the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation. The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office has dedicated sanctions policy resource, including for the Global Anti-Corruption sanctions regime.

Any additional resourcing needs arising from new sanctions regimes are identified early and addressed in the context both of each internal function and across the sanctions community in Whitehall.

Future funding decisions will be taken at the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

■ Housing: Ministers

Bridget Phillipson:

[\[175836\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether any refurbishments or redecorations have been requested in respect of accommodation made available by the Government to Ministers in his Department since 13 February 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer redecorated the No.10 Downing Street flat last year. It was paid for upfront and entirely at his own expense. No request was made to HM Treasury.

No request was made in respect of Dorneywood.

No other accommodation is made available to HMT Ministers by the Government.

■ Intellectual Property Office: Pay

Anna McMorris:

[\[186206\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress has been made on agreeing the pay settlement for staff at the Intellectual Property Office.

Kemi Badenoch:

Following a successful pilot, the Intellectual Property Office has been granted approval to agree their annual pay remit through a system called paybill control. They

are removed from the Civil Service pay remit guidance process and instead submit their requested paybill control total to HMT each year for approval.

The Intellectual Property Office are finalising their pay award for 2020/21 and will communicate the settlement to staff.

■ **Liverpool Victoria**

Gareth Thomas: [\[185786\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the proposed demutualisation of Liverpool Victoria on corporate diversity and customer choice in financial services; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[185787\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will take steps to urge the Board of Liverpool Victoria (LV) to release the information on that company's future business plans which has been passed to regulators to the current owners of LV; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[185788\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision by Liverpool Victoria not to hold an AGM virtually for their owners to attend in 2020; and if he will make a statement.

Gareth Thomas: [\[185790\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on demutualisation of regulators refusal to revisit their decision to approve the conversion of Liverpool Victoria to a limited company; and if he will make a statement.

John Glen:

I refer the honourable member to the answer given on 26 April.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Robert Largin: [\[187360\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the enquiry of 26 January 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak with the reference RL17850.

John Glen:

I responded to the Member on 6 February 2021. A further copy has been sent by email.

■ **National Savings and Investments**

John Lamont: [\[187297\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent progress has been made on the National Savings and Investment's green savings product; and whether the Government has plans to offer that product to savers in summer 2021.

John Glen:

Since the Chancellor's announcement at Spring Budget 2021 that a Green Savings Bond will be offered through NS&I, work has continued at pace on the development of this product. The Green Savings Bond will be linked to the UK's sovereign Green Bond framework, due to be published in June 2021, and will give UK savers the opportunity to take part in the collective effort to tackle climate change. Further details on the Green Savings Bond will be published in due course, prior to the product going on sale this summer.

Red Diesel**Ben Bradley:**[\[187322\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of including all grassroots sports clubs in the list of exemptions in relation to the use of Red Diesel.

Kemi Badenoch:

Following last year's consultation on reforms to the tax treatment of red diesel announced at Budget 2020, the Government accepted the arguments made by representatives from the sports sector that removing the entitlement to use red diesel would increase costs on amateur sports clubs, which would be passed down to members, and that this could affect people's ability to participate in sport and impact on health and well-being. The Government therefore announced at Budget 2021 that amateur sports clubs will qualify for continued use of red diesel beyond April 2022 if they are registered as community amateur sports clubs (CASCs), which are non-profit organisations that can benefit from a range of tax reliefs. There are over 7,300 clubs registered with HMRC as CASCs, and relying on this definition of an amateur sports club will aid HMRC to ensure compliance.

Small Businesses: Non-domestic Rates**Bambos Charalambous:**[\[186200\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of business rates on small businesses.

Jesse Norman:

Business rates are an important source of funding for key local services such as adult social care and children's services.

Small businesses may be eligible for Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR). Properties with a rateable value of £12,000 or less will pay no business rates under SBRR. For properties with a rateable value above £12,000 and less than £15,000, the SBRR will taper from 100% relief to 0%. Under SBRR, over 700,000 businesses pay no business rates.

Small businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector may also be eligible for the three month extension to the business rates holiday provided at Budget 2020.

The fundamental review of business rates is considering all parts of the business rates system, including support for small businesses.

■ **Soft Drinks: Taxation**

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[186179\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding his Department has received from revenues from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy since that levy was introduced on 6 April 2018.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck: [\[186180\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much funding his Department has received from revenues from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy since that levy was introduced on 6 April 2018.

Kemi Badenoch:

The money raised through the Soft Drinks Industry Levy is not linked to any specific programmes, or departmental spending. Departmental spend is allocated through Spending Reviews, by the Treasury.

Since its introduction in April 2018, the provisional total for revenue raised from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy up to and including March 2021 is £878 million. This consists of the following amounts raised per financial year:

2018-19: £240 million

2019-20: £337 million

2020-21 (provisional): £301 million

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ **Babies and Mothers: Coronavirus**

Dan Jarvis: [\[182050\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what discussions she has had with Ministers in HM Treasury on the allocation of specific funding from the public purse to (a) new mothers and (b) children born since the outbreak of covid-19.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government is committed to providing support to all those that need it, including new mothers and children born during the pandemic, as we recover from the impact of COVID-19. During the crisis we have rolled out unprecedented levels of support to protect jobs and income for both women and men, including via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Universal Credit uplift.

Financial support available for those who are pregnant or new parents includes Child Benefit, the Sure Start Maternity Grant, and the Healthy Start Scheme, as well as Maternity Allowance or paid parental leave for those who are eligible and/or Universal Credit where relevant.

We also recognise the impact of the pandemic and restrictions on people's mental wellbeing and are doing our utmost to ensure that mental health services are there for everyone who needs them. The Government's mental health recovery action plan, backed by £500 million, will support hundreds of thousands of people with mental health issues.

All specialist and in-patient perinatal mental health services have remained available during COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, having moved at pace during the early stages to be able to deliver digital and remote support.

Since 1 April 2020, GPs are required to offer a maternal postnatal consultation at 6-8 weeks after birth, focusing on a review of the mother's physical and mental health and general wellbeing. This service has also continued throughout the pandemic.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Mark Jenkinson:

[186262]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many jobs have been approved by the Kickstart Scheme nationally to date.

Mims Davies:

As of 22nd April, there has been over 195,000 jobs approved by the Department of Work and Pension's Kickstart scheme.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system which has been developed quickly. The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency.

■ Bereavement Support Payment

Justin Madders:

[186186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 14 December 2020 to Question 127581, on Bereavement Support Payment, whether an assessment of the economic effect of the introduction of the Bereavement Support Payment has now been undertaken.

Guy Opperman:

To date no assessment of the economic effect of the introduction of Bereavement Support Payment has been made. However, we are currently evaluating Bereavement Support Payment and will consider our next steps once we know the outcome

■ Employment: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[184477]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on employment levels amongst 25-35 year olds in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England; and what steps her Department has taken to support 25-35 year olds who have been made redundant as a result of the covid-19 outbreak to (i) access training and skills support and (ii) secure suitable alternative employment.

Mims Davies:

(a)-(d)

The information on employment levels for 25-34 year olds is published and available at:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/default.asp>

Guidance for users can be found at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home/newuser.asp>

The most up to date information on NOMIS comes from the Annual Population Survey for Jan-Dec 2020 and is therefore not entirely subject to the effects of COVID-19. As a sample survey it is subject to sampling error, which may limit the conclusions that can be drawn.

(i)-(ii)

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is committed to supporting everyone who has been affected by the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the labour market.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we want everyone to be able to find a job, progress in work and thrive in the labour market, whoever they are and wherever they live.

We are working with Department for Education and HMT on how Universal Credit claimants can best be supported to gain skills for priority sectors and meet skills shortages, in addition to better facilitating progression opportunities.

To meet demand for Jobcentre services and to ensure that people looking for work receive the right support, DWP has successfully recruited 13,500 new Work Coaches.

■ Kickstart Scheme

Julian Sturdy:

[185355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 February 2021 to Question 145788, for what reasons local data is not available for the Kickstart scheme; and what steps his Department plans to take to assess the effectiveness of that scheme.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions collects data on the uptake of the Kickstart Scheme. We have published information on the number of young people who have started in each region, here: <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-04-12/179100>, but we are unable to break this down below the regional level at present.

The need to deliver and operate the Kickstart Scheme at pace has led to a current limited clerical data set which, in turn, makes it harder to accurately present a snapshot of a smaller geographical area, such as a Parliamentary constituency. Information is contained across multiple systems as more than one Jobcentre could cover a single constituency. Conversely, Kickstart placements and vacancies are not allocated to one JCP, so we have many vacancies which may be connected to a company based or headquartered in one area, but the vacancies can be filled from a wider geographical area.

As such, it is not currently possible to provide the data below the regional level. We are, however, continuing to develop our management information tools and data collection system which may help in sharing more localised information at a local authority level in due course.

The Government is monitoring and evaluating the Kickstart Scheme throughout its implementation, and will continue to evaluate the longer term outcomes and impact for Kickstart participants.

Local Housing Allowance

Ms Karen Buck: [\[183052\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households there are in the private rented sector in receipt of universal credit with the housing element in payment; how many of those households have rents which exceed the local housing allowance (LHA); and of the latter households, what the median average gap is between the rent and the LHA, for each broad rental market area in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales, for the most recent period for which data is available.

Ms Karen Buck: [\[183053\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in the private rented sector there are in receipt of housing benefit in payment; how many of those households have rents which exceed the local housing allowance rate (LHA); and of the latter households, what the median average gap is between the rent and the LHA rate, for each broad rental market area in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales, for the most recent period for which data is available.

Ms Karen Buck: [\[183054\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in receipt of universal credit there are in the private rented sector with the housing element in payment where one or more members has limited capability for work and/or for work-related

activity; how many of those households have rents which exceed the local housing allowance rate; and of the latter households, what the median gap is between the rent and the LHA in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales, for the most recent period for which data is available.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[183055\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households are in receipt of local housing allowance in payment; how many of those households have rents which exceed the local housing allowance; and what the median gap is between the rent and the LHA for those households also in receipt of (a) income support, (b) income-related employment support allowance and (c) income-related jobseeker's allowance in (i) England, (ii) Scotland and (iii) Wales, for the most recent period for which data is available.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[183056\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households in receipt of universal there are in the private rented sector with the housing element in payment; how many of those households have rents which exceed the local housing allowance rate; and of the latter households, what the median gap is between the rent and the LHA broken down by the number of children in the household in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales, for the most recent period for which data is available.

Ms Karen Buck:

[\[183057\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many households are in receipt of local housing allowance in payment, how many of those households have rents which exceed the local housing allowance rate; and of the latter households, what the median gap is between the rent and the LHA broken down by the number of children in the household in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales, for the most recent period for which data is available.

Will Quince:

Requested information is in the following attachment.

In response to Covid-19 we increased LHA rates to the 30th percentile of local rents in April 2020. This significant investment of nearly £1billion has provided 1.5 million claimants with an average £600 more housing support last year than they would otherwise have received.

In 2021/22 claimants will continue to benefit from the increase. We are maintaining this investment by keeping LHA rates at the same levels from April 2021.

Attachments:

1. Table [Table.xlsx]

■ Redundancy: Rapid Response Fund

Paul Blomfield: [\[184429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 April 2021 to Question 179078, for what reason rapid response funding does not cover career change retraining for those who have been made redundant.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: RRS funding is demand led, and Districts have the discretion to decide whether offers of support, including vocational or non-vocational training, are appropriate to the local labour market, and subsequently are appropriate to move a person into employment.

■ Self-employed: Adoption

Thangam Debbonaire: [\[185404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the adequacy of financial support available for self-employed people who are adopting children.

Guy Opperman:

The Government recognises that it is crucial to the success of an adoption placement that an adopter is able to take time off work to care for and bond with their child.

We recognise that affordability may limit the time away from work that some self-employed adopters can take which is why statutory adoption guidance says that Local Authorities should consider making a payment - equivalent to Maternity Allowance - in cases where adopters do not qualify for any statutory payment because of their self-employed status.

■ Social Security Benefits: Appeals

Kate Osamor: [\[187289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 25 March 2021 to Question 171674, on Social Security Benefits: Appeals, what training decision makers receive in respect of the Decision makers' guide, volume 1, chapter 3.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Decision Makers Guide, Volume 1, Chapter 03 is titled **Revision**. As part of their foundation learning, all new decision makers receive the following training on Revision:

- Decision Maker Foundation Learning Module 05: Common Decision Maker Subjects Part 2: Revision and supersession. This is a 3-hour session delivered by Learning Delivery Officers. This training aims to provide decision makers with the knowledge and understanding of the revision and supersession processes, the differences between them, what an application for revision or supersession is, and how to record the outcome of an application.

In addition, decision makers who deal with mandatory reconsiderations and appeals undertake the following additional learning:

- Mandatory Reconsiderations and Appeals. This is a 12-hour session delivered by Learning Delivery Officers. This training aims to give decision makers the skills to make a mandatory reconsideration decision accurately and write the outcome clearly, addressing all areas disputed by the claimant.

Kate Osamor:

[\[187290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of claimants who were offered an increased benefits award after lodging an appeal were provided with an interpreter in 2020.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not available.

Kate Osamor:

[\[187291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 25 March 2021 to Question 171674, on Social Security Benefits: Appeals, and the Best practice memorandum issued to all decision-making staff involved in appeals lapsing, Quality focus August 2020: lapsing appeals (including in-part) and telephone calls, if she will undertake a sampling exercise to establish whether there are instances of decision makers calling claimants directly to lapse an appeal against the refusal of personal independence payments when those decision makers should have contacted the claimant's representative in the first instance.

Justin Tomlinson:

The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[187282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to Answer 169910 of 23 March 2021 on Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses, what recent progress her Department has made towards the publication of its review of the Special Rules for Terminal Illness.

Justin Tomlinson:

The Department is committed to delivering an improved benefit system for claimants that are nearing the end of their lives and is working across Government to bring forward proposals following the evaluation. I remain committed to implementing the key areas identified in the evaluation; a consensus to change the six-month rule; improving consistency with other services used by people nearing the end of their lives; and raising awareness of the support that is available.

■ Universal Credit

Ms Karen Buck: [185274]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Universal Credit Programme Board minutes, Paper 1, deposited in the Library on 15 April 2021, if she will publish an update on the progress of the course correction that was committed to being carried out to help vulnerable people claiming universal credit following concerns raised at the Universal Credit Programme Board by the Chief Executive of the London Borough Islington on behalf of the Local Government Association.

Will Quince:

[Holding answer 26 April 2021]: In line with our established strategy for releasing Universal Credit Programme Board papers, the outcome to this specific action will be published when we make our next scheduled deposit to the Library during October 2021.

Ms Karen Buck: [185275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will place in the Library a copy of the paper, Universal Credit claimants – In their own words which was presented to the Universal Credit Programme Board at its meeting on 21 March 2019.

Will Quince:

As part of the Department's deposit of Universal Credit Programme Board papers to the Library on 15 April 2021, we included the file titled '54. I - Paper BTL02 – UC Claimants: In Their Own Words', which can be found at:

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2021-0348/54 I BTL02 UC claimants in their own words.pdf>

John Lamont: [187298]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people will benefit from the £20 uplift in universal credit; and what the value of that uplift is in monetary terms in (a) the Scottish Borders and (b) Scotland.

Will Quince:

The Department for Work and Pensions estimates the six month extension to the Universal Credit £20 uplift will cost around £2.2bn in GB, which can be found here: <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2021/>. The available information on the number of people with Universal Credit in payment, by geography, is published and can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>. Guidance on how to extract the information required can be found at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>.

■ Universal Credit: Disqualification

Justin Madders: [185943]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit sanctions have been administered in each month since January 2021.

Mims Davies:

Sanctions statistics on those people claiming Universal Credit are published quarterly and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

The latest statistics are to October 2020 and the statistics from November 2020 to January 2021 are expected to be published on 18 May 2021.

Justin Madders:

[185944]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit sanctions have been administered for failure to comply with work claimant commitments due to complying with covid-19 self-isolation requirements.

Mims Davies:

The information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Claimants who have been advised to self-isolate will not be required to conduct any work related activity outside the home but they may be required to complete work-related activity that it is safe and reasonable to do in their circumstances. Where a claimant has failed to meet their requirements, we will look at any evidence of good reason, including whether they are self-isolating, when considering if a sanction is warranted.

■ Universal Credit: Learning Disabilities**Ms Karen Buck:**

[185273]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Universal Credit Programme Board minutes, Paper 1, deposited in the Library on 15 April 2021, if she will publish an update on (a) the work of the Universal Credit Complex Needs Steering Group and (b) alternative access to claiming and managing universal credit for people with learning disabilities.

Will Quince:

The Universal Credit Programme Board papers deposited in the Library relate to meetings held between October 2018 and March 2019.

The Universal Credit application process is deliberately designed to be as quick and easy as possible, so that claimants receive money at the earliest opportunity. It has been designed to be a predominantly digital service, ensuring we make best use of technology to deliver a modern and effective working-age welfare system, allowing our staff to concentrate on those people who require additional support. The value of this approach has been clearly demonstrated as the Universal Credit caseload doubled, very rapidly, in the months following the outbreak of the pandemic. Where an individual has difficulties using or accessing our online service, help is available through our Freephone Helpline.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, Jobcentre Plus offices across the country remained open to support the most vulnerable claimants, including those with

complex needs and learning disabilities. The Department strives to identify individuals who have complex user needs and/or require additional support to enable them to access our services, ensuring we make necessary adjustments for them to be effectively supported by Universal Credit.

In addition, the Department has continued its Help to Claim funding for 2021/22. This service, delivered through Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, was already a multi-channel offer prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, capable of supporting people through the entire Universal Credit claim through various channels including by telephone and web chat, up to receiving their first full correct payment on time.

■ Work Capability Assessment

David Linden:

[\[187305\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Answer of 13 April 2021 to Question 176014, on Work Capability Assessment, what constitutes appropriate with respect to making the additional Limited Capability for Work Related Activity (LCWRA) amount payable from the date of the decision maker's decision as opposed to the date of the claimant's application.

Justin Tomlinson:

If the claimant applies for a change in their award on the grounds that they have LCWRA, the effective date of the change, that is, the date from which the decision is superseded, is the date of the application. If they move from LCW to LCWRA following a routine WCA then it will take effect from the date of decision.

MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

HOME OFFICE

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper:

[\[178954\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letter dated 12 February 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on weddings, reference ZA55504.

An error has been identified in the written answer given on 21 April 2021. The correct answer should have been:

Kit Malthouse:

~~Given the cross cutting nature of the subject matter of the item of correspondence from the member, we are working with colleagues across Government to provide a comprehensive response. We apologise for the delay and will update the member on progress with the response shortly.~~

This letter has been transferred to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy to respond.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ National Gallery Contingent Liability

Minister of State for Digital and Culture (Caroline Dinenage):

[\[HCWS946\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of all members of this House to bring to their attention the Departmental Minute issued today that provides the House with notice of a small, short-term contingent liability created by my department. This is in relation to an exceptional exhibition arranged by the National Gallery in partnership with the Polish Cultural Institute, and pertains to specialist indemnity insurance coverage protecting five artefacts from harm or damage, required throughout the period of transport and display. The National Gallery, an arm's length body of government sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, will be incurring the liability.

The National Gallery will on 17 May 2021 open its eagerly awaited exhibition *Conversations with God*, with Jan Matejko (1838-1893)'s epic painting of Astronomer Copernicus - a Polish National Treasure - at its heart. Successive delays caused by Covid-19 have frustrated the schedule and logistics of this exhibition, the first devoted to Poland's national painter, whose works are very seldomly loaned.

The complexities of transporting fine art across Europe mid-pandemic, related pandemic stipulations, and works of particular national importance, are such that Polish lenders have requested an indemnity directly from National Gallery in the event any of the artworks suffered damage, in addition to the fine art coverage provided by the Government Indemnity Scheme. Despite the UK's Government Indemnity Scheme enjoying widespread recognition as the 'gold standard' amongst such schemes, the department has agreed to this additional layer of coverage - a particular lender requirement under Polish law - in view of the exhibition's exceptional content and timing. The indemnity would be in place for four months (May-September 2021), up to the consignment of artworks' total value of £5.6 million and therefore represents a contingent liability. The likelihood of the contingent liability crystallising is remote, furthermore a claim would be far more likely to fall at the lower end of the monetary scale provided for.

In the event that loss or damage to an object occurred, the lenders would have the right to request compensation directly from the Gallery, should it believe the Government Indemnity Scheme or a commercial insurance product to be inadequate or unduly inaccessible. The department is confident however that the risk is very low, given the comprehensive nature of Government Indemnity Scheme coverage and its excellent track record in meeting the rare claims brought by lenders. The department is further reassured by the rarity of 'total loss' cases, with only one such payout under the Government Indemnity Scheme in the past decade, and by the National Gallery's exceptional standards of care, which has submitted no claims under the Government Indemnity Scheme for at least the last twenty years.

A copy of the Departmental Minute will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Attachments:

1. Departmental Minute [DCMS Departmental Minute 28 April 2021, National Gallery.pdf]

TREASURY**■ Contingencies Fund Advance**

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman): [\[HCWS945\]](#)

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will incur new expenditure in connection with the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021-22.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £7,792,000,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Main Estimate for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £7,792,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Further requests to the Contingencies Fund may be made as necessary to fund Covid-19 activity delivered by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.