



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 18 October 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (08:44 P.M., 18 October 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Employment Tribunals Service

Alex Cunningham:

[52489]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the report by the Law Commission, Employment law hearing structures, published in April 2020, whether he has plans to implement the recommendation in that report that the employment tribunal time limit for claims be extended to six months for all types of claim.

Paul Scully:

A claim to an Employment Tribunal must usually be made within three months. For certain claims, redundancy pay or equal pay, the claim must be made within six months. The Employment Tribunals already have the discretion to allow claims submitted out of time, on a case by basis.

■ Employment: Bullying

Rachael Maskell:

[53275]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether his Department has made an assessment on the effect of workplace bullying on trends in the levels of lost days of work per employee in each calendar year.

Rachael Maskell:

[53276]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment has he made of the effect of (a) negative behaviours and (b) bullying at work on the cost to the economy each year.

Rachael Maskell:

[53277]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent steps has he taken to address bullying in the workplace; and if he will bring forward measures to tackle bullying in the proposed Employment Bill.

Paul Scully:

The Government is clear that bullying and harassment has no place in today's workplace and we are taking steps to better understand the scale of the problem, including:

- We commissioned IFF research to conduct the forthcoming Employee Rights survey. The survey asked respondents to recount instances of problems with fair treatment at work in the past two years and whether it was bullying and harassment related.
- Acas recently published independent research which estimates the cost of workplace conflict more broadly. This is available at:
<https://www.acas.org.uk/estimating-the-costs-of-workplace-conflict-report>.

- We announced in the summer that it will be taking further action to address persistent issues of sexual harassment in the workplace.

There is guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-bullying-and-harassment> and Acas provides free and impartial advice for employers and employees.

■ Energy Supply: Prices

Rachael Maskell: [52542]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of a potential rise in energy prices; and what assessment he has made of the impact of any such rise on household disposable income (a) of people who are (i) on low pay and (ii) in receipt of social security and (b) in general.

Greg Hands:

The Government is committed to ensuring fair energy prices for consumers. We therefore introduced the energy price cap in 2019, which saves 15 million households on default tariffs up to £100 a year on average. The level of the price cap is set by Ofgem, the independent regulator.

Rachael Maskell: [53965]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will publish a regional impact assessment on a rise in energy prices.

Greg Hands:

In order to protect customers, the Government introduced a price cap in 2019 which saves 15 million households on default tariffs up to £100 a year on average. The level of the price cap is set by Ofgem, the independent regulator, and is based on a range of factors including regional network costs.

■ Google: Conditions of Employment

Chi Onwurah: [53891]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to reports that Google delayed correcting a known disparity in pay between temporary and permanent staff, if his Department will investigate (a) Google's employment practices and (b) whether that company has been fully compliant with requirements of employment legislation in the last five years.

Paul Scully:

An agency worker can qualify for equal treatment after working for 12 weeks in the same role with the same hirer. From April 2020 the Government banned the use of "Swedish Derogation" contracts. This ensures that agency workers cannot be pressured to opt out of their right to equal pay with permanent counterparts after the twelve-week qualifying period in the same role with the same hirer. While I cannot comment on individual cases, if somebody believes these requirements have not

been met then it is open to them to seek redress through the Employment Tribunals system.

■ **Green: Insolvency**

Chi Onwurah:

[53237]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he had with representatives of Green, the energy supplier, on its exit from the energy market; and whether he took steps to prevent that exit.

Greg Hands:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I held a roundtable on 21 September 2021 with smaller and challenger energy suppliers, including Green Energy Company. It is Ofgem, the independent regulator responsibility to engage with suppliers considering exiting the market.

In a competitive market, it is normal from time to time for energy suppliers who cannot finance their activities to exit the retail energy market.

Chi Onwurah:

[53239]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many consumers are affected by the exit of Green energy company from the energy market; and how long their existing (a) tariffs and (b) renewables mix will be maintained.

Greg Hands:

Ofgem estimate that 255,000 domestic customers and a small number of non-domestic customers are affected by Green Energy Company exiting the retail energy market. Ofgem runs the Supplier of Last Resort process with the aim of getting the best deal for consumers.

■ **Green: Redundancy**

Chi Onwurah:

[53238]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with (a) the employees of the energy company Green and (b) Ofgem on training and redeployment for the employees of Green following the company's exit from the energy market.

Greg Hands:

BEIS Ministers have not met with Green Energy Company employees. Energy suppliers have a duty to inform both Ofgem and their employees before exiting the market. Government help and support, including training and finding new employment is delivered by the Job Centre Plus Rapid Response Service and is available to all employees affected by energy suppliers exiting the market. For more information on government support visit the gov.uk website at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/redundancy-help-finding-work-and-claiming-benefits>.

■ Heating

Dr Alan Whitehead:

[\[52395\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many new (a) gas boilers and (b) heat pumps have been installed by each energy company under the Government's Energy Company Obligation programme in the last financial year.

Greg Hands:

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is worth £640 million per annum and has been in place since January 2013.

The Government does not have figures on the number of gas boilers and heat pumps installed by each energy company in the last financial year. However, we do know that since ECO began, it has delivered around 3.3 million insulation and heating measures in around 2.3 million homes, up to the end of June 2021.

Obligated suppliers can deliver insulation and heating measures at any time during their obligation period.

■ Housing: Heating

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[52558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to incentivise the transition from gas boilers to heat pumps.

Greg Hands:

The Government will shortly publish the Heat and Buildings Strategy which will set out a long-term plan to decarbonise domestic heating.

■ Members: Correspondence

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[53836\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when he plans to reply to the correspondence of 9 April 2021 from the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne East.

George Freeman:

A reply was issued on 4 May from my Hon. Friend the then Minister for Science, Research and Innovation (Amanda Solloway). A copy of that response was sent to the Rt. Hon. Member on 24 September.

■ Post Office Horizon It Inquiry

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[53194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether (a) the Post Office, (b) Fujitsu, (c) his Department and (d) UKGI has refused any batch requests for documents from the Inquiry Team of the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry.

Paul Scully:

Sir Wyn Williams made it clear in his [Statement of 19 May](#) that all parties whose decision-making is under the spotlight are cooperating fully with the Inquiry.

Mr Kevan Jones:[\[53195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of whether core participants to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry have the right to refuse to give evidence.

Paul Scully:

As the Inquiry is now statutory, the Chair has the power to compel all witnesses to give evidence if necessary.

■ Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry: Paula Vennells**Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[53193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will confirm that, as a core participant, Paula Vennells' cost of legal representation in relation to the Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry has not been covered by the public purse under Section 40 of the Inquiry Act 2005.

Paul Scully:

In the progress update published in September, Sir Wyn Williams clearly outlines his approach towards legal representation and funding for Core Participants.

■ Shops: Closures**Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[53325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of trends in the number of shops closing since 1 January 2021.

Paul Scully:

The Government recognises the challenge that empty properties on our high streets poses and the risk of the number of vacant units increasing due to the economic impacts of Covid-19.

In order to mitigate against a rise in the number of vacant units, the Government has introduced a range of measures to protect businesses that are struggling to pay their rent due to Covid-19. We have extended the moratorium on commercial landlords' right to forfeiture for the non-payment of rent to the 25 March 2022 and we will introduce legislation to help landlords and tenants resolve historic Covid-19 rent debt through binding arbitration if necessary.

On 15 July, the Government published the Build Back Better High Streets Strategy focusing on five key priorities: breathing new life into empty buildings; supporting high street businesses; improving the public realm; creating safe and clean spaces; and celebrating pride in local communities.

■ Universal Credit: West Midlands**Shabana Mahmood:** [53216]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential combined effect of the removal of the £20 a week uplift to universal credit and increases in gas utility prices on estimated rates of fuel poverty in (a) Birmingham Ladywood constituency and (b) the West Midlands in the next 12 months.

Greg Hands:

Thanks to our price cap we are able to protect customers from higher bills.

The Government introduced a price cap in 2019 which saves 15 million households on default tariffs up to £100 a year on average. The level of the price cap is set by Ofgem, the independent regulator, and is based on a range of factors including regional network costs.

■ Utilities: Insolvency**Shabana Mahmood:** [53217]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what contingency plans he has in place for customers in the event of a major gas provider collapsing.

Greg Hands:

The Government has robust processes in place to ensure continuity of supply for customers. These include the Supplier of Last Resort process, which is operated by Ofgem, the independent regulator. The Government also has powers under Special Administration. Government will continue to work closely with Ofgem to protect customers. For more information on this process visit the Ofgem website: <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/supplier-last-resort-revised-guidance-2016>.

Shabana Mahmood: [53218]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with representatives of energy companies on the effect of their potential collapse on consumers.

Greg Hands:

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have held a series of bilateral and roundtable events with leading energy suppliers, smaller and challenger suppliers and consumer groups to hear about the challenges they currently face and explore ways to protect consumers and businesses

CABINET OFFICE**■ Bishops: Public Appointments****Valerie Vaz:**[\[53885\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Prime Minister has an advisory role to the Sovereign on the appointment of Anglican bishops; and what assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of reviewing the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829.

Michael Ellis:

Under reforms introduced in 2007 by the then Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister does not choose bishops or advise on the choice of bishops. His or her role is confined to putting the name of the nominated candidate to Her Majesty The Queen.

The Government does not have any current plans to review the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829.

■ Cabinet Office: Flags**Justin Madders:**[\[50053\]](#)

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

Justin Madders:[\[50054\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will list the companies that have supplied Union Jack flags to his Department since 2019.

Michael Ellis:

Flags have been supplied to the Cabinet Office by Mitie FM Ltd. and Flagmakers. These flags were manufactured in the UK.

■ Chequers**Layla Moran:**[\[54005\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many days the Prime Minister has stayed at Chequers overnight in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021 to date.

Layla Moran:[\[54006\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many bedrooms are available for use at Chequers as at 23 September 2021.

Michael Ellis:

Chequers is not a government building; it is run and managed by an independent trust.

As has been the practice under successive Premiers, the Prime Minister uses Chequers consistent with the wishes of the donor, the late Sir Arthur Lee, who gave it to the nation for the use of the Prime Minister. Chequers is available to Ministers for both official and private use.

Sir Arthur Lee's wishes are set out in the Chequers Estate Acts 1917: "It is not possible to foresee or foretell from what classes or conditions of life the future wielders of power in this country will be drawn. Some may be as in the past men of wealth and famous descent; some may belong to the world of trade and business; others may spring from the ranks of the manual toilers. To none of these in the midst of their strenuous and responsible labours could the spirit and anodyne of Chequers do anything but good. In the city-bred man especially, the periodic contact with the most typical rural life would create and preserve a just sense of proportion between the claims of town and country. To the revolutionary statesman the antiquity and calm tenacity of Chequers and its annals might suggest some saving virtues in the continuity of English history and exercise a check upon too hasty upheavals, whilst even the most reactionary could scarcely be insensible to the spirit of human freedom which permeates the countryside of Hampden, Burke and Milton. Apart from these more subtle influences, the better the health of our rulers the more sanely will they rule and the inducement to spend two days a week in the high and pure air of the Chiltern hills and woods will, it is hoped, benefit the nation as well as its chosen leaders."

■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries

Stephanie Peacock: [\[53983\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will make it his policy to bring forward the public inquiry into the Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic to afford bereaved families the opportunity to have their concerns answered and come to terms with their losses.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[53984\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress has been made on appointing a chair for the public inquiry into the Government's response to the covid-19 pandemic.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[53985\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on defining the terms of reference in preparation for the public inquiry into the handling of the covid-19 pandemic.

Stephanie Peacock: [\[53986\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what progress he has made on (a) hiring staff, (b) finding offices and (c) sending advance requests for documents in preparation for the public inquiry into the handling of the covid-19 pandemic.

Michael Ellis:

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed that a public inquiry into COVID-19 would be established on a statutory basis, with full formal powers, and that it will begin its work in spring 2022.

Further details will be set out in due course.

Stephanie Peacock:[\[53987\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he plans to take to help ensure that lessons are learnt from the handling of the covid-19 pandemic before the public inquiry into its handling, for the purposes of ensuring a stronger response in the event that the virus mutates in a dangerous way between autumn 2021 and spring 2022.

Michael Ellis:

The Government has consistently adapted its response to COVID-19, including new variants, as more is learnt about the virus and how best to manage it.

The Government has developed a wide range of tools to: reduce the risk of new variants emerging; stop and slow importation of the most dangerous variants; identify new variants and outbreaks; and ensure there is an appropriate response if further outbreaks occur. This includes - but is not limited to - the enhancement of domestic sequencing capacity this year. Our domestic capacity is set to further increase over the coming months, enabling a higher number of PCR positive cases to undergo whole genome sequencing, which in turn improves our ability to detect any new variants.

The Government is committed to learning lessons from COVID-19 to inform our preparedness for future epidemics. The government fully expects that many of those lessons will come from the public inquiry which will begin its work in spring 2022.

■ EU Law**Owen Thompson:**[\[52552\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what consultation was undertaken with members of the legal profession ahead of the Government's announcement that it will review retained EU law.

Owen Thompson:[\[52553\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral statement by the Paymaster General of 16 September 2021 on Brexit: Opportunities, Official Report, column 1148, whether retained workers' rights legislation will be reviewed.

Owen Thompson:[\[52554\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral statement by the Paymaster General of 16 September 2021 on

Brexit: Opportunities, Official Report, column 1148, whether retained environmental standards legislation will be reviewed.

Owen Thompson:

[52555]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the oral statement by the Paymaster General of 16 September 2021 on Brexit: Opportunities, Official Report, column 1148, what (a) tests or (b) decision-making frameworks the Government plans to put in place before taking the decision to alter or replace retained EU legislation.

Michael Ellis:

The Cabinet Office will lead this review, working with departments across Whitehall and a range of stakeholders.

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

■ Infected Blood Inquiry

Holly Lynch:

[53289]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what his planned timetable is for publication of the outcome of the infected blood inquiry compensation consultation.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the hon. Member to my [written statement](#) of 23 Sept 2021 - the consultation closed on 9 August 2021 and the [Terms of Reference](#) for the study have now been published online. I look forward to receiving Sir Robert's recommendations.

■ National Space Council

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[53248]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many times the National Space Council has met; and which Secretaries of State have attended each meeting.

Michael Ellis:

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

[GOV.UK](#) is updated regularly with the terms of reference and membership of Cabinet Committees, including the National Space Council.

■ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Daisy Cooper:

[53349]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to the Answer of 15 September 2021 to Question 49964 on Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, what assistance the Government can provide to secure a response from the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman to (a) letters from hon. Members and (b) referrals from constituents.

Michael Ellis:

I would advise the hon. Member to contact the Ombudsman directly at MP@ombudsman.org.uk for any general correspondence or queries about particular cases.

The Government will, of course, pass on correspondence and complaints to the Ombudsman but cannot intervene directly in the Ombudsman's day-to-day business. Members can also raise issues with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee who scrutinise the Ombudsman if they have concerns about how the Ombudsman engages with members.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[53250]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff across Whitehall (a) were working on and (b) are working on the relocation of Afghan nationals (i) prior to and (b) after the fall of Kabul.

Michael Ellis:

A significant cross Government effort is underway to ensure the thousands of Afghans who were evacuated to the UK receive the support they need to rebuild their lives, find work, pursue education, and integrate into local communities. Hundreds of staff across Government have been working tirelessly to bring as many British nationals and eligible Afghans as possible back to the UK.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

■ [Subject Heading to be Assigned]

Jim Shannon:

[53894]

To ask the Member for South West Bedfordshire, representing the Church Commissioners, what steps the Church Commissioners are taking to provide affordable, sustainable and beautiful housing to support community wellbeing on the Church estate.

Andrew Selous:

The Church Commissioners' land portfolio currently has potential to deliver around 30,000 new homes across England. The aim is to deliver high quality new homes and employment opportunities to support and enhance their local surroundings. New developments provide a mixture of market and affordable homes and can include

new primary and secondary schools, community facilities, local retail centres, libraries, sports facilities and new areas of public open space. Through best practice masterplanning and placemaking, the Church Commissioners seek to build new communities, and strengthen existing ones, helping to create and sustain vibrant and vital places.

The Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community, which reported earlier this year, set out a vision for housing centred on five core values: that good housing should be sustainable, safe, stable, sociable and satisfying. The Church Commissioners support these values as a way of defining what good looks like as an important step in building thriving communities. The full report from the Archbishops' Commission can be seen here:

<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/archbishops-commission-housing-church-and-community>

COP26

■ Carbon Emissions: Developing Countries

Helen Hayes:

[53300]

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to negotiate a global fund to support the transition to net zero in less wealthy countries.

Alok Sharma:

We must support the poorest and most vulnerable countries to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis, and mobilise finance to enable their net zero transition. The commitment to jointly mobilise \$100bn of climate finance a year is critically important; it helps countries raise ambition and supports their transition. The UK Presidency has been very clear that developed countries must meet existing commitments and come forward with ambitious post-2020 climate finance pledges, to achieve and surpass the \$100bn a year goal. I have also asked Germany and Canada to lead on the development of a Delivery Plan which sets out how donor countries will meet the goal.

Public finance alone will not be enough to achieve the trillions needed in developing countries. The UK Presidency is working with other donors, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and the private sector to promote and support a range of targeted initiatives that mobilise finance globally and tackle barriers to and promote investment into developing countries. There are a range of financing mechanisms including the dedicated UN backed climate funds which we support - including the Green Climate Fund, Climate Investment Funds and the Global Environmental Facility. The recently launched Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero will also accelerate global flows into activities that support a net zero and resilient future.

■ Climate Change

Daisy Cooper:

[\[53348\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that gender inequality increases as a result of climate-related disasters, if he will meet women most disadvantaged by the effects of climate change.

Alok Sharma:

I have committed to meeting civil society organisations, and young people, in every country I visit. This, of course, means listening to the priorities of women and girls who are experiencing first hand the impacts of climate change and leading the response. The UK Presidency sees women's rights organisations, amongst others, as essential partners in effectively tackling climate change and that is why we are working closely with such organisations to deliver Gender Day at COP26.

Additionally, with Bella Lack and Elizabeth Wathuti, both youth climate activists, I lead regular meetings of a Civil Society and Youth Advisory Council, established in order to hear and act on the expertise, insights and experiences of those most affected by climate change.

Climate change is not gender neutral, and it has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, in particular those from the global south or indigenous communities.

Addressing this will require the implementation of gender-responsive climate action and finance, as well as the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all levels of decision making on climate. We know - in line with the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan and the Feminist Action for Climate Justice Action Coalition - that this will help us achieve our long term climate goals.

■ Climate Change: Finance

Chris Law:

[\[53265\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, if he will make it Government policy to commit to specific targets for climate finance that (a) supports gender equality and (b) reaches women and their organisations most affected by the climate crisis.

Alok Sharma:

The UK Presidency recognises the disproportionate impact climate change has on women and girls. To achieve our long term climate goals, climate finance must deliver on gender equality, but there is work to be done. As highlighted in our priorities for public finance for COP26, published earlier this year, we are committed to improving the gender-responsiveness of climate finance and ensuring that women have full and meaningful participation in climate policy and action.

The UK has signed up to a range of initiatives to help to encourage gender equality, including to help women have better access to finance and enable them to participate in the transition to a green economy. For instance, our Partnership for Forests (P4F) programme has enabled greater female participation in designing payment-for-ecosystem-services systems in the Amazon that benefited the whole community,

giving more involvement in the decision-making and leading to sustainable economic growth. As COP26 Presidency, we are calling on others to take similar steps.

Daisy Cooper: [\[53347\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, if he will make it his policy to commit to specific targets for climate finance that support gender equality.

Alok Sharma:

As the incoming COP Presidency, we understand that climate change is not gender neutral and women and girls are disproportionately negatively impacted. Earlier this year, we published our priorities for public finance for COP26 which include improving the gender-responsiveness of climate finance which is key to achieving long term climate goals. The UK Presidency is committed to working to address gaps in the provision of climate finance to ensure it delivers on gender equality in line with the UNFCCC Lima Work Programme's Gender Action Plan.

The UK has also signed up to other international commitments to delivering gender-responsive climate finance, including the the Feminist Action for Climate Justice in July. These initiatives are at the core of what we want to deliver on gender at COP26. As part of this we have committed to stepping up commitments on gender-responsive climate finance.

■ Environment Protection

Caroline Lucas: [\[53870\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to Zero Hour's report, Three COP Outcomes We Can't Live Without, (a) if he will make an assessment of its recommendations for (i) a joint emergency strategy for climate and nature (ii) commitment from parties to the UNFCCC to the global carbon budget aligned with 1.5 degrees Celsius and (iii) a global goal to achieve net gains in biodiversity by 2030, against a baseline of 2020 and (b) if he will make it his policy to take forward these recommendations at COP26.

Alok Sharma:

Ahead of COP26, we are calling for global action and ambition to reduce emissions from all sectors in order to meet net zero by 2050 – including in agriculture, forestry and other land use, which is collectively responsible for 23% of global emissions.

On i) we are pushing countries to make ambitious commitments to curb the dual crisis of biodiversity loss and climate change, which will be announced at COP26 in November. This will put us on a path to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and mitigate the climate crisis.

In addition, this year the UK has convened meetings between the COP26 and COP15 Presidencies and their respective Secretariats to increase synergies and jointly address the interlinked crises of climate, biodiversity and land through integrated approaches. Discussions have explored the importance of unified action at

all levels to restore the land that sustains us, halt the loss of biodiversity, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

On ii) the science is clear that in order to prevent the most catastrophic effects of climate change we must limit warming to 1.5c. This is why we are urging all parties to submit ambitious NDCs that keep this target within reach by COP26.

On iii) the UK is pursuing a hugely ambitious package of outcomes from COP15 that goes beyond agreement of new global biodiversity goals and targets, but also puts in place the core elements needed to drive real-world change. These are: 1) a set of ambitious targets to deliver on our overall goal of 'bending the curve of biodiversity loss by 2030'; 2) significantly increased mobilisation of global resources from all sources and a shift towards nature positive decision-making across all sectors; 3) strengthened accountability to mitigate the risk that countries agree ambitious targets but fail to take meaningful steps to deliver change.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Interpreters

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[53249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many of the 260 interpreters his Department has made contact with since the data breach on 20 September 2021; and in what form that contact was made.

James Heappey:

All 260 ARAP eligible individuals whose details were involved in the data breach on 20 September have been advised to delete their email account and create a new email address. We have asked them to provide us with their new details so that we can continue to communicate with them via email. We continue to support their relocation by these means.

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

Stephen Morgan:

[\[52592\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many staff have been processing applications to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme in each month from 1 April 2021 to 21 September 2021.

James Heappey:

The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was launched in April 2021 by a team of seven civil servants.

The original ARAP team has been augmented with significant additional civilian and military resource. As at 21 September, a total of 43 additional civilian staff and 103 military staff had been deployed for periods varying from a few weeks to six months to support the delivery of the ARAP programme.

Records have not been kept to show the monthly figure of staff working on the ARAP team. This would not be an accurate reflection of the number of staff who have supported the delivery of the scheme.

John Healey:

[\[53185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many (a) individual Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) applicants and (b) ARAP applicants including their families, have been relocated to the UK each week since 28 August 2021.

James Heappey:

Since the conclusion of Operation PITTING on 28 August, we have relocated 27 ARAP eligible individuals to the UK. 29 dependants have accompanied these individuals as permitted by the policy.

■ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Theresa Villiers:

[\[52425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will meet me and my constituent, Thomas Leigh, to discuss Mr Leigh's award of compensation for injury from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme.

Leo Docherty:

As this is a sensitive matter, it is taking time to collate the information needed to respond to the right hon. Member's request. I will write to her as soon as I am able to.

■ Armed Forces: Housing

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[53908\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the Armed Forces onsite Single Living Accommodation was last upgraded across the Defence Estate.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) undertakes repairs and maintenance to its Single Living Accommodation (SLA) across the MOD estate as and when required.

The Single Living Accommodation Model (SLAM) modernisation project, invested £1.2 Billion in SLA in the UK, in improving or creating more than 22,000 bedspaces, over a period of 12 years, completing in 2015.

MOD remains committed to improving the 'Lived Experience' of Service personnel accommodated in SLA and have plans to invest approximately

£1.5 Billion on upgrades and new-build SLA between 2020 - 2030.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:

[\[53909\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the Service Family Accommodation for Armed Forces personnel across the country is outside the usual ten mile radius from the duty station.

Jeremy Quin:

Approximately 10%, c5,000 of all UK Service Family Accommodation, lies outside the usual 10-mile radius of duty stations. Allocations outside a 10 miles radius must be agreed by the local Commanding Officer.

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck:[\[53910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to help ensure that (a) Substitute Single Service Accommodation and (b) Substitute Service Family Accommodation meet the standards required.

Jeremy Quin:

The Department's management contract for the provision of all substitute accommodation from the private rental market, requires a minimum standard of accommodation to be achieved in line with Departmental specification. All accommodation will meet the Decent Homes Standard as determined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, at the date of occupancy.

As part of the standard contract compliance checks, the Department formally approves the use of properties before they are allocated to Service personnel and Families.

■ Army: Officers**Adam Holloway:**[\[52439\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many officers there are of rank major general or higher in the Regular Army as of September 2021; and how many there are planned to be after the implementation of the Integrated Review.

James Heappey:

Trade Trained Regulars of Paid Rank Major General and above, as at 1 July 2021

RANK	TOTAL
General	4
Lieutenant General	16
Major General	45
Total	65

Notes/ Caveats:

1. These figures are for the Trade Trained 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. Figures are as at 1 July 2021 in line with the protocols for release of personnel statistics.

Detailed plans for the future structure of the Army are still being refined. There will be announcements made on our intent for both the regular and reserve force in due course.

■ Army: Reserve Forces

Adam Holloway: [\[52438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many part-time volunteer major generals there are in the Army Reserve as of September 2021; and how many there are planned to be after the implementation of the Integrated Review.

James Heappey:

Trained FR20 Reserves of Paid Rank Major General, as at 1 July 2021:

RANK	TOTAL
Major General	5

Notes/ Caveats:

1. The Trained FR20 population in the table consists of Group A Army Reserves, some Sponsored Reserves and those personnel serving on FTRS contracts who were previously Army Reservists.

2. The figure above includes Major Generals that contribute towards the previously defined FR20 population and excludes those personnel who do not. E.g., those Reservists on service complaint panels and the Governor of Edinburgh Castle.

3. Figures are as at 1 July 2021 in line with the protocols for release of personnel statistics.

Detailed plans for the future structure of the Army are still being refined. There will be announcements made on our intent for both the regular and reserve force in due course.

■ Australia and USA: Military Alliances

Stephen Morgan: [\[52590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the number of jobs that will be created in the UK as a result of the AUKUS partnership.

Stephen Morgan: [\[52591\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he has received guarantees that British industry will benefit from contracts resulting from the AUKUS agreement.

Mr Ben Wallace:

As set out to the House on 16 September 2021 by the Prime Minister, the initial scoping phase for the AUKUS partnership is expected to take 18 months, therefore it is too early to provide an estimate of the number of UK jobs that will be created. This is a complex, long term project, and the 18 month programme of work is the first step

in the process to identify potential opportunities and interdependencies with the UK submarine programme.

■ **Clyde Naval Base and RNAD Coulport: Fire and Rescue Services**

Grahame Morris:

[\[52469\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what practical fire and rescue safety exercises have been undertaken with the involvement of all the relevant agencies as contingency planning for maximum credible incidents at (a) HM Naval Base Clyde and (b) Royal Naval Armaments Depot in each of the last five years.

Jeremy Quin:

Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, in conjunction with external authorities, routinely conduct practical Emergency Arrangements exercises which cover maximum credible incidents and meet statutory and regulatory requirements, at both Faslane and Coulport.

Over the last 12 months, exercises have included nine independently controlled and assessed fire exercises, involving vessel crews and on-site Fire and Rescue Services.

There have been structured table-top exercises and four successful practical demonstrations of the revised on-site Fire and Rescue crews' response in November 2020, to the satisfaction of the MOD specialist authority.

In August 2021, a practical Naval Base fire and rescue exercise was conducted jointly with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Grahame Morris:

[\[52470\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of contingency planning arrangements in relation to the response of all relevant fire and rescue agencies to maximum credible safety critical incidents at (a) HM Naval Base Clyde and (b) the Royal Naval Armaments Depot.

Jeremy Quin:

Extensive contingency planning arrangements are routinely reviewed to consider all credible safety incidents at Faslane and Coulport.

The Naval Base's agreed fire and rescue response has been endorsed by MOD's Chief Fire Officer and the Naval Base Commander.

Grahame Morris:

[\[52471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the planned changes in the level of fire and rescue cover at the HM Naval Base Clyde proposed by Capita, what steps he has taken to (a) assess the implications of such changes in the event of major incidents affecting safety critical sites and (b) consult trade union representatives on their concerns.

Jeremy Quin:

Capita undertook an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) based on the known strategic assets and credible worst-case scenarios identified by HM Naval Base Clyde's Senior Leadership Team.

The plan has been tested through theoretical and practical exercises reviewed by MOD suitably qualified and experienced personnel. The plans are also endorsed by the MOD Chief Fire Officer and the Naval Base Commander.

Capita have had regular discussions with Unite Trade Union senior officials throughout 2020-21. Prior to the IRMP being approved, colleagues at both locations were engaged to develop a full understanding of the concerns and risks on each site. This included Capita Fire and Rescue firefighters based at Clyde who are members of Unite.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions**Caroline Lucas:****[53865]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish the Ministry of Defence's greenhouse gas emissions for the years (a) 2018-2019, (b) 2019-2020 and (c) 2020-2021.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence publishes its Greenhouse Gas emissions associated with energy consumption on the defence estate, domestic business travel and operational fuels in its Annual Report and Accounts:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mod-annual-reports>

Gurkhas: Pensions**Jim Shannon:****[53897]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will ensure that all Gurkhas who retired from the Army before 1997 are given a full army pension.

Leo Docherty:

All Gurkhas who retired from the Army before 1 July 1997 qualified for an immediate pension under the 1948 Gurkha Pension Scheme (GPS) after only 15 years' service. In contrast, before 1975, British soldiers who served less than 22 years received no pension. This means Gurkhas were receiving pension payments for over 25 years before most British soldiers of the same rank and length of service qualified for any payments.

For most Gurkha veterans the 1948 GPS provides a pension at least as good, and in many cases better, than that given to their British counterparts with identical periods of service. Our view is that the 1948 GPS is a very fair scheme.

■ Mali: Desertion

Kenny MacAskil:

[\[52605\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49287 on Mali: Desertion, what the desertion rates were among Mali's defence and security forces in late 2019.

James Heappey:

This is information which is not available to the Department. Our assessment is relative, derived from a range of non-quantitative data.

■ Military Aid

John Healey:

[\[53186\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will publish (a) the number of open Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) requests, (b) the number of personnel committed and on standby for MACA requests and (c) details of those MACA requests.

James Heappey:

As of 11 October there were 20 open Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) tasks; further information on these tasks is included in the attached table. Those tasks with zero Defence personnel assigned in the table relate to the use of the Defence Estate by other authorities and no Defence personnel are specifically dedicated to the execution of the MACA. In addition to those personnel assigned in the table, 4,000 troops are held at readiness to further support a range of resilience operations at the request of the civil authorities.

■ Ministry of Defence: Small Businesses

Chris Evans:

[\[52483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the total procurement spend was by his Department with small- and medium-sized enterprises in 2020-21.

Jeremy Quin:

In Financial Year 2019-20, the most recent year for which figures are available, the Ministry of Defence is estimated to have spent £4.505 billion directly and indirectly with small and medium-sized enterprises. This represents procurement spend for the core department and DSTL only. All other Executive Agencies and NDPBs are excluded.

Chris Evans:

[\[52484\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of the total procurement spend by his Department has been spent with small- and medium-sized enterprises in 2020-21.

Jeremy Quin:

In Financial Year 2019-20, the most recent year for which figures are available, 21.3% of MOD's total procurement spend is estimated to have gone directly and

indirectly to small and medium-sized enterprises. This represents procurement spend for the core department and DSTL only. All other Executive Agencies and NDPBs are excluded.

■ Ministry of Defence: Training

John Healey: [\[52414\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what proportion of civil servants in his Department have completed (a) initial and (b) annual refresher training for information security, by grade.

Leo Docherty:

All Ministry of Defence (MOD) personnel are required to undertake initial and refresher training to ensure they can recognise threats to security and can respond appropriately. The mandated training is the Defence Information Management Passport (DIMP) online course, which must be retaken every three years, and annual attendance at a General Security Threat Brief (this covers all elements of protective security and includes information and cyber security).

In the period 1 February 2021 (when Version six was introduced) to 4 October 2021, a total of 81,306 MOD staff completed or refreshed their DIMP in accordance with the three-yearly cycle. Completion data is not held by grade within the Defence Learning Environment. Longer term training records will be held locally by business units, but collating this information would involve going out to all sites across MOD, and this would incur disproportionate cost.

General Security Threat Briefs are delivered locally, and no data regarding attendance is held centrally. Again, collating this information would involve going out to all sites across MOD, and this would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Ministry of Defence: Written Questions

Kenny MacAskil: [\[52606\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he plans to respond to Questions 14221, 14222 and 14223 tabled by the hon. Member for East Lothian on 11 June 2021.

James Heappey:

As I stated in my response of 16 June 2021 to the hon. Member's Questions 14221, 14222 and 14223, throughout 2011, the UK Government sought to respond to rapidly changing and volatile dynamics in order to protect Libyan civilians and wider UK interests. The UK's objective was clear: protect civilians and promote stability in Libya in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1973, in support of NATO's Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR.

As announced in Parliament by the then Foreign Secretary on 26 April 2011, the diplomatic mission in Benghazi was expanded to include an additional military liaison advisory team. This team was deployed to support the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) on how to better protect civilians. The team advised the NTC on how to improve their military organisational structures, communications and logistics. This

deployment was fully within the terms of UNSCR 1973; both in respect of civilian protection and its provision, which expressly ruled out a foreign occupation force on Libyan soil. As stated by the then Foreign Secretary, "their sole purpose is to support the NTC's efforts better to protect civilians by advising on military organisational structures, communication and logistics. They are not involved in training or arming the opposition's fighting forces, nor are they executing or providing military advice".

Turning to your question concerning contact with the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, there are no records of any UK contact with this group, in fact, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group was a proscribed terrorist group in both the UK (in 2005) and US (in 2001).

■ **National Flagship: Contracts**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[52420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which companies have been awarded design contracts for the National Flagship programme.

Mr Ben Wallace:

No design contracts have yet been awarded for the National Flagship programme.

■ **Nature Conservation**

Caroline Lucas:

[\[53864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department plans to take to help deliver the Government's target to halt the decline in species by 2030.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) long established SSSI management programme supports the conservation of a wide a range of species that are either legally protected or a priority for conservation management. Our species conservation work also takes place outside of SSSIs with the majority of the activity funded from the DIO Conservation Stewardship Fund. Through this fund the MOD has directly invested in the conservation of habitats and species. Linked programmes and initiatives are run by our specialist natural environment teams and conservation volunteers and are also supported by MOD volunteers. These volunteers work as part of a network of site-level Conservation Groups which enable local naturalists and organisations to undertake surveys across defence sites and contribute to species conservation initiatives.

MOD also works closely with Statutory Bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations to identify opportunities for species conservation (e.g. Back From the Brink - Dorset Heathland Heart, Wildfowl and Wetland Trust Curlew Headstarting). Site level opportunities for species conservation are captured in an Integrated Rural Management Plan to ensure species conservation is integrated with military use and other land uses (e.g. public access, forestry and our agricultural tenanted estate).

There are numerous examples of targeted species conservation projects across the estate (e.g. Wessex Stone Curlew project). For more information and also a focus on

conservation groups work I would refer the hon. Member to Sanctuary magazine which is available on the GOV.UK website.

■ Navy and Merchant Shipping: Recruitment

Cat Smith:

[\[53267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much his Department spends on average per annum on recruitment to the (a) Merchant Navy and (b) Royal Navy, by region of the UK.

Leo Docherty:

The annual spend on Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Fleet Auxiliary recruitment incurred by the RN is as follows:

- Financial Year 20-21 - £62,467,335
- Financial Year 19-20 - £60,740,041
- Financial Year 18-19 - £53,073,272
- Three Year Average - £58,760,216

The spend cannot be broken down to UK regional level.

The Merchant Navy is not a Ministry of Defence organisation. Individual Merchant Navy organisations are responsible for their own recruiting costs.

■ Nuclear Weapons: Testing

Rebecca Long Bailey:

[\[53262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the Answer of 23 May 2019 to Question 256302, what records his Department holds on the civilian (a) women and (b) children who travelled to Christmas Island on troop ship HMT Dunera in 1958.

Leo Docherty:

A search of the Ministry of Defence Archive has been conducted and no records of HMT Dunera have been traced.

■ Shipbuilding: Skilled Workers

Jack Lopresti:

[\[53227\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the UK has access to an adequate supply of skilled labour to ensure that the UK shipbuilding enterprise can deliver the strategically important naval programmes necessary to ensure that the Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary can fulfil their tasks.

Jeremy Quin:

The Secretary of State for Defence is firmly committed to the UK's shipbuilding enterprise and is leading work across Government to deliver an innovative and competitive shipbuilding sector which supports jobs, skills and prosperity throughout the country. Further detail on how Government will develop a sustainable pipeline of

skilled workers for the sector will be set out in the Refresh to the National Shipbuilding Strategy, to be published later this year.

■ Space

John Healey: [\[52413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when he will publish the National Space Strategy.

Jeremy Quin:

The National Space Strategy was published on 27 September 2021.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Broadband

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[53843\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what speed copper broadband must accomplish to be legally defined as broadband.

Julia Lopez:

‘Broadband’ is defined by the technology type and replaced older ‘narrowband’ technologies such as ‘dial-up’ as a method of connecting to the internet. There is therefore no speed threshold which a connection must reach in order to be considered ‘broadband’.

■ Charity Commission: Public Appointments

Rachael Maskell: [\[52539\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her timescale is for appointing a new Chair of the Charity Commission.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS are in the process of appointing a new Chair to the Charity Commission board, which is being run in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The preferred candidate will attend a pre-appointment hearing in front of the DCMS Select Committee.

Ian Karet is the interim Chair of the Commission until 26th December or until a new Chair is appointed.

Rachael Maskell: [\[52540\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to ensure that the new Chair of the Charity Commission is independent.

Nigel Huddleston:

DCMS are in the process of appointing a new Chair to the Charity Commission board, which is being run in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

One of the essential criteria in the person specification for the role, which will be tested in interviews, is a commitment to the charity sector's effective, independent, proportionate, and impartial regulation.

The candidate will also be required to attend a pre appointment hearing in front of the DCMS Select Committee.

■ Digital Technology: Training

Julie Elliott:

[53892]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the implications for her policies of the findings of the recent Harvey Nash Group's Hot Skills & Salary Report, in respect of its findings on (a) what types of digital skills are needed the most by businesses and (b) how the UK compares with other nations on tech skills' gaps; and what plans the Government has to (i) encourage people to take-up digital skills training and (ii) support providers of digital skills training.

Chris Philp:

The high level of demand for cyber security skills identified in the Harvey Nash report is consistent with findings of the annual DCMS-commissioned surveys of the [labour market](#). Some of the skills clusters identified through DCMS research, using Burning Glass data (2019), were: productivity software, software and programming and data science.

The government has introduced various qualifications such as digital T levels in digital production, design and development; digital apprenticeships which provide work based training in technical occupations; and digital bootcamps as a way for people to take up digital skills training. The government is also offering 33 Level 3 digital skills courses from May 2021 to adults aged 19-24. As well as this, HMG is supporting young people to take up digital skills training. For example, people aged between 11-18 can sign up to CyberFirst extracurricular activities to build understanding of digital and technical skills.

Government supports the development of regional digital skills capability through its Local Digital Skills Partnerships. These partnerships are now operating in seven regions and bring together local cross-sector partners to design, develop and coordinate the delivery of digital skills programmes to upskill the current workforce, tackle digital exclusion and raise awareness of the importance of digital skills regionally. An 8th Local Digital Skills Partnership in Hull and East Yorkshire will formally launch in early December 2021.

The government recently published its first [National Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Strategy](#), setting out how we can ensure everyone in every region of the UK has the skills, understanding and opportunities to benefit from AI technologies. This will include: continuing to support future skills through Turing Fellowships, Centres for Doctoral Training and Postgraduate Industrial Masters and AI and Data Science Conversion Courses; publishing research into what skills are needed to enable

employees to use AI in a business setting; and identify how national skills provision can meet those needs.

The National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE), with £84m of government funding, is also aiming to improve the teaching of the computing curriculum in schools. The National AI Strategy will also support the NCCE to ensure programmes for children in AI are accessible.

■ Internet: Safety

Sarah Owen:

[\[53356\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of introducing a named persons scheme in the Online Safety Bill to deliver a culture of compliance to the regulation; what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of such schemes in other sectors; and if she will publish any such assessment.

Sarah Owen:

[\[53357\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of extending the scope for criminal sanctions in the Online Safety Bill where there is a consistent failure by tech companies to meet the required safety duties; and if she will make a statement.

Chris Philp:

The government published the draft Online Safety Bill in May for pre-legislative scrutiny, which is due to report in December. As set out in the Bill, Ofcom will have robust enforcement powers to deliver a culture of compliance, deter companies from breaching the rules and hold them to account if they do. These will include criminal sanctions for senior managers.

■ Sports: Gambling

Martyn Day:

[\[53290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of ending gambling sponsorship in sport.

Chris Philp:

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 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. As part of the wide scope of that Review, we called for evidence on the benefits or harms of allowing operators to advertise and engage in sponsorship arrangements. We are currently considering all evidence carefully and no decisions have been made. A white paper will be published in due course.

■ Streaming: Disability**Lilian Greenwood:****[53228]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2021 to Question 33894 on Streaming: Disability, when she plans to respond to the recommendations on improving the accessibility of video on demand services for people with sight or hearing loss following publication of Ofcom's report entitled Further Statement: Making on-demand services accessible, published on 9 July 2021.

Julia Lopez:

As set out in our response to question 33894 on 20 July 2021, the government is giving careful consideration to the Ofcom recommendations on improving the accessibility of video on demand services for people with sight or hearing loss published on 9 July 2021 and will set out next steps in due course.

■ Telecommunications: Infrastructure**Jamie Stone:****[52572]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) telegraph poles and (b) ducts situated on private land in (i) England and (ii) Scotland.

Julia Lopez:

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

The Digital Connectivity Infrastructure Accelerator (DCIA) programme, led by DCMS, is exploring the challenges of using publicly owned infrastructure assets to support roll out of advanced wireless networks, reducing the demand for additional telegraph poles and other new structures. The Digital Asset Management workstream within this programme, is looking to help local authorities improve knowledge of existing public sector assets, for use by mobile network operators.

In addition, the Geospatial Commission is developing the National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, to drive efficiencies in infrastructure delivery across the UK and help improve worker safety, which may capture some of this data in the future.

The Electronic Communications Code (the Code) is the statutory framework for the installation of digital infrastructure, which applies equally to both public and private land. The full list of operators that have powers under the Code to install, maintain and upgrade digital infrastructure can be found on Ofcom's [website](#).

Jamie Stone:**[52574]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of whether the rollout of full fibre infrastructure is (a) faster, (b) less disruptive and (c) cheaper when using existing duct and pole infrastructure.

Julia Lopez:

The government believes that reusing existing infrastructure, including but not limited to existing ducts and poles, can significantly reduce the time, cost and environmental impact of rolling out new broadband networks. Civil works, in particular installing new ducts and poles (or passive infrastructure), comprise the majority of costs of deploying gigabit broadband networks. In its Wholesale Fixed Telecoms Market Review 2021, Ofcom estimated that the reuse of Openreach's duct and pole network cut the costs of deployment by around half.

Since 2019, Ofcom has mandated open access to Openreach's ducts and poles, making it easier and quicker to deploy digital infrastructure networks. Furthermore, the government has consulted on making changes to the Access to Infrastructure regulations which support deployment using non-telecoms infrastructure.

■ Treasure Trove: Codes of Practice**Gill Furniss:**[\[52568\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when she plans to publish the revised definition of treasure under the Treasure Act 1996.

Nigel Huddleston:

Officials are currently working on the secondary legislation required to introduce the revised definitions, including working with stakeholders on the changes. Once this work is completed it is proposed to introduce the secondary legislation, subject to the constraints of parliamentary time.

EDUCATION**■ Breakfast Clubs****Stephen Timms:**[\[52399\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the decision by the Scottish Government to provide universal free breakfasts to primary school age children.

Will Quince:

Decisions around school funding and the provision of school food including breakfast clubs are a matter for the devolved administrations. The government is committed to continuing support for school breakfast clubs in England and is further investing up to £24 million to continue our national programme for the next two years. This funding will support around 2,500 schools in disadvantaged areas in England, including Opportunity Areas. This will mean that thousands of children from low income families will be offered free nutritious breakfasts to better support their attainment, wellbeing, and readiness to learn.

■ Financial Services: Education

Robert Halfon: [53871]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of placing financial education on the national curriculum for primary schools.

Robert Halfon: [53872]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that school leavers have the necessary financial educational skills when entering the world of employment.

Mr Robin Walker:

Education on financial matters helps to ensure that young people are prepared to manage their money well, make sound financial decisions and know where to seek further information when needed.

Finance education forms part of the citizenship national curriculum which can be taught at all Key Stages and is compulsory at key stages 3 and 4:

<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum>. Financial education ensures that pupils are taught the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and managing financial risk. At secondary school, pupils are taught about income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent.

The department has introduced a rigorous mathematics curriculum, which provides young people with the knowledge and financial skills to make important financial decisions. In the primary mathematics curriculum, there is a strong emphasis on the essential arithmetic knowledge that pupils should be taught. This knowledge is vital, as a strong grasp of numeracy and numbers will underpin pupils' ability to manage budgets and money, including, for example, using percentages. There is also some specific content about financial education, such as calculations with money.

The secondary mathematics curriculum develops pupils' understanding and skills in relation to more complex personal finance issues such as calculating loan repayments, interest rates and compound interest.

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

■ Free School Meals

Stephen Timms: [52400]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the number of eligible students who are not in receipt of food support from their school.

Stephen Timms:

[52401]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has to provide further support to schools to enable them to help children who are experiencing food insecurity.

Will Quince:

The continuing provision of free school meals (FSM) to children from households that are out of work, or on low incomes, is of the utmost importance to the government. Under this government, eligibility for FSM has been extended several times and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half a century.

We want to make sure as many eligible pupils as possible are claiming FSM, and to make it as simple as possible for schools and local authorities to determine eligibility.

To support this:

- We provide an Eligibility Checking System to make the checking process as quick and straightforward as possible for schools and local authorities.
- We have developed a model registration form to help schools encourage parents to sign up for FSM.
- We also provide guidance to Jobcentre Plus advisers so that they can make Universal Credit recipients aware that they may also be entitled to wider benefits, including free school meals.

We have provided around £450 million worth of food vouchers to families whilst schools were largely closed. Now schools are open again, school food provision has returned to typical delivery arrangements, with meals being provided free of charge to eligible pupils at school. If pupils who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals are required to stay at home due to COVID-19, schools should continue to work with their school catering team or food provider to offer a good quality lunch parcel.

Throughout 2021 we are investing up to £220 million in our Holiday Activities and Food programme. Taking place in schools and community venues across the country, delivery began at Easter, has run across the summer and will run in the Christmas holidays. It supports disadvantaged pupils and their families with enriching activities, providing them with healthy food, helping them to learn new things and supporting socialisation and well-being. We are also further investing with £24 million in the National Breakfast Club programme, providing breakfast clubs in schools in disadvantaged areas.

Beyond this, the Department for Work and Pension has provided £429 million through the Covid Local Support Grant. This is being run by local authorities in England to support the hardest hit families and individuals with food and essential utility costs.

Stephen Timms:

[\[53166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has conducted research on the stigmatisation of children who receive free school meals; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

There is absolutely no reason for schools to stigmatise pupils by limiting choice for free school meal pupils at lunchtime. The vast majority of schools and caterers already make use of cashless systems and other methods to ensure that children who are eligible for free school meals are not identified separately, removing any stigma for receiving the benefit.

■ **Free School Meals: Migrants**

Stephen Timms:

[\[53165\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the levels of take-up of free school meals among families with No Recourse to Public Funds in 2019-2021.

Will Quince:

We are working with departments across government to evaluate access to free school meals for families with no recourse to public funds. In the meantime, the extension of eligibility will continue with the current income threshold until a decision on long-term eligibility is made.

At present, data is not available regarding the take up of free school meals by no recourse to public funds groups during the temporary extension.

■ **Free School Meals: Voucher Schemes**

Munira Wilson:

[\[53351\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department plans to provide food voucher support for vulnerable children for the duration of (a) the upcoming autumn 2021 half-term and (b) upcoming winter break 2021-22.

Will Quince:

Schools provide free school meals for eligible pupils during term time. Beyond this, billions of pounds of welfare assistance is in place to support families and children.

During 2021, the department is investing up to £220 million in our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. Taking place in schools and community venues across the country, delivery began at Easter, has run across the summer, and will run during the Christmas holidays. This programme supports disadvantaged pupils and their families with enriching activities, providing them with healthy food, helping them to learn new things and improving socialisation.

■ Free Schools: Denton

Andrew Gwynne:

[52431]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of (a) the adequacy of secondary-level education attainment of pupils in Denton, Greater Manchester and (b) the level of demand for a new free school in that area.

Mr Robin Walker:

There are two secondary schools in Denton, Greater Manchester: St Thomas More Roman Catholic College, a voluntary aided school, and Denton Community College, a local authority maintained school. Both are judged good by Ofsted. Attainment and progress at Denton Community College were below average for the three years up to 2019. At St Thomas More, attainment was above local and national averages for the three years up to 2019 and progress was at or above average for the three years up to 2019. Further detail is available at: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>.

The latest published School Capacity Data (SCAP19) shows that Tameside has a 3% (456 place) surplus for the 2021/22 academic year. Forecasts suggests a growth in demand in the area with an estimated 2% (326 place) shortfall by academic year 2023/24. The council has confirmed to us that they intend meeting the future demand through expanding existing schools, and we are working with them on this.

There are currently no free schools in the pipeline in Tameside. Further free school waves will be considered as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

■ Higher Education: Appeals

Rachael Maskell:

[53968]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of enabling students to appeal against academic judgment within the appeal process for students at universities, alongside (a) exceptional circumstances and (b) procedural irregularity.

Rachael Maskell:

[53969]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions has he had with the Office of Independent Adjudicator on the appeals process for students against academic judgment within the appeal process for students at universities, alongside (a) exceptional circumstances and (b) procedural irregularity.

Michelle Donelan:

Office for Students (OfS) registered providers are independent and autonomous organisations. However, OfS registration conditions require every provider to have fair and transparent procedures for handling academic complaints and appeals. This is to ensure that students are given the opportunity to seek clarification of an assessment or an examination board decision.

In addition, it is an OfS registration condition that all providers co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent

Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), and that they make students aware of their ability to use the scheme.

The OIA is independent of government and has a Good Practice Framework for higher education providers, including information relating to the handling of academic appeals. This is available here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/handling-complaints-and-academic-appeals/the-academic-appeals-process>.

The OIA Good Practice Framework sets out that the provider should clearly state the scope of the academic appeals process and the grounds on which an academic appeal may be lodged.

The OIA is precluded, by primary legislation, from considering complaints related to academic judgement on the grounds that appeals that relate to matters such as marks awarded, or the classifications of degrees, require the opinion of an academic expert. However, the OIA can consider the provider's policies and procedures which may have led to that judgement and whether they are fair and reasonable under a given set of circumstances.

■ Institutes of Technology: Hertfordshire

Bim Afolami:

[53327]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of locating an Institute of Technology in Hertfordshire for (a) people and (b) businesses in that county.

Michelle Donelan:

The department is conducting a competition to deliver our manifesto commitment to establish 8 more high quality Institutes of Technology (IoT). The selected 8 will join the 12 IoTs that have already been established. While it would not be appropriate to comment on the merits of any individual proposal, the department can confirm that we have received an application for the Hertfordshire area. Proposals are being assessed and we plan to announce the outcome of the competition in the autumn.

■ Overseas Students: Finance

Dr Matthew Offord:

[53880]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of enabling people who hold Leave to Remain visa status to apply for student finance.

Michelle Donelan:

The public funds available for student support are targeted on those persons with a lawful and substantial residential connection to the UK.

Student finance is generally available to those who have no restrictions on their ability to live and work in the UK, so that they are likely to be able stay in the UK to complete their education and contribute to the UK economy afterwards.

In 2016, the regulations governing student support were amended to introduce a new eligibility category for those who do not have settled status but who have resided in the UK for an extended period. The amendment extended access to support to students who have spent half their life or at least 20 years in the UK preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course, or 7 years for those under 18 years old. Like most other students, they must be ordinarily resident in England and have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) for the 3 years preceding the first day of the first academic year of their course to qualify for support.

■ Pre-school Education

John McDonnell:

[53172]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings of Action for Children in their report, Barriers to accessing early years services for children, published 21 September 2021.

John McDonnell:

[53173]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to introduce a minimum guarantee of access to early years services.

Will Quince:

The department is leading a cross government approach to champion the family hub model. The government is investing over £34 million to champion family hubs. This includes a National Centre for Family Hubs to provide expert advice, guidance and advocacy; a £10 million transformation fund to open family hubs in around 10 new areas in England; an evaluation innovation fund to build the evidence base; and work with local authorities to develop data and digital products that will support the practical implementation of family hubs. Further details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20m-to-provide-more-early-help-for-vulnerable-families>.

Alongside this, the government is committed to delivering the action areas set out in the Early Years Healthy Development Review led by my right hon. Friend, the member for South Northamptonshire:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>.

One key action area was to champion Family Hubs as a place where parents and carers can access Start for Life services. To support delivery of this, the National Centre for Family Hubs will support councils to understand how best to build a Family Hub network and to take steps at a national and local level to reduce the stigma some parents or carers experience when asking for help. We will consider the recommendations in the Action for Children report as we take forward this work.

Jack Dromey:

[53207]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the (a) proposal to introduce a minimum guarantee of early years services and (b) recommendations of the Action for Children's report entitled Beyond reach: barriers to accessing early years services for children, published on 21 September 2021.

Jack Dromey:

[53208]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the accessibility of early years services in the West Midlands.

Will Quince:

The department is leading a cross government approach to champion the family hub model. The government is investing over £34 million to champion family hubs. This includes a National Centre for Family Hubs to provide expert advice, guidance and advocacy; a £10 million transformation fund to open family hubs in around 10 new areas in England; an evaluation innovation fund to build the evidence base; and work with local authorities to develop data and digital products that will support the practical implementation of family hubs. Further details are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/20m-to-provide-more-early-help-for-vulnerable-families>.

Alongside this, the government is committed to delivering the action areas set out in the Early Years Healthy Development Review led by my right hon. Friend, the member for South Northamptonshire, more information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-best-start-for-life-a-vision-for-the-1001-critical-days>. One key action area was to champion family hubs as a place where parents and carers can access Start for Life services. To support delivery of this, the National Centre for Family Hubs will support councils to understand how best to build a family hub network, and to take steps at a national and local level to reduce the stigma some parents or carers experience when asking for help. We will consider the recommendations in the Action for Children report as we take forward this work.

We have not made an assessment of the accessibility of early years services in the West Midlands specifically. The work that the government is doing to champion the family hub model and support parents and carers to access Start for Life services is national in scope, and applicable, with local nuance, in all regions.

■ **Pupils: Hyperactivity**

Kim Leadbeater:

[54037]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase training and awareness of ADHD behaviour for primary school teaching staff.

Mr Robin Walker:

We know that teaching quality is the most important in-school factor for improving the outcomes for all pupils, particularly for those with additional needs, including those who have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

All new teachers receive at least three years of evidence-based professional development and support, starting with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) based on the new ITT Core Content Framework (CCF), and followed by a new two-year induction underpinned by the Early Career Framework (ECF). The CCF sets out a minimum entitlement of knowledge, skills and experiences that trainees need so they enter the profession in the best possible position to teach and support all pupils to succeed. This includes those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice.

ITT courses must be designed so that trainee teachers can demonstrate that they meet the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level. This includes the requirement in Standard 5, that teachers must have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Details of the Teacher's Standards are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>.

The department's vision is that ITT based on the CCF will be the foundation on which early career teacher training and support is built. The ECF underpins what all early career teachers should learn, and learn how to do, based on expert guidance and the best available research evidence. It was designed in consultation with the education sector, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) specialists, and covers five core areas: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, and professional behaviours. It is designed to work for all early career teachers regardless of subject, phase or school.

Alongside this, through our contract with the National Association for Special Educational Needs (nasen), the department has funded the Whole School SEND Consortium to equip the workforce to deliver high-quality teaching for all children and young people with SEND. This includes providing training and resources for teaching and support staff. The funding in the 2021-22 financial year will bring the total funding for this contract to over £8 million since 2018. All the materials funded by the department are hosted on the nasen SEND Gateway, an online portal offering education professionals free, easy access to high-quality information, resources and training for meeting the needs of children with SEND. This is available here: <http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/>.

We have funded the creation of a suite of condition specific videos to provide helpful pointers, techniques and advice on inclusive teaching strategies for early career teachers, these videos cover ADHD. These are available here: <https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources?title=condition-specific>.

High-quality professional development is important for teachers at all stages of their careers, to ensure they receive appropriate support and to enable them to

consistently improve their practices. Decisions relating to teachers' professional development rest with schools, headteachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements, which may include further training and development relating to pupils and young people with SEND or ADHD.

■ **Schools: Buildings**

Rachael Maskell: [\[53961\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to review the school buildings capital fund to ensure that schools with sustained structural and building challenges can be prioritised.

Rachael Maskell: [\[53962\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the capital budget of faith-based schools when they are ringfenced within holding budgets.

Rachael Maskell: [\[53963\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to take steps to secure future capital funding for All Saints Roman Catholic School in York to enable a new build school.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is aware of the condition issues facing the All Saints Roman Catholic School. The former Minister for the School System, my noble Friend, Baroness Berridge, met with the hon. member for York Central, as well as representatives from the school, the Diocese of Middlesbrough and York City Council in June to discuss this matter, and a capital adviser from the department visited the school in July to understand the condition need of the school. My noble Friend, the Minister for the School System, will also write to the hon. member for York Central to cover the issues in more detail.

Overall, the department allocated £1.8 billion in funding in 2021-22 to maintain and improve school condition. Local authorities, large multi academy trusts and large voluntary-aided bodies receive a School Condition Allocation to invest in priorities across the schools for which they are responsible.

Our aim for this condition funding is to ensure that responsible bodies receive a fair share of the available budget that takes into account their relative investment needs. The funding methodology for 2021-22 has been updated with the latest data from the school Condition Data Collection, which provides a high-level assessment of the relative condition of state funded schools. We expect responsible bodies to use their own detailed condition reports and knowledge to prioritise investment across their schools to address condition issues, including structural issues.

The Diocese of Leeds and the Diocese of Middlesbrough received a combined School Condition Allocation of £3,112,383 in 2021-22 to invest in improving the condition of their schools.

All Saints Roman Catholic School also received a Devolved Formula Capital payment of £32,247 in 2021-22 to spend on their capital priorities.

Over and above condition allocations, the department has also launched a new School Rebuilding Programme with a commitment to 500 projects over the next decade and has already announced the first 100 schools. We are consulting on how we will prioritise future places on the School Rebuilding Programme, and we welcome views from those with an interest in how the condition of the school estate is maintained and funded, including bodies responsible for school buildings. The department encourages All Saints Roman Catholic School, the diocese of Middlesbrough and York City Council to take part in the consultation and share their views on the future prioritisation of projects for the programme.

■ Schools: Energy

Rachael Maskell:

[53964]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to assess the energy use of schools in York.

Mr Robin Walker:

Responsible bodies, including local authorities and academy trusts, have a responsibility to ensure assets are operated and maintained effectively. This includes energy efficiency improvements. Since 2008, all school buildings are legally required to have Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Display Energy Certificates (DECs). These are intended to raise awareness of energy use in buildings and provide recommendations associated with energy efficiency.

The Department for Education collects data, including Display Energy Certificates data across the estate, as well as energy data on new school buildings. However, there are currently no plans to assess the energy use of schools in York specifically. The department provides the sector with guidance on energy efficiency such as minimising energy, water and waste within the following guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/good-estate-management-for-schools>.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy set up the £1 billion Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) in 2020 which provided grants for eligible public sector bodies, including schools, to fund energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation measures across their estate. Phase 3 of the PSDS is now open for applications and we encourage schools in York to apply for this scheme. More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-decarbonisation-scheme-phase-3>.

■ Schools: York

Rachael Maskell:

[53960]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent steps he has taken to assess the financial position of schools in York.

Mr Robin Walker:

The schools sector remains financially stable, with high standards of financial management and governance.

The primary responsibility for the oversight of each academy trust, including their financial position, rests with the trustees themselves. The department expects trustees to deliver strong governance, monitor the financial health of their trust and ensure every pound is well spent. The department plays an important role to build the financial capacity and the capability of academy trusts. This includes using a range of data, including audited accounts and three-year budget forecasts, to identify where there may be issues, and taking a risk-based approach, working with the sector to support and intervene proportionately on the rare occasions when needed.

Local authorities are accountable for maintained schools' finances. The department's role is to support local authorities in their efforts to strengthen the financial accountability and efficiency of the maintained schools sector.

The department supports both maintained schools and academies through the School Resource Management programme. This helps schools improve outcomes for pupils by offering a suite of services to support greater financial efficiency. Details are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/schools-financial-health-and-efficiency>.

The department publishes individual school and academy financial data, including for all schools in York, and this is easily accessible on the schools financial benchmarking website, available here: <https://schools-financial-benchmarking.service.gov.uk/>.

■ Social Security Benefits: Free School Meals**Stephen Timms:****[53167]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate his Department has made of the cost of extending means-tested free school meals to all universal credit or equivalent benefits claimants.

Will Quince:

Under this government, eligibility for free school meals (FSM) has been extended several times, and to more groups of children than any other government over the past half century. Our analysis in 2018 estimated that extending eligibility to all families on Universal Credit would result in almost half of all school pupils becoming entitled to FSM. We think it is important that FSM support is targeted at those that need it most, and FSM is an integral part of our provision for families on low incomes, and our wider actions to promote social mobility.

In 2018, the government introduced new eligibility criteria for families on Universal Credit, following a consultation in 2017. It is estimated that this will be more generous in its reach by 2022, in comparison to the legacy benefit system. Further to this we included generous protections, which mean any family eligible for FSM transitioning

to Universal Credit from a legacy benefit will continue to have access to FSM even if they move above the earnings threshold.

■ Special Educational Needs

Dan Jarvis:

[52500]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when his Department plans to publish the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities review.

Will Quince:

The special educational needs and disability (SEND) Review was set up to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND, with a focus on targeting and distributing resources in a way that best ensures children's needs are met quickly and effectively.

The Department for Education is working with a range of partners including children and young people with SEND, the Children's Commissioner, parents and carers, system leaders, SEND sector organisations, representatives from educational establishments and many others.

Proposals are being developed and we will consult publicly on them. We are not yet in a position to provide a firm date for the publication of proposals but are looking to do so as soon as possible.

Barbara Keeley:

[53852]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report by the Disabled Children's Partnership, *Then There Was Silence*, published on 10 September 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding in that report that fewer than four in 10 children with an Education and Health Care Plan attended school between January and March 2021.

Will Quince:

We welcome the research from the Disabled Children's Partnership (DCP). The impact of the lockdown in early 2021 on children and young people with education, health and care plans (EHCP) was reflected in Government policy, including ensuring children with EHCPs were provided with suitable, high quality remote education. Guidance to schools on meeting this duty for children with EHCPs included putting in place reasonable adjustments as necessary, so that pupils and students with SEND could successfully access remote education alongside their peers.

While attendance is now far higher, with approximately 87% of all pupils with an EHCP on roll in state-funded schools in attendance on 16 September 2021[1], we recognise the implications of being out of school for children and young people with SEND who have an EHCP. We have prioritised education recovery funding for specialist settings by providing additional uplifts, recognising the additional costs involved. We have also ensured that settings have the flexibility to target this to meet the needs of their pupils and students. In addition, we continue to work hard to ensure children and young people are given access to therapies and equipment so

that the right support is in place for all children and families, including addressing the backlog in assessments.

We continue to work closely with the DCP and monitor to identify the impacts the COVID-19 outbreak has had on children and young people with SEND and the implications for our policies. We also continue to closely monitor attendance rates.

[1] [Attendance in education and early years settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak, Week 38 2021 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

■ Special Educational Needs: Training

Dan Jarvis:

[52501]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that all (a) teaching and (b) support staff in schools are trained in handling children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Mr Robin Walker:

All teachers are teachers of special education needs and disabilities (SEND), and the high quality teaching is central to ensuring that pupils with SEND are given the best possible opportunity to achieve at school.

From September 2020, all new teachers will benefit from at least three years of evidence based professional development and support, starting with Initial Teacher Training (ITT) based on the new ITT Core Content Framework (CCF), and followed by a new two-year induction underpinned by the Early Career Framework (ECF).

The CCF sets out a minimum entitlement of knowledge, skills and experiences that trainees need to enter the profession in the best position possible to teach and support all pupils to succeed, including those pupils identified within the four areas of need set out in the SEND code of practice.

ITT providers must design their courses to incorporate the knowledge, skills and experiences detailed in the CCF into a coherent sequence to support trainees to develop their expertise. Courses must be designed so that trainee teachers can demonstrate that they meet the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level. This includes the requirement in Standard 5, that all teachers must have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

The Department's vision is that ITT based on the CCF will be the foundation on which early career training and support is built. The ECF underpins what all Early Career Teachers should learn, and learn how to do, based on expert guidance and the best available research evidence. It was designed in consultation with the education sector, including SEND specialists, and covers five core areas: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours. It is designed to work for all Early Career Teachers regardless of subject, phase or school.

Alongside this, through our contract with the National Association for Special Educational Needs, the department has funded the Whole School SEND consortium to equip the workforce to deliver high quality teaching for all children and young people with SEND. This includes providing training and resources for teaching and support staff. The funding in the 2021-22 financial year will bring the total funding for this contract to over £8 million since 2018.

High-quality professional development is important for teachers at all stages of their careers, to ensure they receive appropriate support and to enable them to consistently improve their practices. Decisions relating to teachers' professional development rightly rest with schools, headteachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements, which may include further training and development relating to pupils and young people with SEND.

■ **Students: Finance**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[53884\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to help ensure that Muslims can access student finance.

Michelle Donelan:

The government understands the concerns held by some Muslim students and their families about student finance. The department have been carefully considering an alternative student finance product, alongside wider reforms to the higher education system, and an update will be provided alongside the conclusion to the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding. The interim conclusion of the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding was published on 21 January 2021, and we will conclude the Review in full at a future date.

■ **Two Trees School Denton: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[52427\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has had any recent discussions with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council on the declassification of the former Two Trees High School site in Denton for education use.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[52428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the process is for Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council to be able to dispose of the former Two Trees High School site in Denton.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[52429\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to consult with Sport England on the future disposal of the former Two Trees High School site in Denton.

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[52430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will keep the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish informed of any proposal relating to the Two Trees High School site in Denton.

Mr Robin Walker:

Local authorities require the Secretary of State for Education's consent to dispose of their school playing field land under section 77 of The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA) and Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) applied for consent to dispose of the Two Trees High School site in 2016. Officials sought clarification on several issues in August 2017. No formal response was received from the Council and there have been no recent discussions with the Council as to the use of the closed school site.

The Council's 2016 application has now been closed and the Council would need to re-apply to seek consent to dispose of the site. The site was last used by a maintained school in May 2015 so the requirement for the Council to seek consent will expire in May 2023 (for consent under the Academies Act) and May 2025 (for consent under the SSFA).

Any new application under the SSFA would be considered by the School Playing Fields Advisory Panel, whose role is to provide an independent recommendation to the Secretary of State for Education. Sport England has an observer on the Panel and their comments would be considered as part of the decision-making process.

The department will keep the hon. Member for Denton and Reddish updated should the council re-apply.

■ Universities: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[\[53958\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial cost of the covid-19 outbreak to universities.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[53959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the financial viability of universities.

Michelle Donelan:

Higher education (HE) providers have faced a period of significant risk to their financial sustainability and continue to face challenges. The government has provided funding support through various support schemes and has maintained regular contact with the sector to understand the ongoing impacts and changing landscape of financial sustainability in the sector.

I work closely with the the Office for Students (OfS) who are responsible for monitoring provider financial sustainability. The OfS report dated 8 June 2021 shows

that the overall financial position of the registered HE provider sector remains sound, with generally reasonable financial resilience, despite the many operational and financial challenges arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ **Animals: Customs**

Tim Loughton:

[\[52396\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when checks on live animals, including commercial movements of pets, are expected to begin at Border Control Posts.

Victoria Prentis:

Live animal checks will continue to be carried out at the point of destination as introduced on 1 January 2021. Live animal checks will move from the point of destination to designated Border Control Posts when sufficient capacity allows.

■ **Controlled Burning: Licensing**

Olivia Blake:

[\[53374\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many licences to burn heather on grouse moors have been (a) received and (b) granted; and on which such estates those licences have been granted.

Olivia Blake:

[\[53375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will publish a public register of the heather burning licences it has granted.

Rebecca Pow:

We have received no applications and therefore granted no licences to burn specified vegetation in accordance with The Heather and Grass etc. Burning (England) Regulations 2021.

Where the Secretary of State considers it necessary to issue such a licence, we will add relevant details to a public register which will be available online. Once a year we will publish a summary of all the applications we have received, including the number of applications that were unsuccessful.

■ **Environment Protection: Finance**

Olivia Blake:

[\[54035\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many applications his Department has received to fund nature-based defence projects in the last five years.

Rebecca Pow:

Between 2015 and 2021 the Government funded around 130 projects which included nature-based solutions to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk.

■ **Hedges and Ditches****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[52557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to encourage the creation of more hedgerows.

Victoria Prentis:

Following our exit from the Common Agricultural Policy, environmentally sustainable farming will be fundamental to our approach to England's agricultural system. The development of our new environmental land management schemes will continue to recognise the role and fund the management of hedgerows.

For example, a Hedgerow Standard has been included within the initial phase of piloting of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. Newly planted hedgerows, for which capital grants will be available, will be immediately available for annual payment under this standard.

Existing Agri-environment schemes, such as Countryside Stewardship, continue to fund hedgerow management and laying to deliver recognised benefits for wildlife, landscape and the historic environment. Hedgerow management is one of the most popular options within Countryside Stewardship with several options available for planting, managing and restoring hedgerows.

■ **Incinerators****Geraint Davies:**[\[53159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (a) what recent discussions the Government has had with the Environment Agency on tightening standards under the BAT Conclusions for Waste Incineration issued by the European Commission in 2019; (b) how many permits of existing facilities have been revised in particular for Nitrogen Oxide pollution; and (c) and whether all permits for new facilities reflect these updated limit values and require the use of selective catalytic reduction to abate Nitrogen Oxide pollution.

Jo Churchill:

(a) Defra meets regularly with the Environment Agency to discuss the implementation of Best Available Techniques (BAT) at regulated facilities. One such meeting was held in July 2021 when the UK Interpretation guidance for the Waste Incineration BAT Conclusions was agreed, including tightening of relevant emission limits.

(b) The Environment Agency has not yet revised any permits for existing facilities in respect of emissions of oxides of nitrogen (NOx). All permits will be revised by the legally required implementation date for the BAT Conclusions for existing plants which is 3 December 2023.

(c) All new permits issued by the Environment Agency since 3 December 2019 reflect the updated limit values for NO_x for new plants, but not all of them require the use of selective catalytic reduction.

Geraint Davies:

[\[53160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on ensuring targets for waste incineration help progress on the (a) Government's net zero emissions target and (b) circular economy.

Jo Churchill:

There have been no recent discussions with Cabinet colleagues specifically on targets for waste incineration. However, powers being adopted via the Environment Bill will require the Government to set long-term, legally binding environmental targets, with at least one within the area of Resource Efficiency and Waste Reduction. My department is exploring how targets can help to reduce the amount of 'residual' waste we generate.

Officials are currently gathering evidence to enable Ministerial decisions on the targets, which will be consulted on in the new year.

Jeremy Corbyn:

[\[53826\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the amount of waste material imported from Europe burned on a daily basis by in incinerators in the UK.

Jeremy Corbyn:

[\[53827\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the amount of waste material imported from Europe burned in UK incinerators in each of the last five years.

Jo Churchill:

Some waste is imported into the UK from the European Union (EU) for use in energy recovery; or in exceptional circumstances for disposal, such as when the UK can offer an environmentally sound solution for specialist waste not available in the country of dispatch.

The total volume of waste imported into the UK from the EU for recovery or disposal by incineration in the past five years, for which there is currently complete data^[1], is presented in the table below. Defra does not hold information on a daily basis.

YEAR	IMPORTS FOR RECOVERY AS A FUEL (R1) FROM EU MEMBER STATES (TONNES)	IMPORTS FOR DISPOSAL	
		BY INCINERATION ON LAND (D10) FROM EU MEMBER STATES (TONNES)	TOTAL IMPORTS FOR R1 AND D10 FROM EU MEMBER STATES (TONNES)
2019	10,046	1,999	12,044

YEAR	IMPORTS FOR DISPOSAL		
	IMPORTS FOR RECOVERY AS A FUEL (R1) FROM EU MEMBER STATES (TONNES)	BY INCINERATION ON LAND (D10) FROM EU MEMBER STATES (TONNES)	TOTAL IMPORTS FOR R1 AND D10 FROM EU MEMBER STATES (TONNES)
2018	20,273	6,899	27,172
2017	20,105	7,978	28,083
2016	2,309	14,898	17,207
2015	3,302	10,813	14,115

Source: [Basel Convention National Reporting](#)

[1] Defra does not have complete data on waste imports for 2020 as the Basel Convention National Report is collated at the end of each year for the previous calendar year.

Jeremy Corbyn:

[53828]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to increase the current capacity of incinerator waste being burned in the UK over the next 5 years.

Jo Churchill:

In line with the commitment in our Resources and Waste Strategy (RWS), officials are currently assessing planned incinerator capacity against expected future residual waste arisings so we can understand what future capacity may be required following implementation of key commitments in the RWS. This assessment of residual waste treatment capacity needs will be published in coming months.

■ Incinerators: Health Hazards

Jeremy Corbyn:

[53829]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment has been given to the (a) precautionary principle and (b) potential harmful effect on local residents' health from the release of particulate fumes from incineration, when permission has been granted to build new incinerators.

Jo Churchill:

(a) The Environment Agency is responsible for issuing permits to allow new incinerators to operate in England. The Health Protection Agency's (now the UK Health Security Agency or UKHSA) response to the 2005 British Society for Ecological Medicine report on the health effects of waste incinerators states "there are no grounds for adopting the 'precautionary principle' to restrict the introduction of new incinerators". The Environment Agency consults UKHSA on every permit

application it receives for a new incinerator and is satisfied that this advice remains appropriate.

(b) As part of the permitting process, the Environment Agency carries out a thorough environmental impact assessment of emissions from the proposed plant, including particulate matter, and strict emission limits are included in permits for particulate matter and other pollutants. The Environment Agency will not grant a permit if the proposed plant could give rise to any significant pollution of the environment or harm to human health.

■ **School Milk: Subsidies**

Dan Jarvis:

[52502]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that the school milk subsidy scheme includes milk alternatives in the event that children have dairy allergies.

Victoria Prentis:

Only milk and relevant dairy products are currently eligible for subsidy in the School Milk Scheme and there are no plans to subsidise plant-based beverages.

However, the Government recognises that some children with clinical and dietary needs are unable to consume milk and expects schools to make reasonable adjustments for those with particular needs. The School Food Standards only require milk to be available, but they also enable schools in England to provide a variety of other products to meet pupils' particular dietary needs, including plain soya, rice or oat drinks enriched with calcium and combination and flavoured variations of these drinks. Further information is available on gov.uk at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/allergy-guidance-for-schools>.

The independent Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) also recently assessed the potential risks posed by these products in the diets of infants and young children. It concluded that, from a toxicological perspective, neither the safety of these products, nor the suitability of current guidance, could be confirmed. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) has also raised concerns that substituting these products for milk could lead to an increased risk of insufficient nutrient intake in young children. It highlighted the high level of uncertainty on nutritional composition of these products and limited data on their consumption by young children. A joint COT/SACN Working Group has been established to conduct a risk benefit analysis and the government will continue to closely monitor developments.

■ **Street Cleaning**

Steve Reed:

[53243]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on the frequency of road sweeping by local authorities in England.

Steve Reed:

[53244]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what data his Department holds on the number of street litter bins maintained by local authorities in England.

Jo Churchill:

Defra does not hold data on the frequency or road sweeping by local authorities in England, or on the number of street litter bins maintained by local authorities.

Local councils are responsible for keeping their public land clear of litter and refuse. It is up to councils to decide how best to meet this statutory duty.

Statistics on waste managed by local authorities are available online at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-collected-waste-management-annual-results>.

■ Transport: Refrigeration

Geraint Davies:

[53164]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 21 June 2021 to Question 15996 on Transport: Refrigeration, if he will publish the industry and sector experts, or their companies, involved in the research project aimed to improve the evidence base on emissions from non-road mobile machinery, including transport refrigeration units.

Jo Churchill:

Defra's recently completed research project aimed to improve the evidence base on emissions from non-road mobile machinery (NRMM), including transport refrigeration units, specifically by improving our understanding of the UK NRMM emissions fleet. This involved working with a number of industry and sector experts. It was important that parties contributing to the research project were able to share their ideas and data with Defra in confidence should they wish to. Therefore, we do not intend to publish a list of contributors to the research project.

We are now considering next steps on NRMM and are undertaking further work to address some remaining evidence gaps. We will consult with further stakeholders in due course as appropriate.

■ Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011

Julie Elliott:

[52491]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many enforcement actions have been made under the Waste Regulations 2011 since those regulations came into law; and if he will provide a list of all enforcement actions taken under those regulations.

Jo Churchill:

The Environment Agency (EA) has taken 46 enforcement actions under the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 since they came into force. Alongside these

enforcement actions, the EA issues cautions and advice and guidance to operators where appropriate to bring them into legal compliance. The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 legislation is one part of the enforcement framework for waste that the EA works under.

Julie Elliott:

[52492]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the Waste Regulations 2011.

Jo Churchill:

A statutory review of The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 was published in December 2018, available here:

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/988/pdfs/ukxi0d_20110988_en.pdf

■ Waste Disposal

Julie Elliott:

[52493]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to introduce further standards on companies (a) disposing of waste and (b) disposing of unused or new products in response to Government's commitment to Net Zero.

Jo Churchill:

The Government is committed to maximising the value obtained from resources and minimising waste, as stated in our Resources and Waste Strategy 2018. Preventing products becoming waste and enabling reuse is fundamentally important in achieving this, and the climate benefits of doing so are recognised.

Businesses that handle waste are obliged, by the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, to follow the waste hierarchy. This requires action to prevent waste as the priority option. Failure to meet the legal obligation to take all reasonable steps to apply this can lead to enforcement action, from the Environment Agency in England.

We recently consulted on a new Waste Prevention Programme for England. This builds on the Resources and Waste Strategy and seeks to help with our strategic goals including achieving Net Zero. It included proposals to provide guidance aimed at encouraging the reuse of products and considering the need to clarify the application of the waste hierarchy. We expect to publish our new Programme later this year.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Abdul Jalil Al-Singace

Brendan O'Hara:

[53917]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the hunger strike by the academic imprisoned in Bahrain, Dr Abuljalil Al

Singace, starting on 8 July 2021, if he will make representations to his counterpart in Bahrain on the (a) release from prison of and (b) return of confiscated research to Dr Al Singace.

James Cleverly:

We continue to monitor and raise the case of Dr Abduljalil al-Singace and others as necessary, with the Bahraini Government as well as with the oversight bodies.

■ Afghanistan: British Nationals Abroad

Lilian Greenwood:

[\[52479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many British Nationals have registered their presence in Afghanistan, by UK constituency as at 15 September 2021.

James Cleverly:

Between 15-28 August over 8,300 British nationals and dependents were evacuated from Afghanistan. Additionally the FCDO has supported over 90 British nationals and their eligible dependants to leave Afghanistan on Qatari Government charter flights. Over 4,400 individuals have signed up to the FCDO's "Register your Presence in Afghanistan". We are working to verify how many of these are British nationals still in Afghanistan and eligible for consular assistance. We are continuing to look at all possible avenues to ensure that any British nationals are able to leave safely if they wish to.

■ Afghanistan: Droughts

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[52453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of reports on drought in the Afghanistan region; and what assessment she has made of the impact of those reports on (a) the refugee crisis, (b) women and girls, (c) economic development and (d) humanitarian assistance.

James Cleverly:

We are very aware of the risks posed by another year of drought in Afghanistan and the UN has analysed the impact of the drought to inform the international humanitarian response. We are particularly concerned about the situation of women and girls, and have emphasised the importance of unfettered humanitarian access. We have committed £286 million of development and humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan and will work with the UN and other partners to do all we can to alleviate the impact of the drought on the humanitarian situation.

■ Afghanistan: Females

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[52455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the Taliban's decision to ban girls from school in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

Supporting education for children, and particularly girls, in Afghanistan, is a priority for the UK Government and we are working with other donors to coordinate a consistent international response. Taliban policy on girls' education remains unclear, particularly in respect of girls' secondary education. We will continue to work with the international community to use our influence to secure girls' rights, including the right to education. Before making any funding decisions we will look carefully at how we might support girls' equal access to schooling.

■ Afghanistan: Intellectuals

Dr Julian Lewis:

[\[53153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent steps she has taken with the Home Secretary to facilitate the rescue of scholars from Afghanistan who have been (a) validated by the Council for At-Risk Academics and (b) awarded funded research posts at UK Universities.

James Cleverly:

The Government is working through the details of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The Scheme will provide protection for people at risk and identified as in need. The ACRS will prioritise those people who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan who face a particular risk from the Taliban, for example because of their stand for democracy and human rights, or because of their gender, sexuality, or religion. The Government has committed to welcome around 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years. The scheme is not yet open. Further details will be announced in due course.

■ Afghanistan: Malnutrition

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[52454\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the impact of malnutrition as a result of the collapse of the Afghan Government in August 2021 on (a) women and girls, (b) humanitarian assistance, (c) economic development and (d) the refugee situation.

James Cleverly:

Even prior to August 2021 food insecurity was a cause for concern in Afghanistan and the UN's Flash Appeal now estimates that 12.2 million people, or 30 per cent of the population, are facing 'emergency' or 'crisis' levels of food insecurity. We have committed £286 million of development and humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan

and will work with the UN and other partners to do all we can to alleviate the humanitarian situation.

■ **Bahrain: Electronic Surveillance**

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[53256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of reports further to reports that (a) Bahraini people living in exile in London were named in the Pegasus project leak as targets for Israeli NSO Group, including human rights defender Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei and (b) at least two Bahraini activists in London, Moosa Mohammed and Yusuf Al-Jamri had their devices hacked by Pegasus spyware; and what steps he plans to take to prevent cyber attacks on Bahraini people living in the UK.

James Cleverly:

While we do not comment on the use of Pegasus against individuals, it is vital that all cyber actors use capabilities in a way that is legal, responsible and proportionate to ensure cyberspace remains a safe and prosperous place for everyone. The National Cyber Security Strategy, supported by £1.9 billion funding, has transformed the UK's fight against the cyber threat since 2016.

■ **Central Asia: Press Freedom**

Catherine West:

[\[53302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49222 on Central Asia: Press Freedom, if she will raise press freedoms in discussion with her Central Asian counterparts.

Wendy Morton:

We will continue to raise media freedom and wider human rights with Central Asian authorities at every suitable opportunity.

■ **Department for International Development and Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Reorganisation**

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[53981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to page 11 of her Department's Annual Report & Accounts: 2020-2021, HC 660, published on 22 September 2022, what estimate her Department has made of the indirect financial costs of the merger of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

Amanda Milling:

The creation of the FCDO brings together our development and diplomatic expertise to deliver greater impact for the UK internationally. The merger has required all FCDO staff across the department to work in different ways. This costs directly relating to transformation are set out in this year's annual report.

■ Developing Countries: Coronavirus

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[53980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on the distribution of surplus covid-19 vaccines to low-income countries in addition to the commitments made at the G7 Summit in June 2021.

Wendy Morton:

Our G7 Presidency has championed equitable access to vaccines, treatments and tests, and the importance of future funding for COVAX. We secured commitments to share or finance up to 1 billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by mid-2022. The Prime Minister has committed the UK to donating 100 million doses by June 2022. To date, we have donated 10.5 million doses and we are on track to meet our target of 30 million doses by the end of 2021. The world now has multiple effective vaccines and global supply is increasing. Donations are an important part of the transition to a global market that works for everyone. Developments in the global vaccine market and the Spending Review will inform decisions on any future vaccine commitments.

■ Diplomatic Service: Languages

Paul Maynard:

[\[53224\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many (a) Pashto (b) Korean (c) Portuguese and (d) Telugu speakers have been trained for the diplomatic service by her Department in each of the last 5 years.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has provided full time language training for officers in Pashto, Korean, and Portuguese as follows:

Pashto: fewer than ten officers between 2017 and 2021

Korean: fewer than ten officers between 2017 and 2021

Portuguese: fewer than forty officers between 2017 and 2021.

No officers have received full time language training in Telugu.

■ Diplomatic Service: Vetting

Jim Shannon:

[\[53895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure the effectiveness of the vetting process for British Embassy workers.

Amanda Milling:

We security clear all British Embassy staff and contractors to the appropriate level to carry out their roles. Security clearances are kept under regular review. Vetting staff is only one element of a range of security tools that we use to protect our people and our missions overseas.

Ethiopia: Human Rights**Neil Coyle:**[\[53252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of sanctioning (a) the Chief of Staff of the Eritrean Defence Forces, Filipos Woldeyohannes and (b) individuals responsible for human rights violations in Ethiopia.

Vicky Ford:

We are deeply concerned by Eritrean involvement in the conflict in Tigray. My predecessor has made clear to the Eritrean Ambassador the UK's concern about reports of human rights violations by all parties to the conflict and the need for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray. The former Foreign Secretary raised the need for a political dialogue to bring a lasting peace to Tigray directly with Prime Minister Abiy on 5 August. I also raised these issues in my first meeting with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 22 September. The UK continues to consider the full range of policy tools at our disposal to protect human rights and deter violations of international humanitarian law. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Official Residences**Layla Moran:**[\[54007\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many days she or her predecessor have stayed overnight at (a) Chevening House and (b) 1 Carlton Gardens in (i) 2020 and (ii) 2021 to date.

Amanda Milling:

Chevening House is managed by independent trustees. Information about overnight stays by Ministers is not collected centrally. 1 Carlton Gardens is the official residence of the Foreign Secretary and is used for official events and functions in support of FCDO and wider government objectives. Neither the Foreign Secretary nor her predecessor (The Right Honourable Dominic Raab) have stayed overnight at 1 Carlton Gardens in either 2020 or 2021 to date.

Layla Moran:[\[54009\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many bedrooms are available for use at (a) Chevening House and (b) 1 Carlton Gardens as at 23 September 2021.

Amanda Milling:

Chevening House is managed by independent trustees. Information about the property is publicly available. 1 Carlton Gardens has five bedrooms.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Public Expenditure

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[53979\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to page 23 of her Department's Annual Report & Accounts: 2020-2021, HC 660, published on 22 September 2022, if she will publish the findings from the Government's prioritisation exercises for (a) legacy FCO activities using a Do/Do differently/Drop approach and (b) legacy DFID activities using a Gold/Silver/Bronze rating.

Amanda Milling:

The onset of the COVID pandemic required both the former FCO and DFID to act quickly to reprioritise and redeploy staff onto new priority areas. This included delivering the largest peacetime repatriation of British nationals in UK history, and managing major financial contributions to the global effort to research and produce COVID diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines. Some workstreams were temporarily paused or slowed to allow staff to focus on the unprecedented challenge posed by COVID.

■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Staff

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[53978\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to page 10 of her Department's Annual Report & Accounts: 2020-2021, HC 660, published on 22 September 2022, what assessment she has made of the reasons for the assertion that her Department has experienced resourcing challenges, in terms of securing both the staff and skills needed for delivery.

Amanda Milling:

The creation of the FCDO brings together our development and diplomatic expertise to deliver greater impact for the UK internationally. FCDO transformation is a important change programme and we have prioritised securing the right resources and skills to implement it.

■ Gulf Strategy Fund

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[53918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will name the bodies that implemented the Gulf Strategy Fund-funded assistance received by the National Intelligence Agency Ombudsman in the financial year 2020-2021.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO's International Programme (IP), and within it the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF), is a vital tool in promoting positive change and reforms across the world, including in the Gulf. Our programmes help our partners to continue their human rights reform, address key climate change and green growth opportunities and challenges, tackle illicit finance, improve marine conservation, promote economic

diversification, promote diversity and inclusion including on LGBTQ+ rights, and develop their institutions

All cooperation through the IP, including the GSF, is subject to rigorous risk assessments to ensure all work meets our human rights obligations and our values. The Government does not shy away from raising legitimate human rights concerns, and encourage other states to respect international law.

We now publish an annual summary of the GSF's work on gov.uk. We will not publish further information where doing so presents risks to our staff, programme suppliers and beneficiaries, or which may impact our relationships with our international partners, and therefore our ability to influence their reform efforts.

We will provide updates on an annual basis.

Brendan O'Hara:

[53919]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her Department's report Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 report published on 8 July 2021 whether the Government provided assistance for the development of the integrated National Human Rights Action Plan through the Gulf Strategy Fund; if the Government will support Bahrain in the implementation of that Plan; and what reforms the NHRAP expected to deliver.

James Cleverly:

The FCDO's International Programme (IP), and within it the Gulf Strategy Fund (GSF), is a vital tool in promoting positive change and reforms across the world, including in the Gulf. Our programmes help our partners to continue their human rights reform, address key climate change and green growth opportunities and challenges, tackle illicit finance, improve marine conservation, promote economic diversification, promote diversity and inclusion including on LGBTQ+ rights, and develop their institutions

All cooperation through the IP, including the GSF, is subject to rigorous risk assessments to ensure all work meets our human rights obligations and our values. The Government does not shy away from raising legitimate human rights concerns, and encourage other states to respect international law.

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We will provide updates on an annual basis.

Brendan O'Hara:

[53920]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what the net expenditure of the Gulf Strategy Fund by beneficiary state for the financial year 2020-21.

James Cleverly:

The Gulf Strategy Fund spend by programme is listed in the published summary: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/official-development-assistance-oda-fcdo-international-programme-spend-objectives-2020-to-2021/gulf-strategy-fund-programme-summary>.

■ Hasan Abdulnabi Manoor**Brendan O'Hara:**[\[53916\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to reports that medical negligence may have contributed to the death of 35 year old Bahraini prisoner, Hasan Abdulnabi Mansoor, on 25 July 2021, and representations from Amnesty International and the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy for an independent impartial investigation into his death, what assessment the Government has made of the implications for its policies of the reports of the death of Hasan Abdulnabi Mansoor.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports regarding the death of Hasan Abdulnabi Mansoor. The Government of Bahrain has been clear in its public statements that access to medical care for those in detention is guaranteed by the constitution of Bahrain. We encourage those with concerns about treatment in detention to report them to the appropriate human rights oversight body and we continue to urge the oversight bodies to carry out swift and thorough investigations into any claims made.

■ Husain Moosa and Mohammed Ramadhan**Brendan O'Hara:**[\[53257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the 19 May 2021 decision adopted by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) that the ongoing detention of death row inmates Mohammed Ramadhan and Husain Moosa in Bahrain (a) is arbitrary under four of the five categories of the WGAD's methods of work (b) contravenes nine articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and (c) contravenes nine articles of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, what representations the Government plans to make to the Government of Bahrain on rescinding those death sentences and urgently bringing their detention in line with international law.

James Cleverly:

Ministers including myself and our officials have consistently reiterated the UK's opposition to the use of the death penalty, in all circumstances. We continue to monitor and raise the cases of Husain Moosa, Mohammed Ramadhan and others, with the Bahraini Government as well as with the Oversight bodies. We understand that the Bahraini Government is in contact with the UN regarding its human rights reform efforts.

■ India: Minority Groups

Brendan O'Hara: [\[52512\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will raise the situation of Christian and Muslim minorities in India with her Indian counterpart in any upcoming discussions.

Amanda Milling:

Where we have concerns over discrimination because of religion or belief, we raise them directly with the Government of India, including at ministerial level. We also raise issues relevant to religious minorities in our wider engagement with Union and State authorities. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia, discussed UK Parliamentary interest in human rights in India with Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla on 23 July.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[52513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will support the formation of an international commission to assess reports of violence and other human rights violations against religious minorities in India.

Amanda Milling:

We look to the government of India to assess and address any concerns in line with India's strong constitution. We will continue to work with both Union and State authorities to support freedom of religion in India, raising concerns where we have them.

■ Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme

Yasmin Qureshi: [\[53860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the barriers preventing UK-based international non-governmental organisations to sign up to the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.

Amanda Milling:

The Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme is run by the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR). SCHR has consulted experts to analyse applicable legal frameworks and to provide guidance to current and potential users to build confidence in the scheme and to help remove any potential barriers to implementation. Since May 2021 the FCDO has funded a full-time administrator role which has boosted SCHR's capacity to engage with organisations considering signing up and to support existing signatories. There are over 100 organisations now implementing the scheme, of whom around one third are UK-based international non-governmental organisations. Under the scheme approximately 200,000 checks have been carried out with no legal or administrative challenges and over 75 people who posed a potential safeguarding risk have not been employed as a result.

■ Iran: Political Prisoners

Steve McCabe:

[\[52409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of whether the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran amounts to (a) crime against humanity and (b) genocide.

James Cleverly:

It is the long-standing policy of the UK Government that any judgment as to whether genocide has occurred is a matter for a competent court. The UK Government takes any allegations of extrajudicial killings seriously, and we have always been clear that Iran must uphold its international legal obligations, including conducting thorough and independent investigations into suspected human rights violations, both past and present. We strongly support the work done by the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran and urge Iran to allow him access to the country, so that he can also conduct research and investigations into human rights concerns reported there, including the events of 1988. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course, which includes committing to improving human rights in Iran.

Steve McCabe:

[\[52410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of an international investigation into the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran.

James Cleverly:

The UK Government takes any allegations of extrajudicial killings seriously, and we have always been clear that Iran must uphold its international legal obligations, including conducting thorough and independent investigations into suspected human rights violations, both past and present. We strongly support the work done by the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Iran and urge Iran to allow him access to the country, so that he can also conduct research and investigations into human rights concerns reported there, including the events of 1988. We call on President Raisi to set Iran on a different course, which includes committing to improving human rights in Iran.

■ Kuwait: British Airways

Wayne David:

[\[53191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when the Government plans to publish information on BA flight 149, 1 August 1990, and the detention of British citizens from that flight in Kuwait.

James Cleverly:

Any information that the FCDO holds in its records on Flight BA149, and the detention of the passengers and crew from that flight by the then Iraqi government, will be made available at The National Archives in line with FCDO's obligations under

Public Records Act, subject to any legal exemptions. Further information about the FCDO's record release programme is available at www.gov.uk/archive-records.

■ **Leah Sharibu**

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[52511\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what communications (a) she and (b) officials in her Department have had with her Nigerian counterpart on the need to locate and rescue Leah Sharibu.

Vicky Ford:

We are deeply concerned by the abduction and continued captivity of children by Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) and Boko Haram in North East Nigeria. We have routinely raised the case of Leah Sharibu with the Government of Nigeria since she was abducted by ISWA in 2018. Most recently, in June this year, officials at the British High Commission in Abuja raised Leah's case with the Nigerian authorities.

My predecessor visited Nigeria in April where he discussed insecurity, including kidnaps, with the Foreign Minister and the President's Chief of Staff, and raised the importance of protecting all communities. The Nigerian Government has provided assurances it is doing all it can to secure the release of all those kidnapped. We have also provided support to Nigerian Police Force units to improve their anti-kidnap capacity, to help reduce harm to victims and to hold those responsible to account.

■ **Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[53192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to the Cuban authorities on the detention of Christian Pastor Lorenzo Rosales Fajardo.

Wendy Morton:

We are clear that all Cubans should have the right to protest peacefully and that detention must not be used as a tool to restrict freedom of expression, assembly and religion. The UK was one of the first countries on 12 July to call for the Cuban people to be allowed to express their views freely and peacefully. We have raised our concerns over ongoing detentions directly with the Cuban Government, both in London and Havana.

■ **Malaria: Drugs**

Jim Shannon:

[\[53898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he has received representations on the potential role of anti-body drugs in tackling malaria.

Wendy Morton:

FCDO is abreast of the latest evidence on malaria prevention and treatment. We will continue to work with partners to assess evidence as it is released.

FCDO remains committed to funding research to develop tools to prevent, detect and treat malaria. This has resulted in successes such as the world's first child-friendly antimalarial drug which is estimated to have saved more than a million lives since 2009.

Global health remains a top priority for UK ODA and we will continue to be a major contributor and a force for good in leading international action.

■ Mohammad Munir Tamimi

Stephen Timms: [\[52402\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will seek assurances from the Israeli authorities that a criminal investigation into the fatal shooting of 17 year old Mohammad Munir Mohammad Tamimi will be held.

Stephen Timms: [\[52403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will seek assurances from the Israeli authorities that a criminal investigation into the fatal shooting of 13 year old Omar Hasan Mousa Abu Al-Nil will be held.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of the reports surrounding the deaths of Mohammad Munir Mohammad Tamimi and Omar Hasan Mousa Abu Al-Nil. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we urge the Government of Israel to conduct swift and transparent investigations. 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, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

■ Mozambique: Armed Conflict

Layla Moran: [\[53337\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park's oral contributions in the House of Lords on 17th March 2021, Official report, columns 300-303, what assessment she has made of reports of violence in Mozambique related to the LNG project supported by UK Export Finance.

Layla Moran: [\[53338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park's oral contributions in the House of Lords on 17th March 2021 Official report, columns 300-303, what action she is taking to bring those responsible for the referenced violence to justice.

Layla Moran:

[53339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park's oral contributions in the House of Lords on 17th March 2021, Official report, columns 300-303, what steps she is taking to help safeguard human rights in Mozambique.

Vicky Ford:

We are deeply concerned by the threat from extremist groups in north-eastern Mozambique, including the attack in the vicinity of the Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) facility in Palma in March. On 26 and 28 March, my predecessor condemned the appalling attacks in Cabo Delgado and made clear that we stand with the people of Mozambique against terrorism. Lord Ahmad, the UK's Minister of State for Human Rights, also spoke to Mozambican Foreign Minister Macamo in March, reaffirming UK support to help Mozambique fight terrorism, and stressing that respect for human rights must be at the forefront of Mozambique's response. We are working with the Government of Mozambique to address the root drivers of conflict and instability, including by providing targeted assistance under the framework of a Defence Memorandum of Understanding. The UK is also working to strengthen international cooperation, and co-chairs with Ireland a high-level international taskforce on Cabo Delgado.

We welcome news that Rwandan, Southern African Development Community and Mozambican Forces have recovered areas previously under insurgent control. We look forward to the Government working with international partners to ensure humanitarian assistance reaches affected areas, and reconstruction can take place.

■ **Mozambique: Liquefied Natural Gas**

Layla Moran:

[53340]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the Mozambique LNG project's compatibility with the net zero targets of (a) Mozambique and (b) the UK.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is committed to working with countries across the world to unlock their renewable energy potential and support their transition away from fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives. The UK's support for the Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) project will help with Mozambique's transition away from dirtier forms of fuel, such as coal. The Government of Mozambique considers revenues from the LNG project as an important source of investment to support their energy transition, in line with its National Determined Contribution and its Paris Agreement commitments. The UK is playing an important role in supporting the development of Mozambique's renewables potential, including through the UK's £22 million BRILHO-Energy Africa programme which supports private sector investment in off-grid renewables.

■ Overseas Aid

Preet Kaur Gill:

[\[53982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to her Department's Annual Report & Accounts: 2020-2021, HC 660, published on 22 September 2022, what assessment she has made of the impact of recent reductions in the Official Development Assistance budget on the UK Government's contribution towards (a) leading international efforts to end the pandemic and strengthen global health security, (b) tackling climate change and biodiversity loss, (c) ensuring that the most marginalised receive a quality education, (d) supporting peace, stability, human rights, and open societies, (e) being an international advocate for equality and (f) making progress in global poverty reduction.

Amanda Milling:

The UK is a world leader on international development. In 2020 we were the third largest international donor. We spent £14.5 billion Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) fighting poverty and helping those in need, despite the seismic impact of the pandemic on the UK and the subsequent reduction in Gross National Income (GNI).

Based on current GNI forecasts, we will still spend over £10 billion of ODA in 2021. To mitigate the impact of the reduction in spend, FCDO has focussed ODA on issues where the UK can make the most difference and achieve maximum strategic coherence, impact, and value for money. We are also using our G7 and COP 26 Presidencies to drive coordinated international action and raise the level of ambition on all of these priorities.

The UK is providing international leadership on global health and we are a major investor, particularly on vaccines. Comparing our 2020 Covid spend to other donors' provisional statistics, the UK was the third largest donor. We are also the third largest donor to the World Health Organization and the top donor to GAVI, which vaccinates children against killer diseases. The FCDO will continue to prioritise global health in 2021/22, spending £1.305 billion. The UK has committed to doubling its International Climate Finance to £11.6 billion over five years. Within this, at least £3 billion will be invested in climate change solutions that protect, restore and sustainably manage nature. Advancing women's and girls' rights remains a core part of this Government's mission, including fulfilling 12 years of quality education for all girls. At the G7 Summit, Leaders' committed at least \$2.7 billion over the next 5 years for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), of which the UK contributed £430 million. We continue to promote global equality, including through commitments made under our G7 Presidency; co-hosting the Global Education Summit with Kenya and COP26.

■ Palestinians: Elections

Julie Elliott:

[\[53893\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations she has made to the (a) Palestinian Authority and (b) Israeli Authorities

on the urgent need for elections to renew the democratic mandate of the Presidency and the Parliament.

James Cleverly:

We are disappointed that elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories have been postponed. The Palestinian people should be allowed to enjoy their democratic rights - and Israel must allow voting for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, in line with the Oslo Accords. We urge further work towards genuine and democratic national elections for all Palestinians, which is crucial to the establishment of a viable and sovereign Palestinian State.

■ **Palestinians: Prisoners**

Kim Johnson:

[\[54031\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations the Government has made to the Israeli government on removing the ban on family visits to Palestinian prisoners.

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 prisoners. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to prison conditions and detention practices, including access to family visits.

Kim Johnson:

[\[54032\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many times UK diplomats have visited Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention in 2021.

James Cleverly:

The British Embassy in Tel Aviv has a regular dialogue with Israel on legal issues relating to the occupation and regularly attend military court hearings. We remain committed to working with Israel to secure improvements to prison conditions and detention practices.

■ **Sri Lanka: Tamils**

Stella Creasy:

[\[53232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with his Sri Lankan counterpart on engagement between the Government of that country and Tamil leaders.

Stella Creasy:

[\[53233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support the Tamil population of Sri Lanka.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government has long called for the rights of Sri Lankans from all communities to be respected. The Minister for South Asia, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, has raised the importance of inclusive engagement with all communities in Sri Lanka in his discussions with Sri Lankan Foreign Minister G.L. Peiris, most recently on 24 September. We continue to urge the Government of Sri Lanka to uphold the rights of all of Sri Lanka's communities.

In March 2021 the UN Human Rights Council adopted a new UK-led resolution, 46/1, on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. The resolution provides a continued framework for international engagement on human rights in Sri Lanka. It calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to make progress on accountability and human rights, and stresses the importance of a comprehensive accountability process for all violations and abuses committed in Sri Lanka. It also calls on the Government of Sri Lanka to fulfil its commitments on the devolution of political authority, which is integral to reconciliation and the full enjoyment of human rights by all members of its population. It encourages the Government to respect local governance, including through the holding of elections for provincial councils, and to ensure that all provincial councils, including the Northern and Eastern Provincial Councils, are able to operate effectively, in accordance with the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka. Through UK-funded programmes, we have supported a number of activities to benefit those in the north and east of the country, including demining, resettlement of internally displaced persons and interfaith dialogue.

■ Sri Lanka: UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearance**Stella Creasy:**[\[53889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the progress of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in Sri Lanka.

Amanda Milling:

A very high number of cases relating to Sri Lanka remain under consideration by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, including at the Working Group's most recent session in September 2021. We note the Working Group's concerns about Sri Lanka raised in its report of 4 August 2021, including the need for the Sri Lankan authorities to stop rolling back the progress made in recent years in ensuring accountability for past crimes and justice for victims.

UN Human Rights Council resolution 46/1, led by the UK along with our partners in the Core Group on Sri Lanka, stresses the importance of the Government of Sri Lanka maintaining support for the Office on Missing Persons and the Office for Reparations, safeguarding their independent and effective functioning, and resolving the many cases of enforced disappearances so that the families of disappeared persons can know their fate and whereabouts. We will continue to engage with the Government of Sri Lanka on this important issue.

■ Sri Lanka: Water**Rachael Maskell:**[\[53270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make an assessment of the impact of water contamination in northern Sri Lanka in the area around the Chunnakam power plant on (a) the health of citizens affected by water contamination and (b) accessibility to clean water for citizens in this area.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government is aware of the challenges Sri Lanka faces around water management and quality, and the unique challenges faced by communities in Northern Sri Lanka. The Minister for South Asia, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, discussed this issue with the Sri Lankan High Commissioner to the UK in December 2020. Staff at the British High Commission in Colombo have also raised the issue of water quality during visits to the north. A number of public bodies in Sri Lanka, including the national water supply and drainage board, have conducted tests and compensation has been offered to those affected by water pollution caused by the Chunnakam Power plant. We will continue to engage with the authorities in support of clean water provision.

■ Sultana Khaya**Navendu Mishra:**[\[52609\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer to Question 155443, on Sultana Khaya, whether HM Ambassador to Morocco raised the matter with the Moroccan government; and what the response of that government was.

James Cleverly:

We are aware of reports concerning Sultana Khaya and continue to monitor the case. Support for human rights is a priority around the world, and we regularly discuss human rights issues with Morocco.

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland**Colum Eastwood:**[\[53365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his counterpart in the US State Department on the Government's proposed legacy plans for Northern Ireland.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary and US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken speak regularly on a broad range of issues, including Northern Ireland. Our Embassy in Washington regularly engages with the US Administration and Congress on Northern Ireland. The Government wants to work with all our partners in the United States, the European Union and Ireland to ensure that Northern Ireland can continue to prosper.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021

Caroline Lucas:

[\[53868\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish the details of all meetings which (a) she and (b) her predecessor has held with (i) Heads of States, (ii) Ambassadors, (iii) business leaders and (iv) civil society, where COP26 was the leading topic of discussion in the last 12 months.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[53869\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will publish the details of all meetings which (a) she and (b) her predecessor has attended with (i) Heads of States, (ii) Ambassadors, (iii) business leaders and (iv) civil society, where COP26 was the leading topic of discussion in the last 12 months.

Vicky Ford:

To help deliver a successful COP26, climate diplomacy is at the centre of the work of the whole FCDO diplomatic network and a priority for the Foreign Secretary's engagement. FCDO Ministers regularly raise climate issues in a range of meetings, including bilateral engagements, negotiations and multilateral summits. This year the former Foreign Secretary discussed climate in more than 100 engagements with counterparts across the world - this includes recently at September's UN General Assembly.

Details of meetings held by Ministers in the Department with external organisations are recorded in our transparency data, which is published on GOV.UK:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fcdo-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Ambulance Services: Newham

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[53203\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the London Ambulance Service Estates Vision, published in 2019, what estimate he has made of any impact on the (a) mean and (b) median ambulance response times to addresses in Newham of the closures of ambulance stations planned by the London Ambulance Service.

Ms Lyn Brown:

[\[53204\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the London Ambulance Service Estates Vision, published in 2019, if he will make an assessment of any potential detriment to the access to healthcare of (a) critically ill and (b) disabled people in Newham of the closures of ambulance stations planned by the London Ambulance Service.

Edward Argar:

No such estimate has been made. The London Ambulance Service (LAS) advises that it is at an early stage in developing its estates a strategy, including understanding how any changes would impact on the care patients receive. The LAS will engage with the public and stakeholders on any proposed changes.

■ Autism and Learning Disability: Health Services**Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[53972\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has taken steps to introduce mandatory basic training for those working in private healthcare with people with (a) learning disabilities and (b) autism.

Gillian Keegan:

There is a mandatory requirement under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 for all Care Quality Commission regulated providers, including those in private healthcare, to ensure that their employees have the appropriate support, training, professional development, supervision and appraisal necessary to carry out the duties they are employed to perform.

As set out in "Right to be heard": The Government's response to the consultation on learning disability and autism training for health and care staff published in 2019, we have allocated £1.4 million to develop and trial the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training in learning disability and autism for all health and social care staff. This training is intended to ensure that health and social care staff have the skills and knowledge to provide safe, compassionate and informed care.

■ Cancer: Diagnosis**Andrea Jenkyns:**[\[38344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase the levels of cancer diagnosis in (a) the Morley and Outwood constituency and (b) England.

Maria Caulfield:

Between March 2020 and July 2021, there were 3.13 million urgent referrals and over 760,000 people receiving cancer treatment

West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance is leading on improving cancer diagnosis and outcomes for its local population, including Morley and Outwood. The Alliance is working with its local system to ensure that there is sufficient diagnostic and treatment capacity in place to meet cancer needs, introducing new pathways and initiatives including Rapid Diagnostic Centres (RDCs) and the Faster Diagnosis Standard. A new test to identify people at highest risk of oesophageal cancer is also being launched across West Yorkshire and Harrogate Cancer Alliance. Cytosponge can be swallowed in order to detect Barrett's Oesophagus or pre-cancerous cells in the oesophagus, as a COVID-safe alternative to endoscopy.

Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement are running a campaign, 'Help us help you' to raise awareness of general symptoms of cancer and encourage people experiencing persistent symptoms to contact their general practitioner. In 2021/22 to tackle the elective backlog, from which cancer patients will benefit. This is being supported by £325 million of investment in National Health Service diagnostics. In July 2021, the NHS announced a further £20 million for Cancer Alliances to accelerate cancer diagnosis and enable management of high referral volumes. NHS England and NHS Improvement are prioritising delivery of NHS Long Term Plan commitments such as increasing diagnostic capacity and early diagnosis and survival rates through RDCs. As of June 2021, there were 102 RDCs across hospitals in England, compared to 12 in March 2020.

■ Cancer: Yorkshire and the Humber

Rachael Maskell:

[\[38326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the scale is of the cancer backlog (a) nationally, (b) in Yorkshire and (c) in York.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 6 September 2021]: The information for Yorkshire and York is not held in the format requested. The number of people waiting longer than 62 days from an urgent referral for suspected cancer in England in July 2021, in the most recently published statistics, was approximately 18,000. This has reduced from 35,000 in May 2020.

The three Cancer Alliances in Yorkshire have worked with trusts and integrated care systems to ensure that cancer patients are prioritised and their care protected. Each system has developed comprehensive recovery plans to address backlogs and support the recovery in cancer including services such as screening and diagnostics. York and Scarborough Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has worked to maintain cancer services throughout the pandemic and has continued to offer fast track and urgent diagnostics.

The Trust has prioritised bowel and breast cancer screening and is on target to offer breast screening to all eligible patients who missed routine screening. The Trust continues to work with the Cancer Alliance to reduce delays for patients by refreshing the cancer pathway analysers, targeting work on early diagnosis, including extending rapid diagnostic centres and appointing cancer pathway navigators in gynaecology, upper gastrointestinal and urology to support the timely diagnosis of patients.

■ Cardiovascular Diseases: Coronavirus

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[50111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the covid-19 outbreak on access to cardiovascular care for people in England; and what steps he is taking to tackle the backlog in NHS cardiovascular care.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: We have made no formal assessment. The Department continues to engage with NHS England and NHS Improvement to build capacity and reduce the backlog in elective care

In September, the Department announced a further £1 billion, totalling £2 billion this year, to tackle the backlog. An additional £8 billion has been made available across the next three years to reduce waiting times and transform elective services, including cardiovascular care. This could deliver the equivalent of around nine million more checks, scans and procedures.

■ Care Homes: Coronavirus**Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[53226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether contractors and employees of suppliers who work in care homes, but are not employed by care companies directly, must provide evidence of being fully vaccinated against covid-19 before entering care homes.

Gillian Keegan:

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 requires care home providers to allow entry to the premises only to those who can demonstrate evidence of having had a complete course of an authorised COVID-19 vaccine or evidence that they are exempt from vaccination. These Regulations come into force on 11 November 2021. This includes all workers employed directly by the care home or care home provider, on a full-time or part-time basis, those employed by an agency and deployed by the care home, and volunteers deployed in the care home.

It will also include those providing direct care and those coming into care homes to do other work, for example healthcare workers, tradespeople, the Care Quality Commission's inspectors and hairdressers and beauticians.

■ Carer's Allowance**Rachael Maskell:**[\[53956\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, further to the Answer of 16 September 2021 to Question 47013, what recent discussions has he had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the potential merits of increasing carer's allowance in respect of the forthcoming proposals for social care.

Gillian Keegan:

While there have been no specific discussions, we will ensure that unpaid carers have the support, advice and respite they need, fulfilling the goals of the Care Act 2014. We will work with the sector, including unpaid carers and the Department for Work and Pensions to develop our plans and publish further detail in a white paper for reform later this year.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Alex Norris:

[53328]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in the context of the shielding programme having ended, what support his Department plans to provide clinically extremely vulnerable people in the event that some covid-19 public health restrictions are required to be reintroduced.

Maggie Throup:

Based on the success of the vaccine programme and new treatments becoming available, we do not anticipate shielding being required in the future. We are advising those previously considered as clinically extremely vulnerable consider their own risk, supported by their National Health Service clinician where necessary.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[53877]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to prepare for a potential resurgence of covid-19 infections in the autumn and winter months of 2021.

Maggie Throup:

The success of the vaccination programme means that economic and social restrictions may not be needed to prevent unsustainable pressure on the National Health Service this autumn. We aim to manage the risk of COVID-19 through pharmaceutical interventions such as vaccines and antivirals, including vaccines for those aged 12 to 15 years old; continuing the Test, Trace and Isolate programme; continuing support for the NHS and social care; and managing risks at the border.

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

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

■ Coronavirus: Screening

Julian Sturdy:

[53231]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effect on working parents, including key workers, of having to supervise children self-isolating from childcare settings while awaiting PCR covid-19 test results; and what steps he is taking to mitigate and minimise that impact.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made. Children and young people aged under 18 years and six months old who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who have been identified as a close contact can continue to attend as normal.

Working parents or guardians of a child or young person who has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace may be eligible for support via the Test and Trace Support Payment scheme if they live in England and meet specific eligibility criteria.

The payment covers the full 10-day self-isolation period. If an individual has to look after someone who is required to self-isolate, they may also qualify for other welfare and COVID-19 support, such as Universal Credit and/or the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Sir Christopher Chope:

[51587]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 14 July 2021 to question 28938, Coronavirus: Vaccination, in what format is data available on the number of deaths reported of people who have died following a covid-19 vaccination.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) publishes a weekly report of the number of suspected adverse drug reaction reports for each of the COVID-19 vaccines used in the United Kingdom, where the patient died shortly after vaccination. The weekly reports are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-adverse-reactions>

The UK Health Security Agency publishes data on COVID-19 deaths by vaccination status and by age group in the COVID-19 vaccine surveillance report, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-surveillance-report>

This data shows deaths within 28 days of positive specimen, deaths within 60 days of a positive specimen or with COVID-19 reported on the death certificate.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[53179]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to enable people enrolled on the Novavax covid-19 vaccine trial to access an international NHS covid-19 pass for the purposes of travel.

Maggie Throup:

All Novavax clinical trial participants in England and Wales can access their domestic COVID Pass through the NHS App or online through NHS.UK.

As of 21 September, approximately two thirds of Novavax trial participants in England, can present their vaccination information through the NHS COVID Pass for travel purposes. Work is ongoing to ensure that all clinical trial participants can access an NHS COVID Pass for travel in the near future.

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[53180]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans the Government has to allow people enrolled on the Novavax covid-19 vaccine trial to receive either two doses or a booster dose of an approved covid-19 vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

The decision for a participant in a vaccine trial to receive a further vaccination should be made in conjunction with clinicians. This may vary depending on the vaccine. The clinical guidance for administering further vaccinations for trial participants is currently under review.

Mr Mark Harper:**[R] [53196]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Public Health England document entitled Easy-read consent form for children, young people or parents and carers, what the evidential basis is for the statement that there is a small chance of catching covid-19 if you have been vaccinated; and how the Government defines small in that context.

Maggie Throup:

The evidence is based on published literature. In a recent trial of 2,260 adolescents aged 12 to 15 years old three COVID-19 cases were noted within 11 days after dose one among Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine recipients, as compared with 12 cases among those who had not received the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. There were no cases more than seven days after two doses, which is the recommended course for at-risk children. The study, 'Safety, Immunogenicity, and Efficacy of the BNT162b2 Covid-19 Vaccine in Adolescents', is available at the following link:

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/pdf/10.1056/NEJMoa2107456>

In this context, the definition of 'small' means that although individuals could still be infected with the virus, they are less likely to develop symptoms of COVID-19 after vaccination.

Mr Mark Harper:**[R] [53197]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Public Health England document entitled Easy-read consent form for children, young people or parents and carers, for what reason that document does not mention more serious side effects of covid-19 vaccines, including myocarditis and pericarditis.

Maggie Throup:

Public Health England's COVID-19 vaccination consent form for children and young people or parents and carers is part of a suite of materials designed to assist an individual in making their decision about acceptance of vaccination. It is intended that this should be completed once an individual has been supplied with the easy-read information leaflet on COVID-19 vaccination in children and young people, which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccination-easy-read-resources-for-children-and-young-people/covid-19-vaccination-an-easy-read-guide-for-at-risk-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years>

This contains the necessary information about potential side effects of COVID-19 vaccination, including myocarditis and pericarditis. These side effects are described

in the patient information leaflet as 'problems with their heart'; 'pain in their chest'; and 'breathing problems'.

Richard Fuller:

[53206]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued to the public on the status of the covid-19 vaccination branded Covishield; and whether there are any limitations on international travel for those in receipt of the Covishield vaccine.

Maggie Throup:

No specific guidance has been issued. No AstraZeneca doses branded as Covishield have been administered in the United Kingdom. All AstraZeneca vaccines in the UK are the same product and appear on the NHS COVID Pass as 'Vaxzevria', which has been permitted for international travel since May 2021.

■ Dementia: Drugs

Munira Wilson:

[53354]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with NHS (a) England and (b) Improvement on anti-psychotic prescription rates for people with a diagnosis of dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department has regular discussions with NHS England and NHS Improvement. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the monthly data published by NHS Digital on the prescribing of anti-psychotic medication for people diagnosed with dementia. There is also regular contact with regional clinical network leads and local services to understand the patterns in prescribing and potential reasons for such trends.

Munira Wilson:

[53355]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department plans to make an assessment of trends in data on the prescription of anti-psychotic medication for people with a diagnosis of dementia by individual CCG.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department has no current plans to make such an assessment. NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor monthly data published by NHS Digital on the prescribing of anti-psychotic medication for people diagnosed with dementia. They also work closely with regional clinical network leads and local services to understand the patterns in prescribing and potential reasons for any trends.

Public Health England published clinical commissioning group factsheets to provide context around prescribing activity and facilitate an understanding of the patterns in prescribing. These are available at the following link:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/dementia/data#page/>

■ Dementia: Health Education

Dr Luke Evans:

[54023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of undertaking a targeted public awareness campaign on reducing the risk of developing dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

No formal assessment has been made.

Since 2018, dementia risk reduction messaging has been incorporated in the NHS Health Check for all eligible adults in England aged 40 to 74 years old to increase dementia awareness and motivate people in midlife to make positive changes to reduce their risk.

To reduce the risk of dementia the Government recommends the following:

- eating a healthy diet as depicted in the Eatwell Guide;
- maintaining a healthy weight;
- exercising regularly;
- not drinking too much alcohol;
- stopping smoking; and
- keeping blood pressure at a healthy level.

We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England for future years in due course which will include a focus on risk reduction and prevention.

■ Dementia: Health Services

Gill Furniss:

[53976]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to help ensure that healthcare workers are adequately trained in assisting people living with dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

The training needs for staff supporting those living with dementia are available at the following link:

<https://skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Dementia-Core-Skills-Education-and-Training-Framework.pdf>

Since 1 April 2015, health care assistants and social care support workers, including those providing care to people with dementia, have received training as part of the implementation of the Care Certificate. As at September 2020, over 1.5 million episodes of tier 1 basic dementia awareness training have been completed by National Health Service staff. In addition, over 233,000 episodes of dementia training at tier 2 and nearly 32,000 episodes of dementia training at tier 3 have been delivered and over one million care workers have completed the Care Certificate or common

induction standards. We will be setting out our plans on dementia for England, including training, for future years in due course.

■ Dementia: Palliative Care

Gill Furniss:

[53977]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve end of life care for people with dementia.

Gillian Keegan:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for funding end of life and palliative care services in their area as part of their statutory responsibilities. NHS England's palliative and end of life care delivery plan describes their focus on improving access, quality and sustainability in line with the NHS Long Term Plan, which contains a specific commitment to provide more personalised care.

NHS England's Dementia Well Pathway highlights that services should be integrated, commissioned, trained and monitored aligned with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's standards. The Pathway is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/wp-content/uploads/sites/29/2016/03/dementia-well-pathway.pdf>

■ Dementia: Research

Jeff Smith:

[50071]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to invest funding allocated under the Dementia Moonshot to infrastructure for dementia clinical research.

Maria Caulfield:

There are no specific plans to allocate funding to infrastructure for dementia clinical research. However, we will announce our strategy for dementia research in due course. Plans for delivering a dementia moonshot are subject to the forthcoming Spending Review settlements.

■ Dementia: Social Services

Gill Furniss:

[53975]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to end geographical disparities in dementia care.

Gillian Keegan:

Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for services and support for people with dementia. We expect CCGs to commission services that take into account relevant guidance, including the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's guidelines and the Dementia Care Pathway, which sets out benchmarks to improve the delivery and quality of care and support.

Public Health England has published factsheets for CCGs to understand local patterns and potential reasons for trends in dementia diagnosis rates, as well as identifying specific areas for support. In addition, £17 million has been made available to CCGs to address the needs of those waiting for diagnosis and those who have a diagnosis but are unable to access support services due to the pandemic.

■ Dental Services: Refugees

Rosie Duffield:

[\[42068\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the availability of emergency dental treatment for refugees who have been resettled in the UK from Afghanistan as part of the UK's military withdrawal from that country.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: Refugees, including those arriving from Afghanistan, can access emergency dental treatment via NHS 111.

Many individuals arriving from Afghanistan are doing so as part of the Afghanistan Relocation and Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme. A separate process applies in these cases, which includes linking with urgent care services. Where commissioners have made additional resources available this offer may be more comprehensive and include an enhanced health assessment.

■ Disability: Children

Helen Hayes:

[\[53298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS can (a) tackle the needs of disabled children and (b) help those children to recover from the covid-19 outbreak.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health services for disabled children. On 6 September 2021, we announced an additional £5.4 billion to support the COVID-19 response over the next six months, which includes £2 billion to tackle the elective backlog and reducing waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

We have also allocated £79 million to expand mental health services for children, including disabled children and £31 million to address particular challenges faced by individuals with a learning disability and autistic people, with £3 million for community respite services.

■ Doctors: Recruitment

Zarah Sultana:

[\[54026\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the Medical Support Worker scheme for (a)

international medical graduates, (b) out-of-practice doctors and (c) refugee doctors indefinitely.

Edward Argar:

The Medical Support Worker Scheme is already available to international medical graduates, including refugees, as well as doctors returning to practice to assist during the pandemic. During 2021, 423 medical support workers have been employed in the National Health Service in England. Discussions around the future of the scheme are ongoing.

■ **Drugs: Northern Ireland**

Simon Hoare:

[\[50103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many notifications of medical discontinuations to Northern Ireland have been formally received by his Department in each week since 1 August 2021.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 20 September 2021]: The Department regularly receives notifications of discontinuations and possible discontinuations from suppliers. However, we are unable to provide the information requested as it is commercially sensitive.

Stephen Farry:

[\[54033\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the indefinite extension of the grace period in respect of medicines announced on 6 September 2021, what additional steps are required to ensure that imported medicines used in Northern Ireland after 1 January 2022 are fully recognised as compliant under EU law by the European Commission.

Edward Argar:

The Government will continue to operate the Northern Ireland Protocol on its current basis until further notice. The existing arrangements will continue, including the current grace period for medicines which means there are no additional steps after 1 January 2022. The Government will ensure that reasonable notice is provided in the event that any of these arrangements are to change, to enable businesses and citizens to make appropriate preparations.

■ **Dyslexia: Diagnosis**

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[53377\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps are been taken to improve (a) access to and (b) the affordability of assessments for dyslexia.

Gillian Keegan:

We are currently reviewing the provision of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services, including those for dyslexia. The review is considering measures to make sure the SEND system is consistent, high quality and integrated

across education, health and care and will look at how needs can be identified as early as possible.

■ Food: Contamination

Steve Reed:

[53906]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what data his Department holds on the number of incidents of food poisoning and contamination reported to local authorities in England.

Maggie Throup:

Public Health England publishes notifications of food poisoning which are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notifiable-diseases-weekly-reports-for-2021>

■ Health Professions: Radioisotopes

Peter Dowd:

[53264]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate his Department has made of potential the number of nuclear medicine physicians required to provide adequate care for NHS patients in the next year; and if he will make it his policy to increase the number of nuclear medicine physicians in training.

Edward Argar:

No assessment has been made. However, Health Education England is providing additional funding to support an increase of five nuclear medicine physician training posts in the National Health Service in England in 2021/22. The next Spending Review will set out further details of the Government's spending plans including the NHS workforce.

■ Health Services

Dr Matthew Offord:

[53879]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to increase NHS capacity.

Edward Argar:

The National Health Service will receive an extra £5.4 billion over the next six months to support its response to COVID-19. This includes £478 million to continue the enhanced hospital discharge programme and increasing bed capacity. This includes an extra £1 billion to tackle the elective care backlog and more than £8 billion will be allocated for recovery in the next three years. This additional investment could provide approximately nine million additional checks, scans and procedures.

The NHS 10-point plan to manage emergency care demand and capacity includes providing ambulance trusts an extra £55 million to increase staff numbers ahead of the winter. The seasonal flu vaccination programme and COVID-19 booster vaccines

for priority groups will also reduce pressure on NHS services by limiting the number of admissions to hospital services.

■ **Health Services and Social Services: Private Sector**

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[53971\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to protect patients from (a) private health and (b) social care companies that have been found guilty of neglecting patients.

Maria Caulfield:

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2008 all providers of regulated activities, including National Health Service and independent providers, must register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and follow a set of fundamental standards of safety and quality. The CQC uses its enforcement powers to address failings in poor care and to remove organisations that are not meeting the fundamental standards of care from the provider marketplace. The enforcement action can range from issuing cautions, fines to prosecuting cases where people are harmed as a result of neglect or placed in danger of harm.

In any setting, local authorities have a statutory duty to safeguard adults with care and support needs and should take swift action to investigate where anyone alleges poor care, abuse or neglect. The Health and Care Bill will introduce a new duty for the CQC to assess local authorities' delivery of their adult social care duties, including safeguarding. The Department is working closely with the CQC and other key stakeholders to design a system to ensure the best possible outcomes for care users.

■ **Health Services: Females**

Sarah Champion:

[\[53241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of women on waiting lists for gynaecological care are awaiting care for menstrual health conditions; and how many of those women have been waiting for more than six months.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS England and NHS Improvement do not hold this information in the format requested. Data on specific conditions within medical specialties is not held centrally.

■ **HIV Infection: Disease Control**

Catherine West:

[\[53303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will commit to additional funding to help meet his Government's policy to end new HIV transmission by 2030.

Maggie Throup:

Funding for HIV treatment and care services is provided by NHS England and NHS Improvement through specialised commissioning. HIV testing and prevention is

funded by local government through the ringfenced Public Health Grant. Decisions on future funding will be taken in the forthcoming Spending Review

The Department is currently developing a new Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and an HIV Action Plan towards the 2030 target, both of which are planned for publication later this year.

Catherine West:

[\[53304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of his Department's progress toward the Government's policy to end new HIV transmission by 2030.

Maggie Throup:

The annual official statistics on new diagnoses of HIV infection and people accessing HIV care will be released in early December. However, between 2014 and 2019, there was a 34% reduction in new HIV diagnoses in England.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[53861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 13 July 2021 to Question 33889 on HIV Infection: Disclosure of Information, through what mechanism he will report annually to Parliament from 2022 on the Government's progress in implementing the HIV Action Plan to end new cases of HIV in England by 2030.

Maggie Throup:

The HIV Action Plan is currently being developed for publication in December 2021 and will set out our plans for annual reporting to Parliament from 2022.

■ Hospitals: Waiting Lists

Steve Brine:

[\[53229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people are on waiting lists for non-urgent treatment in (a) England and (b) Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust by clinical specialty.

Edward Argar:

The total number of people on waiting lists for non-urgent treatment in England and Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is shown in the following table.

ENGLAND	HAMPSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST
5,606,724	44,166

■ Hyperactivity: Greater Manchester**Navendu Mishra:** [\[52611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how long waiting lists are for ADHD diagnosis in Greater Manchester; and how that wait compares with the national average.

Gillian Keegan:

The data requested is not held centrally.

■ In Vitro Fertilisation: LGBT People**Daisy Cooper:** [\[54021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will tackle inequalities for lesbian and bi women in accessing IVF under NICE guidelines.

Maria Caulfield:

In England, decisions about local fertility services are determined by clinical commissioning groups, taking account of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) fertility guidelines.

NICE is reviewing their fertility guidelines which will consider the current access criteria to treatment for female same-sex couples.

■ Infectious Diseases: Children**Tim Loughton:** [\[53157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional funding to health visiting services to prevent respiratory infections in young children.

Maggie Throup:

No recent assessment has been made.

■ Kidney Cancer: Diagnosis**Alex Norris:** [\[53331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7915 on Kidney Cancer, what guidance his Department plans to provide to community diagnostics hubs to help ensure that they have adequate equipment to be able to diagnose kidney cancer within an appropriate timeframe.

Maria Caulfield:

Community diagnostic hubs (CDHs) will be equipped with computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging scanners and biopsy facilities, which are used for the detection of kidney cancer. Full guidance on the diagnostic testing required within CDHs will be published in due course.

■ **LGBT People: Reproduction**

Charlotte Nichols:

[50165]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that LGBTQ+ people receive equitable support in being able to start a family; and what steps he is taking to tackle inequalities for lesbian and bi women accessing IVF treatment under NICE guidelines.

Maria Caulfield:

We are currently sponsoring a multi-year joint project of the Law Commission for England and Wales and Scotland to review and update surrogacy legislation. The reform aims to ensure that there is greater clarity for all participants in surrogacy arrangements, particularly in respect of legal parenthood. This will benefit male same-sex couples, who represent approximately half of United Kingdom surrogacy arrangements.

We have also agreed with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to review their fertility guideline, which will consider the current access criteria to treatment for same sex couples.

■ **Liver Diseases: Health Services**

Wayne David:

[45049]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of outcomes in liver disease care in England compared to (a) Wales, (b) Scotland and (c) other comparable countries.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 13 September 2021]: Public Health England (PHE) has not made a direct comparison of outcomes in liver disease care in England, Scotland and Wales.

In 2017, PHE published the Second Atlas of Variation in risk factors and healthcare for liver disease in England. This included comparisons of liver disease outcomes across the European Union, in particular France and Sweden as comparable countries to the United Kingdom. The Second Atlas of Variation in risk factors and healthcare for liver disease in England is available at the following link:

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/atlas-of-variation>

■ **Local Government: Contracts**

Mr Clive Betts:

[53832]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 22 September 2021 to Questions 49948 on Local Government: Contracts and 49947 on Local Government, if the Government will compensate local authorities for the costs of the levies which fall on contractors they employ; and what funding from the levy will be paid to local authorities for (a) the cost of introducing the £86,000 cap, (b) the proposed floor as described in the Health and Social Care Plan, (c) improving social care provision and (d) any other reforms as a result of the Health and Social Care Plan.

Gillian Keegan:

We have announced that we will be investing an additional £5.4 billion across three years in social care. The announcement includes funding that will be made available to all local authorities to cover the costs of implementing our reforms, including the cap, the increased capital limit and moving towards paying a fair rate of care and the associated implementation costs. The Government intends to compensate departments and other public sector employers in England at the forthcoming Spending Review for the increased cost of the Levy and provide Barnett consequential on this funding to the devolved administrations.

■ **Lung Cancer: Screening****Jim Shannon:**[\[49142\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 July 2021 to Question 36638 on Lung Cancer: Diagnosis, how many people have been invited for screening as part of the lung health check programme; and how many and what proportion of those people invited have attended a lung cancer screening appointment across each of the 19 locations since the programme's launch.

Jim Shannon:[\[51696\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 27 July 2021 to Question 36638, on Lung Cancer: Diagnosis, how many people have (a) been invited for screening as part of the lung health check programme and (b) attended a lung cancer screening appointment in each of the 19 programme locations since the launch of that programme.

Maria Caulfield:

As of July 2021, the latest available data, the National Health Service has invited 125,680 people for targeted lung health checks and performed more than 38,000 lung health checks.

The following table shows the number of people invited for a lung health check within each of the 18 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) where data is available and the number of health checks carried out following the invitation.

	NUMBER OF INVITATIONS JULY 2021	NUMBER OF LUNG HEALTH CHECKS JULY 2021
NHS Knowsley CCG	N/A	N/A
NHS Luton CCG	9,124	2,581
NHS Hull CCG	9,102	3,255
NHS Southampton CCG	10,929	3,338
NHS Thurrock CCG	8,464	2,060
NHS Doncaster CCG	9,318	2,431

	NUMBER OF INVITATIONS JULY 2021	NUMBER OF LUNG HEALTH CHECKS JULY 2021
NHS Blackburn with Darwen CCG	1,181	44
NHS Corby CCG	1,599	703
NHS Mansfield and Ashfield CCG	1,270	677
NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG	554	512
NHS Salford CCG	11,890	5,668
NHS Manchester CCG	36,571	9,111
NHS Hammersmith and Fulham CCG	4,148	1,193
NHS Hillingdon CCG	5,452	1,606
NHS Sutton CCG	3,041	506
NHS Stoke CCG	8,989	3,714
NHS Liverpool CCG	N/A	N/A
NHS Coventry and Warwickshire CCG	4,048	964
Total	125,680	38,363

Note:

* Data for Liverpool CCG and Knowsley CCG are still being validated.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[45314\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 21 May 2021, referenced RL11063.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 13 October 2021.

Robert Largan: [\[45316\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 4 June 2021, referenced RL23152.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 13 October 2021.

Rosie Cooper:

[\[53199\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the letter dated 11 August 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire reference on mandatory covid-19 tests and travel, reference ZA57293.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 12 October 2021.

■ Mental Health Services

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[53378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to reduce the backlog in mental health care ahead of winter 2021-22.

Gillian Keegan:

We have published our mental health recovery action plan to ensure that we respond to the impact of the pandemic on mental health services. This is supported by a one-off targeted investment of £500 million in this financial year, and an additional £79 million to expand children and young people's mental health services. We are also transforming mental health services in England as part of the NHS Long Term Plan and investing an additional £2.3 billion a year by 2023/24.

■ Mental Health Services: Children and Young People

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[53379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the waiting times for children and adolescent mental health services.

Gillian Keegan:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Wolverhampton South West (Stuart Anderson MP) on 23 September to Question [48359](#).

■ Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018

Steve Reed:

[\[53247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which Minister in his Department is responsible for the implementation of the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018.

Gillian Keegan:

I am the Minister with responsibility for social care and mental health.

■ Motor Neurone Disease: Research

Tony Lloyd:

[\[41672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 29 July 2021 to Question 35705 on Motor Neurone Disease: Drugs, if he will provide details of the projects relating to Motor Neurone Disease that were funded by the National Institute for Health Research in each of the years between 2015 and 2020.

Maria Caulfield:

The information requested is shown in the following table. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is also funding research on motor neurone disease through the NIHR's research infrastructure, including the NIHR Sheffield Biomedical Research Centre. However this information is not available at individual study level.

YEAR	PROJECT
2015/16	Telehealth in Motor Neurone Disease: the TiM trial. A randomised controlled pilot study of the use of the TiM system to deliver highly specialised care to patients and carers of those living with motor neurone disease. * Evaluation of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of Short-term Integrated Palliative Care Services (SIPC) to OPTimise CARE for people with advanced longterm Neurological conditions (OPTCARE Neuro) *
2016/17	Head up: The development of a novel cervical orthosis to support neck weakness due to neurological disease. * Telehealth in Motor Neurone Disease: the TiM trial. A randomised controlled pilot study of the use of the TiM system to deliver highly specialised care to patients and carers of those living with motor neurone disease. * Evaluation of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of Short-term Integrated Palliative Care Services (SIPC) to OPTimise CARE for people with advanced longterm Neurological conditions (OPTCARE Neuro) * DiPALS: A randomised controlled trial evaluating NeuRx/4 Diaphragm Pacing in patients with respiratory muscle weakness due to Motor Neurone Disease
2017/18	Telehealth in Motor Neurone Disease: the TiM trial. A randomised controlled pilot study of the

YEAR	PROJECT
	<p>use of the TiM system to deliver highly specialised care to patients and carers of those living with motor neurone disease. *</p> <p>Evaluation of the clinical and cost-effectiveness of Short-term Integrated Palliative Care Services (SIPC) to OPTimise CARE for people with advanced longterm Neurological conditions (OPTCARE Neuro) *</p> <p>A feasibility study and randomised controlled trial of acceptance and COMmitment therapy for people with Motor nEuroN Disease (COMMEND) *</p>
2018/19	<p>Telehealth in Motor Neurone Disease: the TiM trial. A randomised controlled pilot study of the use of the TiM system to deliver highly specialised care to patients and carers of those living with motor neurone disease. *</p> <p>A feasibility study and randomised controlled trial of acceptance and COMmitment therapy for people with Motor nEuroN Disease (COMMEND) *</p> <p>Nusinersen for treating infant or child spinal muscular atrophy [ID1069] A programme to develop and evaluate a complex intervention to achieve a high calorie diet for people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (HighCALS) *</p> <p>Enhancing the efficacy of non-invasive ventilation for patients with motor neurone disease: Synthesising the evidence, mapping the services and translating the evidence into clinical practice. *</p>
2019/20	<p>A feasibility study and randomised controlled trial of acceptance and COMmitment therapy for people with Motor nEuroN Disease (COMMEND) *</p> <p>A programme to develop and evaluate a complex intervention to achieve a high calorie diet for people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (HighCALS) *</p> <p>Enhancing the efficacy of non-invasive ventilation for patients with motor neurone disease: Synthesising the evidence, mapping the services and translating the evidence into clinical practice. *</p>

YEAR	PROJECT
2020/21	<p>Onasemnogene abeparvovec for treating spinal muscular atrophy type 1 [ID1473] - Part 1</p> <p>A feasibility study and randomised controlled trial of acceptance and COMmitment therapy for people with Motor nEuroN Disease (COMMEND) * A programme to develop and evaluate a complex intervention to achieve a high calorie diet for people with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (HighCALS) * Enhancing the efficacy of non-invasive ventilation for patients with motor neurone disease: Synthesising the evidence, mapping the services and translating the evidence into clinical practice. *</p> <p>Onasemnogene abeparvovec for treating spinal muscular atrophy type 1[ID1473] - Part 2</p> <p>Risdiplam for treating spinal muscular atrophy [ID1631]</p>

Note:

* Project funded for multiple years spanning the period 2015-2020.

■ NHS and Social Services

Barbara Keeley:

[\[53849\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the (a) individuals and (b) organisations that attended the reform summit held on 21 September 2021.

Edward Argar:

The following table shows the external attendees at the summit.

NAME	ROLE
Richard Murray	Chief Executive, The King's Fund
Nigel Edwards	Chief Executive, The Nuffield Trust
Jennifer Dixon	Chief Executive, The Health Foundation
Sir Muir Gray	Director, Optimal Ageing Programme for Living Longer Better
Rebecca Steinfeld	Head of Policy, National Voices

NAME	ROLE
David Halpern	Chief Executive, Behavioural Insights Team
Richard Sloggett	Director, Future Health Research
Robert Ede	Health and Social Care, Policy Exchange
Amanda Pritchard	Chief Executive, NHS England and NHS Improvement
Alastair Henderson	Chief Executive, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
Matthew Taylor	Chief Executive, NHS Confederation
Saffron Cordery	Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Providers
Miriam Deakin	Director of Policy and Strategy, NHS Providers
Tim Mitchell	Vice President, Royal College of Surgeons
Roland Sinker	Co-chair of the Shelford Group and Chief Executive, Cambridge University Hospitals Foundation Trust
Rob Webster	Chief Executive, West Yorkshire Integrated Care System
Lord Darzi	Director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation, Imperial College London and Chair of Imperial College Health Partners
Sir Chris Ham	Co-Chair of the NHS Assembly, Chair of the Coventry and Warwickshire Health and Care Partnership
Sir Jim Mackey	Chief Executive, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Pauline Philip	National Director for Emergency and Elective Care, NHS England & Improvement
Habib Naqvi	Director, NHS Race and Health Observatory
Sarah Pickup	Deputy Chief Executive, Local Government Association

NAME	ROLE
Jim McManus	Director of Public Health, Hertfordshire (and Acting President of the Association of Directors of Public Health)
Maggie Rae	President, Faculty of Public Health
Christina Marriott	Chief Executive, Royal Society for Public Health
Jason Strelitz	Director of Public Health, Newham
Tom Riordan	Chief Executive, Leeds City Council
Vic Rayner	Chief Executive, National Care Forum
Nadra Ahmed	Chairman, National Care Association
Stephen Chandler	Director of Adult Social Care, Oxfordshire (and President of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services)
Emily Holzhausen	Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Carers UK
Sir David Behan	Chair, Health Education England
Jane Townson	Executive Director, United Kingdom Homecare Association
Martin Green	Chief Executive, Care England
Caroline Abrahams	Chair Director, Age UK
Carolyn Wilkins	Former Oldham Accountable Officer & local authority chief executive
James Sanderson	Director of Personalised Budgets, NHS England & Improvement
Susan Jebb	Professor of Diet and Population Health, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, Oxford University
Nick Harding	CMO Operose Health. Primary Care & Ex Clinical lead for ICS at NHSE
Edel Harris	Mencap CEO
James White	Alzheimer's society

NAME	ROLE
Kate Lee	Alzheimer's society CEO
Ian McCreath	Head of Think Local Act Personal

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[53875\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to integrate health and care services.

Edward Argar:

The Health and Care Bill encourages joint planning, decision making and commissioning in the National Health Service and local government. A white paper will be published this year setting out a national plan for further integrating health and care systems.

■ **NHS: Agency Workers**

Justin Madders:

[\[52519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 294 on NHS: Agency Workers, if he will publish the total cost to the NHS of using (a) agency staff and (b) bank staff for 2020-21 in (i) Quarter 4 and (ii) total.

Edward Argar:

The data requested is not yet available as the accounts are currently being audited.

■ **NHS: Coronavirus**

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

[\[53837\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 22 September 2021 to Question 49038 on NHS: Coronavirus, what plans he has to make an assessment of the effect on NHS frontline staffing levels of the advice that from 28 weeks all NHS staff who are pregnant should work from home and if that is not possible take sick leave or be suspended on full pay; and if he will remove that provision in response to the ending of shielding guidance.

Edward Argar:

There are currently no plans to do so. However, the Department is currently reviewing the guidance 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for pregnant employees'.

■ **NHS: Finance**

Stephen Timms:

[\[51905\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the (a) contribution to the public purse of tax, National Insurance and NHS surcharges

paid by families without permanent residence in the UK and (b) cost to the NHS of care provided by the NHS to those families.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 23 September 2021]: The Department does not collect data on tax or National Insurance payments that migrants and their family members make in the United Kingdom. Since 2015, the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) has raised almost £2 billion for the National Health Service. The Department estimates that the average cost to the NHS of care provided to an IHS payer is £646 per year.

■ **Nurses**

Alex Norris:

[\[53329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2021 to Question 7914 on Kidney Cancer, when he plans to publish the common and consistent competencies for clinical nurse specialists.

Alex Norris:

[\[53330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 19 July 2021 to Question 7914 on Kidney Cancer, what steps he is taking to involve the urology clinical nurse specialist workforce in the development of the common and consistent competencies for clinical nurse specialists.

Maria Caulfield:

A standard competency framework for clinical nurse specialists in the field of kidney cancer is currently under development and being piloted in the National Health Service in the North West of England. The framework is being developed with input from a range of stakeholders including cancer nurse specialists. The findings will further inform the development of the national competency framework which is due to be launched across the NHS in England in 2022/23.

■ **Ophthalmic Services**

Marsha De Cordova:

[\[54010\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase (a) funding for eye health services and (b) the effectiveness of public eye health strategy.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Health Service is receiving £2 billion this year and an additional £8 billion across the next three years to increase activity and tackle elective backlogs caused by the pandemic, including in ophthalmic services.

NHS England and NHS Improvement's National Eye Care Recovery and Transformation programme aims to transform secondary care ophthalmology services by using existing funding more effectively to improve service quality and patient outcomes. The programme is also looking for opportunities to invest in eye

care services in order to move activity into primary care settings, supported by specialists in NHS trusts.

The Public Health Outcomes Framework Eye Health Indicator continues to track the rate of sight loss for age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy. This information is available to commissioners and can also be used to drive improved local outcomes and interventions.

■ Ovarian Cancer

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[41791\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms during Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month in September.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 8 September 2021]: While no specific ovarian cancer awareness campaigns were run as part of Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month, NHS England and NHS Improvement and Public Health England launched the latest 'Help us, help you' campaign targeting abdominal symptoms of cancer in August 2021. This includes bloating or discomfort for three weeks or more, as this could be a sign of ovarian cancer.

■ Radioligand Therapy: Training

Peter Dowd:

[\[53263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to support the adoption of radioligand therapies and other targeted treatments in the NHS through provision of training of specialist (a) staff and (b) equipment.

Maria Caulfield:

Radioligand therapy is not yet licensed for the National Health Service and has yet to receive approval from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. We therefore have no current plans to consider the adoption of equipment and training of specialist staff for Radioligand or any other targeted treatments until they are licensed.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Yasmin Qureshi:

[\[53223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to provide (a) mental health support and (b) other health support for refugees arriving from Afghanistan.

Gillian Keegan:

On 27 August, NHS England and NHS Improvement advised all local commissioners to facilitate general practitioner registration for all individuals arriving from

Afghanistan and an enhanced health assessment to identify and manage families' immediate health and care requirements.

The assessment should cover trauma and safeguarding concerns, mental health needs, women's and children's health, long-term conditions, areas of public health concern, vaccinations and ensuring pathways to other priority services such as maternity, child health services, dental and eye care. Individuals requiring more specialist or extensive mental health support will be referred onto relevant services.

■ Skin Diseases: Health Services

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[50620]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce waiting times for a dermatology appointment in England.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 21 September 2021]: We continue to support the National Health Service to increase activity to tackle waiting lists for treatment caused by the pandemic. We have provided £2 billion this year to reduce waiting times, including for patients waiting for dermatology appointments.

■ Social Services

Alex Sobel:

[52593]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to work with the Ministry of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to expand housing-with-care provision.

Alex Sobel:

[52594]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of a cross-departmental task force to improve housing options that include CQC-regulated social care.

Gillian Keegan:

The Government's plan for health and social care, announced on 7 September, recognised the important role of housing in providing care and support to people in the community. We will invest in supported housing, including housing-with-care, as well as exploring other innovative housing solutions to support more people to live independently at home for longer, with personalised care and support.

The Department of Health and Social Care works closely with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Department for Work and Pensions to increase the supply and quality of supported housing. We are engaging closely with the sector and a range of other stakeholders, including considering the merits of different engagement and delivery models including proposals from the sector for a cross-Government taskforce.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[53855\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to findings of the rapid survey by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, published on 8 September 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding that the number of people who have been waiting more than six months for an assessment of their care needs has increased by 57 per cent over the last three months to 11,000 people.

Gillian Keegan:

Local authorities are responsible for assessing an individual's eligibility for care and support as set out in the Care Act 2014 and where the individual is eligible for financial support, for meeting those needs.

The forthcoming Health and Care Bill will set out the Department's plans to develop an enhanced assurance framework to support improved social care outcomes, identify and share best practice and build on existing sector-led support and improvement programmes. This includes powers to collect improved data and a new duty for the Care Quality Commission to assess local authorities' delivery of their adult social care duties to help drive quality and outcomes for care users.

■ Social Services: Finance

Barbara Keeley:

[\[53854\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, prior to the funding from the Health and Social Care Levy in April 2022, what plans he has to support social care providers with the level of workforce pressures.

Gillian Keegan:

We continue to monitor capacity and work closely with the social care sector to consider any further actions. Our next national recruitment campaign for adult social care will be launched this autumn. We are also ensuring free and fast-track Disclosure and Barring Service checks for staff recruited in response to the pandemic and the promotion of adult social care careers in Job Centres.

■ Social Services: Labour Turnover

Barbara Keeley:

[\[53850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the recent survey by the National Care Forum, published on 31 August 2021, which found that 74 per cent of providers of social care services had seen an increase in staff exits since April 2021, what steps he is taking to reduce the turnover rate of social care staff.

Gillian Keegan:

The Department has put in place measures to retain staff which includes a package of wellbeing support such as helplines and we have set out our intention to make care work a more rewarding vocation, offering a career where people can develop new skills.

We will invest at least £500 million across three years in social care workforce professionalisation and development and wellbeing and mental health support, which will support retention of staff in the sector.

■ Social Services: Private Sector

Rachael Maskell: [\[53951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to ensure that people with a history of the directorship of previously struck-off care companies are prevented from being able to set up new companies in the social care sector.

Rachael Maskell: [\[53952\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will introduce mandatory guidance for local authorities to prevent commissioning of services from private care companies or owners with a history of moving into administration or being struck off.

Rachael Maskell: [\[53953\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of mandating tighter application restrictions on operation of commissioning private care providers by local authorities through (a) financial viability assessment and (b) provision of financial history of directors of prospective care service delivery companies.

Gillian Keegan:

On registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), providers are required to submit a statement from an accredited financial specialist which confirms their ability to operate the service to required standards in a way that is financially viable. The Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance sets out the responsibility of local authorities to facilitate and shape a care market that offers a diverse range of high-quality and appropriate services.

The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 require that certain people working within a provider meet certain standards and demonstrate that they are appropriate for the role. Providers have a duty to have a 'fit and proper' person in director level roles and the CQC assesses a provider's compliance with this as part of its regulatory role. The CQC confirms that the provider has made the appropriate checks regarding the fitness of director level roles to ensure suitability. The providers' checks should include their previous regulatory history, Companies House information, financial viability, Disclosure and Barring Service checks and fit and proper persons interviews.

Providers should identify if a director has been responsible for or contributed to any serious misconduct or mismanagement (whether unlawful or not) in the course of carrying on a regulated activity. The CQC assesses a provider's compliance with this as part of its regulatory role. No further assessment has been made of amending these restrictions.

■ Social Services: Recruitment

Barbara Keeley: [\[53851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of the 112,000 vacancies in the social care workforce he estimates to fill using the £500 million funding announced on 7 September 2021.

Gillian Keegan:

A specific estimate has not been made. Our investment will deliver new qualifications, progression pathways and wellbeing and mental health support. We will also introduce further reforms to improve recruitment and support for our social care workforce. We will set out more detail in the forthcoming white paper.

■ Social Services: Reform

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[53874\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to provide a long-term solution to social care.

Gillian Keegan:

On 7 September, we committed to investing an additional £5.4 billion over three years to begin a comprehensive programme of reform for adult social care. The introduction of an £86,000 cap on lifetime personal care costs will end people's worry that they may face unpredictable or unlimited care costs. We also announced an investment of at least £500 million to support the development and wellbeing of the care workforce. This will enable a five-fold increase in public spending on the skills and training of care workers and registered managers.

We will work with care users, providers, and other partners to develop these plans and publish further detail in a white paper for reform later this year.

■ Social Services: Standards

Rachael Maskell: [\[53955\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of establishing an award as a benchmark of quality social care for responsible care providers, which includes consideration of Care Quality Commission reports, a lack of complaints or tribunals in respect of staff payment and the introduction for staff of the living wage.

Gillian Keegan:

We have no current plans to make this assessment. The quality of adult social care providers is regulated independently by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Local authorities also have a duty under the Care Act 2014 to promote diversity and quality in provision of services. This includes a range of factors, including the CQC's fundamental standards as a minimum, to ensure services are appropriate for its users and clear criteria on quality are established and met. The vast majority of care

workers are employed by private sector providers who ultimately set their pay, independent of central Government.

■ Special Educational Needs

Dan Carden:

[\[52588\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the backlog in needs assessments to ensure that disabled children can access the health support they need.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health and care services for disabled children. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who require additional provision will receive an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The SEND Regulations 2014 make clear that local authorities must complete an EHC plan assessment within twenty weeks after the request is received unless exceptional circumstances apply. The Department for Education monitors local authority performance on EHC plan assessments to establish where there are long-standing delays and provide support. This could include training for staff, extra monitoring or engagement with partners to improve joint working.

Helen Hayes:

[\[53299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to tackle the backlog in needs assessments for disabled children.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to enhance the provision of health and care services for disabled children. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who require additional provision will receive an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The SEND Regulations (2014) make clear that local authorities must complete an EHC plan assessment within twenty weeks after the request is received unless exceptional circumstances apply. The Department for Education monitors local authority performance on EHC plan assessments to establish where there are long-standing delays and provide support. This could include training for staff, extra monitoring or engagement with partners to improve joint working.

Barbara Keeley:

[\[53848\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Disabled Children's Partnerships report entitled *Then there was silence*, published on 10 September 2021, what steps he has taken to reduce the time taken for assessments of children's conditions that have led to needs not being identified.

Gillian Keegan:

We are working with the Department for Education and NHS England and NHS Improvement to improve the provision of health and care services for disabled

children. Children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who require additional provision will receive an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. The SEND Regulations 2014 make clear that local authorities must complete an EHC plan assessment within twenty weeks after the request is received unless exceptional circumstances apply. The Department for Education monitors local authority performance on EHC plan assessments to establish where there are long-standing delays and provide support. This could include training for staff, extra monitoring or engagement with partners to improve joint working.

■ **Surgery: Waiting Lists**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[53876\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce NHS backlogs in elective procedures.

Edward Argar:

An additional £1 billion has been announced for elective recovery this year, further to £1 billion previously committed. The Government has also allocated £8 billion across the next three years to increase activity in elective procedures, which could deliver approximately nine million more checks, scans and procedures. We will establish a new £250 million Elective Recovery Technology Fund to enable cutting-edge technologies increase operating theatre capacity and improve productivity in hospitals.

■ **Terminal Illnesses: Social Services**

Paul Girvan:

[\[53996\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government plans to take to help ensure that social care is affordable for people with a terminal illness and their carers.

Gillian Keegan:

Under the Care Act 2014, charging is based on a several principles including that people should not be charged more than it is reasonably practicable for them to pay and is based on care needs. Those care needs could include increased support for a carer or for someone with a terminal illness. A means tested financial assessment determines what the care recipient can afford to contribute towards care and support costs. The Government has announced a more generous means testing threshold, allowing more people to become eligible for financial support towards meeting care costs from October 2023.

■ **Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus**

Mr Ben Bradshaw:

[\[53177\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish the methodology used by the Joint Biosecurity Centre when deciding to add a country to the covid-19 red list for international travel.

Maggie Throup:

Information on the methodology used by the Joint Biosecurity Centre is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-risk-assessment-methodology-to-inform-international-travel-traffic-light-system/risk-assessment-methodology-to-inform-international-travel-traffic-light-system>

■ Travel: Coronavirus**Anne Marie Morris:****[52504]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of (a) customer service and (b) complaints procedures provided by firms on the list of travel covid-19 test providers approved by her Department.

Maggie Throup:

The Department has completed a rapid review of all private testing providers including their online terms and conditions and customer service. However, we are unable to provide further details of these assessments as they relate to the ongoing development of Government policy.

■ Travel: Quarantine**Shabana Mahmood:****[53219]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what medical duty of care exists for hotel providers being used for covid-19 quarantine following international travel.

Maggie Throup:

The duty of care for medical provision should a passenger or guest present with symptoms other than COVID-19 rests with the National Health Service. All managed quarantine facilities' staff, security and testing staff ensure that every guest is kept in a safe environment and that the potential for exposure to others within the facility who may have tested positive for COVID-19 is minimised.

Shabana Mahmood:**[53220]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether hotels that are being used for covid-19 quarantine following international travel are required to conduct risk assessments for people who are quarantining there.

Maggie Throup:

Prior to any hotel or establishment becoming a Managed Quarantine Service (MQS) facility, a complete risk assessment is carried out. MQS hotels comply fully with all regulatory and legislative requirements including those relating to health and safety, COVID-19 protocols and fire risk. All assessments incorporate guidance from Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[53221\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what formal (a) complaints and (b) other processes are in place to ensure that the hotels being used for covid-19 quarantine following international travel are held accountable by (i) service users and (ii) his Department.

Maggie Throup:

The Department contracts Managed Quarantine Service hotels via Corporate Travel Management (CTM). Initial complaints are raised with CTM to address with hotels. In addition, the Department has deployed liaison officers to liaise with hotels in England to ensure that Standard Operating Procedures are being adhered to in line with any contractual standards. The Department's contract management and commercial teams monitor standards and performance and will terminate contracts where performance or standards remain below requirements.

■ **Trodelvy**

Theresa Villiers:

[\[52426\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with NICE and the NHS on making the drug Sacituzumab Govitecan, also known as Trodelvy, available on the NHS in England.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is currently appraising sacituzumab govitecan and expects to issue guidance in June 2022, with draft guidance expected in April 2022.

■ **Vaccination: Children**

Tim Loughton:

[\[53158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has commissioned research to understand the potential link between the (a) reduction in health visitor numbers and (b) fall in childhood immunisations since 2015.

Maggie Throup:

No specific research has been commissioned.

■ **Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme**

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[54016\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has undertaken a review of the adequacy of the (a) eligibility criteria for and (b) financial payments under the Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme in the context of the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Maggie Throup:

We have no current plans to do so. However, we will monitor the situation as more information becomes available and our understanding of the potential causal links between the COVID-19 vaccines and its purported side effects becomes clearer.

HOME OFFICE■ **[Subject Heading to be Assigned]****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[903766\]](#)

What discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on preventing illegal practices in the rental sector.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office operates the Right to Rent Scheme in England, which ensures only those with the correct immigration status can access the private rented sector, whilst tackling unscrupulous landlords who exploit vulnerable migrants.

My officials work closely with their colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and enforcement bodies to ensure the effectiveness of powers to tackle criminal landlords, including civil penalties and banning orders.

Sarah Olney:[\[903767\]](#)

If she will take steps with Cabinet colleagues to support people with British National (Overseas) visas who are facing difficulties in applying for early withdrawal of their provident funds.

Priti Patel:

Hong Kong's Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority is unfairly disrupting people's livelihoods by refusing to accept the British National(Overseas) visa when Hong Kongers apply for early withdrawal. This is preventing them from accessing funds they are entitled to.

The Government has expressed concern to the relevant Hong Kong authorities and calls on them to resolve this issue.

Aaron Bell:[\[903769\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to help ensure the effective implementation of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

Priti Patel:

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to interpreters and other staff who risked their lives working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan.

It is why we have introduced a generous funding package, covering healthcare, accommodation, education, and integration. We are committed to working with local authorities and NGOs to ensure Afghans who are resettled in the UK are fully supported.

Henry Smith:

[903771]

What steps her Department is taking to help ensure the effective implementation of the Beating Crime Plan.

Kit Malthouse:

The Beating Crime Plan sets out the Government's blueprint for cutting crime, protecting the public and increasing confidence in the Criminal Justice System.

Since its publication, we have been working with partners across government, policing and other law enforcement agencies to deliver the commitments we have made to the public.

Christian Wakeford:

[903772]

What recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the Government's proscription of Hamas.

Damian Hinds:

Hamas' military wing was proscribed in the UK in 2001.

Proscription is a powerful tool. The investigation and prosecution of proscription offences is a matter for the police and Crown Prosecution Service.

It would be inappropriate for the Government to comment further on such matters however, anyone that professes support for, or who is a member of Hamas, risks being investigated by the police for proscription offences.

Steven Bonnar:

[903773]

If she will take steps with the Secretary of State for Justice to develop an overarching national strategy to improve the outcomes for neurodivergent people in the criminal justice system.

Kit Malthouse:

We are working closely with the Ministry of Justice on the development of a national strategy to improve outcomes for neurodivergent people in the criminal justice system (CJS).

The recent Criminal Justice Joint Inspection report on neurodiversity in the CJS is welcome. I look forward to discussing this with the new Secretary of State for Justice.

Olivia Blake:

[903774]

What assessment she has made of trends in the level of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse and assaults faced by LGBTQ+ asylum seekers in processing centres (a) in the UK and (b) offshore.

Tom Pursglove:

The Nationality and Borders Bill seeks to build a fair, but firm asylum and illegal migration system. We published an Equality Impact Assessment for the policies being taken forward through the Bill, and the potential impacts on people who are LGBTQ+ are considered throughout.

The welfare and dignity of all claimants forms a central platform of our decision-making processes and robust safeguarding measures will continue to ensure that all cohorts of asylum seeker are protected from bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Patrick Grady:

[\[903775\]](#)

What assessment she has made of the adequacy of her Department's provision for Afghans seeking asylum in the UK following the Taliban's resurgence in Afghanistan.

Priti Patel:

This country has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need. Our swift and generous response to the crisis in Afghanistan is no exception.

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy has relocated around 7,000 Locally Employed Staff and their family members since late June, while the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme will provide up to 20,000 people at risk with a safe and legal route to the UK.

Tim Farron:

[\[903776\]](#)

What steps she is taking to support Afghan people who reach the UK by their own means after being unable to access safe routes.

Victoria Atkins:

There are many people in Afghanistan who may wish to leave, and while the UK has led the way with the most ambitious resettlement scheme of its type, we cannot do it all alone. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.

We are taking action to help those affected by the situation in Afghanistan.

Our new resettlement scheme will welcome Afghans most at risk, prioritising women, girls, religious and other minorities, so they can rebuild their lives safely in the UK.

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[903777\]](#)

What steps her Department is taking to encourage scientists, engineers, academics and other highly skilled workers to the UK.

Kevin Foster:

Attracting the brightest and best is a key component of our global points-based immigration system.

Our wide-ranging action to make the UK a preferred destination for global talent, such as scientists, engineers and academics, includes the recently-introduced Graduate route, changes to the world leading Global Talent route, and a new High Potential route, which will launch in 2022.

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[903778\]](#)

What discussions she had with Police Scotland prior to the laying of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (Designated Scottish Sites under Section 129) Order 2021.

Damian Hinds:

Officials in the Home Office worked closely with Scottish Parliament counterparts throughout the process.

For security reasons we do not comment on the underlying reasons for the decision. Designation as a protected site will assist the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to strengthen protection of the Parliament as a key civic institution.

■ Afghanistan: Asylum**Navendu Mishra:**[\[52610\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to provide assistance to LGBTQI+ Afghans seeking asylum.

Tom Pursglove:

The UK has a proud record of providing protection for people who need it, in accordance with our obligations under the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. However, there is no provision within our Immigration Rules for someone to be allowed to travel to the UK to seek asylum or temporary refuge. Whilst we acknowledge the increasingly complex situation in Afghanistan, we are not bound to consider asylum claims from the very large numbers of people overseas who might like to come here. Those who need international protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach – that is the fastest route to safety.

While we do not allow asylum claims from abroad, all asylum claims that are lodged from within the UK, including those from Afghan nationals that are based on sexual orientation or gender identity, will be carefully considered on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations. Those who need protection will normally be granted five years' limited leave, have full access to the labour market and mainstream benefits, and can apply for settlement after five years.

We do not remove asylum seekers who have had to leave their countries because their sexuality or gender identity has put them at risk of persecution and no one who is found to be at risk of persecution or serious harm in Afghanistan will be expected to return there. Enforced returns of those who have been refused asylum and have exhausted all rights of appeal are also currently paused while we consider the situation.

The UK's new resettlement scheme will, however, offer a route welcoming Afghans most at risk who have been forced to flee the country. We will work with UNHCR and partners in the region to prioritise those at risk, such as women and girls at risk, and ethnic, religious and LGBT+ minority groups at risk.

■ Afghanistan: Refugees**Dan Jarvis:**[\[52503\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her timeframe is for opening the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

Information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

The scheme is not yet open. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will include those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists. The ACRS is being developed at pace and further details will be released in due course.

■ Asylum**Stuart C McDonald:****[53923]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum applicants referred into the National Referral Mechanism received (a) refugee leave, (b) positive conclusive grounds status and (c) both statuses since April 2016.

Rachel Maclean:

Figures on the number of asylum applicants who have been referred into the National Referral Mechanism and received refugee status, a positive conclusive grounds decision or both are not currently published.

Statistics on the number of individuals referred into the National Referral Mechanism who have received a positive conclusive grounds decision can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-referral-mechanism-statistics> and the number of individuals granted refugee status can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2021/how-many-people-do-we-grant-asylum-or-protection-to>.

Stuart C McDonald:**[53924]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether the Government has (a) reached any agreements with countries to remove people it considers inadmissible to the asylum procedure and (b) identified any locations for offshore processing of asylum claims to the UK.

Tom Pursglove:

In response to part (a), we have several bilateral agreements with key third countries that assist in expediting the return of individuals we consider inadmissible. This includes within the EU and other international partners.

In response to part (b), we must consider every possible option to prevent people from putting their lives at risk to make perilous journeys – deterring abuse of the asylum system and criminality associated with it. As part of offshoring, we are in

discussion with a number of international partners but will not comment on the detail of individual negotiations. We would only ever work with countries that we know are safe and will treat asylum seekers in accordance with the Refugee Convention and relevant international human rights laws.

Carol Monaghan:

[53938]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to help ensure that asylum cases are determined on the basis of need rather than the route by which people arrive to the UK.

Tom Pursglove:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations under the Refugee Convention and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

However, we have been clear that people should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach and should not seek to enter the UK illegally. They should not put their lives at risk by leaving those safe countries and making unnecessary and dangerous onward journeys to the UK.

Inadmissibility is a longstanding process designed to prevent secondary movements across Europe. If an individual has a connection to or has passed through a safe country before arriving in the UK, we can declare their claim as inadmissible to our asylum process, and we will seek to return them to a safe country. If we cannot return an inadmissible claimant to a safe country within a reasonable period of time, we will consider their claim in the UK.

For claims admitted for consideration under the UK asylum process, decision makers carefully consider the claimant's protection needs by assessing all the evidence provided by them in light of published country information guidance. Decision makers receive extensive training on considering asylum claims and must follow published Home Office policy guidance.

Each case that is admitted to our asylum process, irrespective of how the individual arrived in the UK, is carefully considered on its own merits. Protection is normally granted where a claimant has a well-founded fear of persecution under the Refugee Convention or their circumstances engage our obligations under Article 3 (ECHR). Those who qualify are granted five years' limited leave and have access to the labour market and welfare support.

Those found not to need protection are refused, and the decision can be subject to legal challenge where appropriate either via appeal to the independent court or through a judicial review, depending on the decision in question. Once their appeals rights are exhausted, they are required to leave the UK.

■ Asylum: Afghanistan

Stephen Farry:

[\[51895\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghan refugees have arrived in the UK since the UK military's final evacuation from Kabul airport.

Victoria Atkins:

None of the Afghans evacuated during Op PITTING are considered refugees within the international law meaning. Those resettled in the UK via the ARAP scheme, and those provided with LOTR in advance of their admission to the ACRS have indefinite leave to remain under the appropriate resettlement scheme. An individual is only considered a refugee by UNHCR for the purpose of our UK Resettlement Scheme or once their claim for asylum in the UK has been assessed and accepted.

Since the end of the evacuation we have relocated a small number of Afghan nationals to the United Kingdom under other schemes, but the figure for ARAP and others is around 7000 Locally Employed Staff and their family members have been relocated to the UK, since the first ARAP flight on 22 June.

Mr Nicholas Brown:

[\[52418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the (a) eight cases between February and May 2021 and (b) seven cases between June and August 2021 relating to UKVI raised with her Department by the hon Member for Newcastle upon Tyne East.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office has responded to 18 of the Rt Hon Member's written enquiries between February and August 2021 and will provide substantive responses to any outstanding enquiries as quickly as possible

■ Asylum: Costs

Anne McLaughlin:

[\[53934\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the total cost of asylum support expended on people issued with a Notice of Intent (Inadmissible) is since 1 January 2021.

Kevin Foster:

The cost of support expended on people issued with a Notice of Intent could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

■ Asylum: Housing

Stuart C McDonald:

[\[53921\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will publish the final inspection report on contingency asylum accommodation by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration.

Kevin Foster:

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration is still conducting this inspection and has not yet produced a final report.

Carol Monaghan:[\[53939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to increase the amount of suitable asylum seeker accommodation.

Kevin Foster:

The current global pandemic along with high intake presented us with significant challenges when it comes to the provision of asylum accommodation, including sourcing sufficient suitable accommodation to meet demand. The use of hotels and wider government facilities is a short-term measure and we are working with our accommodation providers to move people to longer-term dispersal accommodation as soon as it becomes available.

The Home Office is working closely with asylum accommodation providers, Local Authorities and Strategic Migration Partnerships to increase the amount of accommodation available for asylum seekers so we can eliminate the need for the use of contingency accommodation.

We are grateful to those local authorities who participate in the dispersal scheme and will continue to work in partnership with them to procure suitable accommodation. Sadly, many local authorities do not currently participate in the dispersal scheme, making it harder to procure sufficient dispersal accommodation. I would encourage them to step up and play their part in the UK-wide effort to provide accommodation to those seeking asylum who would otherwise be destitute.

We have established the Local Government Chief Executive Group (HOLGCEX) group to bring together senior representatives from Home Office, Local Government Association and local authorities with the aim of working in partnership to improve the asylum dispersal process for the people who use this service and the communities in which they reside.

■ Asylum: Social Security Benefits**Anne McLaughlin:**[\[53933\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to publish its consultation on possible changes to asylum support entitlement, via commencing provisions within Immigration Act 2016; whether officials in her Department have engaged with representatives of local and devolved governments in respect of its plans during 2021; and whether her Department has prepared an equalities impact assessment on those plans.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office plans to consult on the implementation of the support provisions of the Immigration Act 2016 later this year. There will be engagement with representatives of local and devolved governments as part of the process.

An equalities impact assessment was completed at the time the measures were considered by Parliament in 2015 and this will be updated in light of the consultation.

■ Chevening Scholarships Programme: Afghanistan

Clive Lewis:

[\[53292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps the Government is taking to ensure the safe passage of Chevening scholars' families to the UK who were not evacuated from Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

Between 15 and 29 August, the UK evacuated over 15,000 people from Afghanistan. That includes more than 8,000 British nationals; close to 5,000 Afghans who loyally served the UK, along with their dependants; and about 500 special cases of particularly vulnerable Afghans, including Chevening scholars, journalists, human rights defenders, campaigners for women's rights, judges and many others.

We successfully evacuated the majority of Afghan Chevening scholars in this year's cohort and will continue to do all we can to support the small number who remain in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement scheme will prioritise those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law. The scheme will also prioritise vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk.

■ Domestic Abuse: Ethnic Groups

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[54027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what training is provided to police officers on specific issues affecting Black victims of domestic abuse.

Abena Oppong-Asare:

[\[54028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of mandating specialist training for police officers who support Black women and girls affected by domestic abuse.

Kit Malthouse:

This Government is committed to ensuring that all victims and survivors of domestic abuse get the support they need, including those from Black backgrounds. We know that domestic abuse affects a wide and disparate group and that a "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate to support all victims, especially those with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including ethnic minority victims.

The College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice on domestic abuse sets out that victims may have specific needs or issues relating to their cultural background or immigration status which should be considered when understanding risk and vulnerability of the victim. The Government continues to encourage forces to take on the College of Policing's Domestic Abuse Matters training, which includes

specific training on intersectionality and the different impacts of domestic abuse on black and minority ethnicity communities. This is part of their continued development, therefore, the Government does not feel it necessary to mandate such training.

■ **Extradition: Hong Kong**

Stephen Kinnock: [\[53912\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many extradition requests have been (a) made by Hong Kong to the UK and (b) agreed by the UK government since January 2017.

Stephen Kinnock: [\[53913\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many extradition requests have been (a) made from Hong Kong and (b) agreed to on the extradition a Uyghur person from the UK since January 2017.

Damian Hinds:

We can confirm that there have been no extraditions from the UK to Hong Kong since January 2017.

As a matter of long-standing policy and practice, we do not disclose whether an extradition request has been made or received until such time as a person is arrested in relation to the request. Therefore, we cannot provide the number of extradition requests made by Hong Kong to the UK since January 2017.

■ **Nationality and Borders Bill 2021-22**

Stuart C McDonald: [\[53922\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent discussions she has had with the (a) Crown Prosecution Service and (b) Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service on clauses 37 and 38 of the Nationality and Borders Bill.

Tom Pursglove:

Home Official officials have regular dialogue with the Crown Prosecution Service, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service including on the content and impact of clauses 37 and 38 of the Nationality and Borders Bill 2021.

■ **Psilocybin: Health Hazards**

Crispin Blunt: [\[R\] \[53823\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 7 June 2021 to Question 7725, on Psilocybin: Health Hazards, for what reason her Department has not commissioned a review into the scheduling status of psilocybin in the context of no recent analysis of the evidence for that drug's harm having been commissioned or published by the Government to support the compound being a Class A and a Schedule 1 drug and recent evidence of that drug's clinical and experimental potential.

Kit Malthouse:

There is an established process for the development of medicines, which enables medicines (including those containing Schedule 1 drugs such as psilocybin) to be developed, evaluated in clinical trials and licensed based on an assessment of their safety, quality and efficacy.

The Government recognises that a number of studies into the potential use of psilocybin as part of the treatment for mental health conditions have been or are being conducted in the UK. However, medicines based on psilocybin have not yet been licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) which would address safety, quality and efficacy concerns. Ministers could seek advice from the ACMD about the rescheduling of psilocybin-based products on the basis of evidence of the therapeutic use of unlicensed medicines, but we would ordinarily do this only in consultation with the Department for Health and Social Care and the MHRA.

The MHRA continues to support the safe and scientifically sound conduct of trials in this area and also to provide regulatory and scientific advice to companies at all stages of developing medicines. Should a company apply for a marketing authorisation (a product licence), it will ultimately be a decision for the MHRA whether to license a psilocybin-based medicine as a therapy.

If a psilocybin-based medicine is made available following an assessment of its quality, safety and efficacy by the MHRA, the Home Office will seek and then consider advice provided by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) on its scheduling under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 as soon as possible. Such advice is a statutory requirement and will be considered before any decision is taken on scheduling under the 2001 Regulations.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan**John Healey:**[\[52415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department plans to (a) open the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme and (b) publish the eligibility criteria for that scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The first to be resettled through this scheme will be those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

We are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture. We are working closely across government and with NGOs, charities, local authorities and civil society groups to ensure support is provided to people who are resettled through this route.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

Lilian Greenwood:

[52477]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when her Department will open the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme; and what her timescale is for commencing processing of referrals from people currently (a) in Afghanistan (b) in other countries outside the UK.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The first to be resettled through this scheme will be those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

We are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture. We are working closely across government and with NGOs, charities, local authorities and civil society groups to ensure support is provided to people who are resettled through this route.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

Lilian Greenwood:

[52478]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether she has issued guidance to people in Afghanistan who are eligible for a visa under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy on obtaining a visa in a third country.

Victoria Atkins:

Details of the how to apply for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP), including for those in third countries, can be found in the Afghanistan Resettlement and Immigration policy statement.

Guidance was published on 1 September 2021 providing details on how to make ARAP applications from third countries.

The policy statement can be viewed here: [Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement).

The guidance can be found here: [Afghan locally employed staff - relocation schemes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-locally-employed-staff-relocation-schemes).

Stephen Kinnock:

[52510]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her timeframe is for opening the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme; and whether Uyghurs living in Afghanistan will qualify as a vulnerable ethnic minority group under that scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk. It will prioritise those who have stood up for values such as democracy and women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as vulnerable people including ethnic and religious minorities such as Uyghurs.

The first to be resettled through this scheme will be those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

We are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture. We are working closely across government and with NGOs, charities, local authorities and civil society groups to ensure support is provided to people who are resettled through this route.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

Kirsten Oswald:

[52518]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the target date is for the first Afghan citizens to be relocated to the UK under the Afghan Citizen's Resettlement Scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

A number of individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists - were called forward and evacuated to the UK as part of Operation PITTING. These individuals will form part of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) cohort.

We are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture. We are working closely across government and with NGOs, charities, local authorities and civil society groups to ensure support is provided to people who are resettled through this route.

Rachael Maskell:

[52543]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to publish details on how people from religious minorities will be able to be prioritised under the Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk. It will prioritise those who have stood up for values such as

democracy and women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as vulnerable people including ethnic and religious minority groups.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement. We are working urgently to develop the details of this scheme amidst the emerging security situation in Afghanistan.

Dr Julian Lewis:

[53822]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September to Question 46919 on Afghanistan: Refugees, for what reason the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme has not yet commenced; when that scheme will commence; whether her Department or the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be responsible for determining the priority given to applicants for that scheme; if the Government will give priority under that scheme to Afghans who followed UK ministerial advice to cross borders to countries adjacent to Afghanistan, even if they were undocumented, and who are consequently at risk of detention and deportation back to Afghanistan; and if she will make an assessment of whether a scholar in Pakistan who is (a) female, (b) politically prominent, (c) a Hazara, (d) validated by the Council for At-Risk Academics, (e) capable of being extracted without difficulty from her current location and (f) in danger of deportation back to Afghanistan would fit the criteria for prioritisation for that scheme as set out in that Answer.

Victoria Atkins:

As set out in the answer to Question 46919 on 16 September, the Government has issued a policy statement which gives further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

Eligible people will be prioritised and referred for resettlement to the UK as set out in the policy statement.

The ACRS is being developed at pace and further details will be released in due course.

Anne McLaughlin:

[53932]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many people have arrived under the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme to date.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives in safety.

The scheme is not yet open. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

We are working urgently to open the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture. We are working closely across government and with NGOs, charities, local authorities and civil society groups to ensure support is provided to people who are resettled through this route.

■ **Resettlement: Afghanistan**

Stephen Kinnock:

[53251]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether Hazara people are classified as a vulnerable ethnic group under the terms of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Programme.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk. It will prioritise those who have stood up for values such as democracy and women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious minorities such as the Hazara people.

The first to be resettled through this scheme will be those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists. We will work with international organisations such as UNHCR to identify others eligible to come here under ACRS.

We are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture. We are working closely across government and with NGOs, charities, local authorities and civil society groups to ensure support is provided to people who are resettled through this route.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

Rachael Maskell:

[53269]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will implement a specific resettlement scheme to (a) relocate to the UK and (b) support unaccompanied children from Afghanistan.

Victoria Atkins:

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people. It will provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety and will be one of the UK's most ambitious resettlement schemes.

Under the ACRS, unaccompanied children may be offered resettlement where it is determined to be in their best interests, and where they have been identified as eligible for the scheme. The best interests assessment will be made with expert partners. Where a child is unaccompanied it may be in the child's best interest to remain in the region, where they are more likely to be reunited with their family.

Further information on the eligibility, prioritisation and referral of people for the ACRS is set out in the policy statement published on gov.uk on 13 September, available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement.

■ **Uighurs: China**

Stephen Kinnock: [53911]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many instances of harassment by the Chinese authorities towards Uyghur individuals resident in the UK have been reported to the police since January 2017.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office does not hold these statistics, but is aware of reports of members of the Uyghur diaspora - including in the UK - being harassed by the Chinese authorities in an effort to intimidate them into silence, force them to return to China, or co-opt them into providing information on other Uyghurs. HMG takes a zero-tolerance approach to harassment of individuals based on ethnicity. We will continue to work closely with our international allies to protect Uyghurs and other minorities resident in the UK, and we urge anyone affected in the UK to contact the police.

Stephen Kinnock: [53914]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum from Chinese nationals of the Uyghur minority were (a) received and (b) granted by her Department in (i) 2017, (ii) 2018, (iii) 2019 and (iv) 2020; and how many Uyghur minority people are resident in the UK having been granted asylum by the UK.

Stephen Kinnock: [53915]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for asylum from Chinese nationals of the Uyghur minority have been rejected by her Department since 1 January 2017; and how many of those applicants her Department deported as a result of their asylum application being so rejected.

Kevin Foster:

The Home Office are unable to state how many applications for asylum from Chinese nationals of the Uyghur minority were received, granted or rejected since 1 January 2017, or how many Uyghur minority people are resident in the UK having been granted asylum as this as the data is only held on paper case files or within the notes sections of the Home Office's databases. Therefore, the information requested is not held in a reportable format.

However, the Home Office publishes information on asylum applications and resettlement in the Immigration statistics quarterly release. Data on asylum applicants being refused any form of leave and then subsequently being returned to either their home country or a safe third country are published in table Asy_D04 of the asylum and resettlement detailed datasets; available breakdowns include year of application and nationality.

The latest data relates to 2020 and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets>

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Asylum

Layla Moran:

[53334]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of asylum case applications being handled by UKVI that are yet to be resolved and were made (a) five, (b) four, (c) three, (d) two and (e) one years ago.

Kevin Foster:

Information regarding the number of asylum claims which are yet to be resolved which were made in each of the last 5 years, is routinely published as part of the Government's Transparency agenda and can be found at tables Asy_02 and Asy_03:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-and-protection-data-q2-2021>

This data shows the number of asylum cases awaiting an initial decision, post decision, appeals outstanding and further leave which is broken down by case age.

■ UK Visas and Immigration: Standards

Judith Cummins:

[53258]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what proportion of hon. Members' queries to UK Visas and Immigration services are responded to within their target time of 20 working days.

Kevin Foster:

The Department works to a target of responding to 95% of MPs written correspondence within 20 working days. Performance has been impacted by a very significant increase in the volume of correspondence received, alongside the need for Ministers and officials to instigate a remote process for drafting and signing correspondence during the period of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Department recognises it has not been able to meet service standard in some cases but has implemented an action plan to clear backlogs and drive up performance.

Data about intake and performance in answering MP Correspondence are published quarterly and this includes data up to and including the end of quarter 2 – 2021. This can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-q2-2021>

■ Visas: British National (Overseas)**Layla Moran:** [53335]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of British National (Overseas) visa applications that (a) have been put on hold and (b) are on hold because there is an adult dependant relative linked to the application as at 22 September 2021.

Layla Moran: [53336]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number and proportion of applications for BNO Visas made by Adult Dependant Relatives of a BNO status holder that (a) have been put on hold to date and (b) are currently on hold.

Kevin Foster:

The Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) route is for those with BN(O) status and their eligible family members including adult children who were born after 1 July 1997 and who live with their parents. Applications made to this route are considered on their own individual facts and are progressed to conclusion as swiftly as possible.

The Home Office publishes data on visas and the BN(O) route in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.UK:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release

Where a BN(O) Visas application is supported by sufficient evidence to demonstrate they and, where applicable, any family members who are applying with the BN(O) status holder, are eligible for a BNO Visa, under the terms of Appendix HK to the Immigration Rules, the application will be concluded.

However, if insufficient evidence or information to support their application is provided and further information is required, UK Visas & Immigration will contact the applicant(s), providing an opportunity to supply further evidence or information for assessment, before a decision is taken on their application.

■ Visas: Coronavirus**Munira Wilson:** [53350]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether her Department plans to offer free visitor visa extensions to people who have been unable to use the visas they paid for due to travel restrictions during the covid-19 outbreak.

Kevin Foster:

It is not possible to extend a visit visa once they have been issued. Those wanting to visit the UK should apply for a new visit visa.

Applications can be made via the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/standard-visitor-visa/apply>

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION**■ Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance****Alan Brown:**[\[53948\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49191 on Palace of Westminster: Repairs and Maintenance, what the (a) value of the stonework order is, (b) timescale for completion and (c) extent and locations of all proposed works.

Sir Charles Walker:

As stated in the answer to question 49191, it is not possible to provide the value of the stonework order until we have completed the business case. Similarly, the extent, locations and timescales of all the repairs will also be determined by the business case. As stated in the last answer, the timescale of this business case is approximately 18 months. The repair work is driven by the need to ensure that health and safety risks are eliminated before they arise. Aside from Cloister Court, key areas identified by initial surveys carried out in 2020 are:

- Westminster Hall (North Elevation)
- The Colonnade, both internally and externally
- Peers Court
- Peers Inner Court
- St Stephen's Hall
- Star Chamber Court
- Central Spire

Alan Brown:[\[53949\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will publish the projects relating to the Palace of Westminster commissioned since 2015 detailing the (a) extent of work and for completed projects, (b) estimated budget, (c) estimated timescales and (d) final cost and completion timescales.

Sir Charles Walker:

Since 2015 a number of capital works projects have been undertaken within the Palace of Westminster, many of which remain ongoing. The majority of these projects are driven by health and safety, personnel and asset protection, or critical operational need. To provide a comprehensive list would exceed the prohibitive cost threshold for responding to a Parliamentary Question.

The overall funding for capital works is set each year by the Commission through the Medium-Term Investment Plan following advice from the Finance Committee. There is a rigorous process of financial control for all projects, overseen by the House's Audit Committee, and the progress of all projects is monitored routinely by the Joint Investment Board* and the Finance Committees of both Houses. In addition, there is

a regular flow of assurance – monitoring how projects are delivered against time, cost and quality – provided by a variety of external bodies.

*The Joint Investment Board (JIB) is a sub-committee of the House of Commons Executive Board and House of Lords Management Board. For capital works projects, JIB provides prioritisation, scrutiny and assurance, maintaining an overview of the capability and capacity of the project community. The Board escalates any concerns to the Commons Executive Board and the Lords Management Board.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Civil Liberties: Mexico

Gareth Thomas: [\[53169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to ensure that the Mexican Government takes steps to tackle violations of (a) freedom of association and (b) other International Labour Organisation before finalising a trade deal with that country; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom has a trade deal with Mexico, which is supporting jobs in communities across our country.

HM Government has announced plans to negotiate a new trade deal, so asked the British people, British businesses and other organisations for their views, including on issues such as labour. We are analysing the responses in advance of setting a mandate.

HM Government has made clear that trade does not have to come at the expense of our values, and this is reflected in British trade policy.

■ Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership: Dispute Resolution

Gareth Thomas: [\[53168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the Government's proposal to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of requesting an exemption to Investor State Dispute Settlement clause; and if she will make a statement.

Penny Mordaunt:

The UK's independent investment policy makes it easier for UK firms to invest overseas and reinforces the UK's position as the top destination in Europe for investment and the third in the world. Accession to Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) will help to secure the UK's already strong position in investment.

The UK has negotiated investment agreements with investment protections and Investor-State Dispute settlement (ISDS) provisions with over 90 existing treaty

partners, including CPTPP partners, and recognises the important role that these provisions can play in protecting UK investors abroad.

CPTPP is a high standards agreement. It is in the UK's interests to meet these standards, not to re-write the agreement, and for future applicants to meet these standards too.

■ Human Rights: India

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[52516\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what representations (a) she and (b) officials in her Department have made to the Government of India on the human rights of Christian and Muslim minorities in that country in the context of forthcoming trade negotiations; and if she will include clauses recognising the centrality of human rights, including those of freedom of religion or belief, in any future trade agreement with India.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

In May, the United Kingdom and India announced our intent to negotiate a free trade agreement. Since then, the Department of International Trade has launched a public consultation about our approach to negotiations.

HM Government has a history of promoting British values globally, including freedom of religion, and we are clear that upholding rights and responsibilities go hand-in-hand with our trading ambitions. We engage with the Government of India on a range of matters.

■ Liquefied Natural Gas: Mozambique

Layla Moran:

[\[53341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, on what date she was made aware of the £900 million in loans and guarantees made by UK Export Finance to the Mozambique LNG project.

Mike Freer:

In line with the requirements of the OECD Common Approaches, the fact that UK Export Finance was considering support for the project was published on its website in August 2019. Following that consideration, my predecessor collectively consulted with ministerial colleagues before UK Export Finance support was made available.

More broadly, I would observe that in December 2020, the Prime Minister announced at the Climate Ambition Summit that the UK will end new direct support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas. The Prime Minister announced that the UK Government will no longer provide any new direct financial or promotional support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas, other than in exceptional circumstances, and align its support to enable clean energy exports. This policy shift applies to any new official development assistance, investment, export credit and trade promotion activity overseas. Following consultation, this new policy came into effect from 31 March 2021.

■ Trade Agreements: Human Rights

Gareth Thomas:

[53170]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps her Department has taken to (a) ensure that the Domestic Advisory Groups that it is establishing are independent and (b) ensure that there are consequences when nations breach human and labour rights commitments they have agreed to in trade deals with the UK; and if she will make a statement.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

The United Kingdom is committed to implementing the 'Trade and Sustainable Development' chapters in her trade agreements and, in support of this, HM Government is considering options for setting up the 'Domestic Advisory Group(s)'.

We will continue to show global leadership in encouraging all states to uphold international rights and responsibilities and will hold those who violate them to account. HM Government takes a balanced and proportionate approach with all international partners, delivering the best outcome for the United Kingdom.

JUSTICE

■ Dementia: Human Rights

Gill Furniss:

[53974]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on ensuring the human rights of people living with dementia are adhered to.

James Cartlidge:

My Department works closely with the Department for Health and Social Care on a range of issues of mutual interest.

Improving the lives of people living with dementia is a top priority for this Government. We want a society where every person with dementia receives high quality, compassionate care, from diagnosis through to end of life.

■ Employment Tribunals Service

Alex Cunningham:

[52490]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of (a) single claims and (b) multiple claimant cases are outstanding and awaiting determination by an employment tribunal.

James Cartlidge:

Our latest published statistics for employment tribunals can be found using the link below:

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2020

The most recent employment tribunal data covers the period up to March 2021. This is because ET has moved to a new case management system and HMCTS is currently working to incorporate the new IT system alongside longer-established data sources to provide a more complete and consistent data set for this jurisdiction.

■ Probate

Mr David Jones:

[53844]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what is the current average length of time for processing online applications for (a) probate and (b) letters of administration.

Tom Pursglove:

The most recently published information regarding combined waiting times for a grant of probate, on paper and digital cases, covers April 2021 to June 2021 and is published on gov.uk via Family Court Statistics Quarterly (Table 25):

[Family Court Statistics Quarterly: April to June 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/family-court-statistics-quarterly)

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ Building Safety Fund: Leeds

Hilary Benn:

[52416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, on what date his Department sent a letter to the (a) owners and (b) managing agents of Merchants Quay, East Street, Leeds informing them of the outcome of their application to the Building Safety Fund.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department confirmed a successful Pre Tender Support Building Safety Fund application for Merchants Quay on 15 January 2021.

■ Buildings: Insulation

Dr Julian Lewis:

[53154]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what further steps he plans to take to prevent costs resulting from cladding remediation from being passed on to leaseholders to pay.

Christopher Pincher:

The Building Safety Bill will ensure that those responsible for occupied higher-risk buildings will be required to actively manage building safety risks, evidencing this through the safety case regime overseen by the Building Safety Regulator. This will ensure major fire and structural hazards are effectively and proportionately managed, mitigated and remedied and that effective steps are taken, which take into account safety and cost.

We have been clear that building owners and industry should make buildings safe without passing on costs to leaseholders and where they haven't stepped up, we

have stepped in. The Government has announced a globally unprecedented investment over £5 billion in building safety and hundreds of thousands of leaseholders will be protected from the cost of remediating unsafe cladding from their homes.

■ Coastal Areas: Conservation

Steve Reed: [52507]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data his Department holds on the amount spent by local authorities in England on maintaining coastal protection in each of the last ten years.

Kemi Badenoch:

Local authorities in England report expenditure in long-established annual returns to the Department. Capital expenditure on coastal protection can be found in table A1 of the local authority data tables which are linked from www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-capital-expenditure-receipts-and-financing. Revenue expenditure on coastal protection is in table RO5 of the local authority data tables which are linked from www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-revenue-expenditure-and-financing.

■ Evictions

Dr Rupa Huq: [52560]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of abolishing section 21 no fault evictions.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to bring in a Better Deal for Renters, including improving tenants' security by abolishing Section 21, or so-called 'no fault', evictions. The primary merit of abolishing Section 21 is enabling tenants to rent with certainty, ensuring that they will not be asked to leave without being given a fair reason. Another benefit of abolishing Section 21 is that it will grant tenants greater protection from retaliatory evictions if they complain about poor standards, which in turn could help to improve standards in the private rented sector. Our reforms will also make sure that landlords have a route to regain possession where they have a valid reason to do so. This is important to mitigate any potential negative consequences of abolishing section 21.

We have consulted in 2019 on how the reformed tenancy regime should operate and received nearly 20,000 responses. We are carefully considering the responses, including the impact of the pandemic, as we develop the detail of the reforms. We are undertaking regular engagement with key stakeholders to inform this and will publish a White Paper detailing our proposals in due course.

■ Flats: Leeds

Hilary Benn:

[52417]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, for what reason Turner and Townsend have been appointed by Homes England to assist in the managing of unsafe cladding removal at Merchant's Quay, East Street, Leeds.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department has appointed consultants to provide additional expert construction consultation support to those who need assistance planning and undertaking remediation work under the Building Safety Fund.

■ Holiday Accommodation and Second Homes

Rachael Maskell:

[53279]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate his Department has made of the number of (a) properties used for airbnb, (b) other short term holiday let properties and (c) the number of second homes (i) nationally and (ii) in York.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department has not made an estimate of the number of properties used for AirBnB, other short term let properties and the number of second homes nationally or in York.

At household level, the English Housing Survey in 2017/18, reported that 12% of households rented part or all of their home out in the 12 months prior to the survey using home sharing organisations, such as AirBnB. The frequency or length of period is not known.

Some details are available in the 2017/18 Home ownership report at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2017-to-2018-home-ownership> and the 2018/19 Second homes fact sheet at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2018-to-2019-second-homes-fact-sheet>.

■ Housing: Construction

Rachael Maskell:

[53281]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to ensure that all future planning legislation prioritises house building according to local need for (a) tenure, (b) size, and (c) houses with gardens or flats.

Christopher Pincher:

As set out in our National Planning Policy Framework, local authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and reflect this in their local planning policies.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[53283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment has he made of the adequacy of the contract procurement processes used by local authorities for house building.

Christopher Pincher:

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities does not assess the local authority contract management process for house building. The Government supports local authorities to deliver new housing. Local authorities are independent statutory bodies, accountable to their local electorate and have the autonomy to develop their own housebuilding programmes. The *National Procurement Policy Statement*, published in June, sets out strategic priorities for public procurement and the expectation that contracting authorities will benchmark procurement capability.

We encourage local authorities to develop housebuilding plans and have taken a number of steps to support councils to deliver new homes. In March 2021 we announced greater freedoms for councils to spend the money they receive from Right to Buy sales on replacement homes. In May 2021, Homes England launched a Local Government Capacity Centre to provide councils with practical support to build their housebuilding skills and capacity. This is on top of Government's commitment to invest over £12 billion in affordable housing over 5 years, the largest investment in affordable housing in a decade, which includes the £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme that councils are able to bid for. We want to see local authorities using the range of tools available to deliver a new generation of council housing.

■ Housing: Homelessness and Internally Displaced People

Rachael Maskell:

[\[53282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will make it his policy to prioritise housing for homeless and displaced people in line with the Housing First programme.

Eddie Hughes:

Piloting Housing First was a Government manifesto commitment that was announced in the 2017 Autumn budget. Since its launch, our expert advisers have been working closely with each of the three pilot regions to monitor and support progress. We also commissioned a consortium, led by ICF, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the programme, which will run for the duration of the pilots. The Housing First pilots are now in their fourth year and have supported over 1,050 of the most entrenched and cyclical rough sleepers across 23 local authorities.

We recognise that rough sleeping is a nationwide challenge, and that is why it is important that we consider the findings of our evaluation, together with our experiences from the three pilots, to ensure that we know how it could work best on a larger scale.

The Government committed to expanding Housing First in its latest manifesto and we will use the findings of our evaluation, together with our experiences from the three pilots, to inform next steps.

■ **Housing: Older People**

Alex Sobel:

[\[52595\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities,, what steps his Department plans to take to ensure that the Government's reforms to the planning system improve housing options for older people, including housing-with-care.

Christopher Pincher:

This Government is committed to the provision of homes for older people which includes housing-with-care. As set out in our National Planning Policy Framework, local authorities should already assess the types of specialist housing needed for older people and reflect this in their local planning policies.

As a new Secretary of State in a new department, the minister is taking time to review the departmental programmes and engage with key stakeholders. The Government's consultation response will be published.

In the meantime, we continue to work closely with the older people's housing sector and across Government to look at how we can further support its growth.

■ **Leasehold**

Sarah Olney:

[\[53310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether his Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to allow leaseholders to buy out their freehold.

Eddie Hughes:

Under the current system, too many leaseholders find the process for extending their lease or buying their freehold prohibitively expensive, too complex and lacking transparency. The Government is addressing this historic imbalance to ensure fairness for leaseholders, whilst taking account of the legitimate rights of freeholders. We will continue to ensure we meet this objective as we bring forward reforms.

The Government will abolish marriage value, cap the treatment of ground rents at 0.1% of the freehold value, and prescribe rates for the calculations at market value. The Government will also introduce an online calculator, further simplifying the process for leaseholders and ensuring standardisation and fairness for all those looking to enfranchise.

Existing discounts for improvements made by the leaseholder and for security of tenure will be retained, as will a separate valuation methodology for low-value properties known as 'section 9(1)'. Leaseholders will also be able to voluntarily agree to a restriction on future development of their property to avoid paying 'development value'.

We will translate these measures into law as soon as possible, starting with legislation to set ground rents on newly created leases to zero in the current session. This will be the first part of seminal two-part reforming legislation in this Parliament.

■ Leasehold: Contracts

Navendu Mishra: [\[52612\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps his Department is taking to protect leaseholders from unfair and exploitative leasehold contracts.

Navendu Mishra: [\[53360\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will bring forward legislation that will prohibit freeholders from charging excessive ground rents and high service charges for leaseholders.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market. This includes a restriction of ground rents for newly created leases for both houses and flats to a peppercorn (zero financial value), through the Leasehold Reform (Ground Rents) Bill currently in Parliament and a ban on the unjustified use of leasehold for new houses as soon as Parliamentary time allows

In addition, the Government asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to investigate potential mis-selling of homes and unfair terms in the leasehold sector.

■ Leasehold: Reform

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[54014\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what his timeframe is for bringing forward legislative proposals to enact the leasehold reform proposals announced by the Government on 7 January 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government is committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service. We are taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform to end unfair practices in the leasehold market. On January 7 the Government announced reforms to enfranchisement valuation, 990-year leases, removing the retirement exemption from zero ground rent measures and established a new Commonhold Council as a partnership of industry, leaseholders and Government that will prepare homeowners and the market for the widespread take-up of commonhold. This was the first part of the Government's response to the Law Commission's reports on enfranchisement, Right to Manage.

The Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill currently in Parliament will put an end to ground rents for new residential leasehold properties as part of the most significant changes to property law in a generation. The Bill's provisions will lead to fairer, more transparent homeownership for thousands of future leaseholders. This will be the first part of seminal two-part reforming legislation in this Parliament.

■ Levelling Up Fund

Patricia Gibson:

[\[53266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the (a) opening and (b) closing dates are for the second round of Levelling up funding.

Neil O'Brien:

The £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund will invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life across the UK, including regenerating town centres and high streets, upgrading local transport, and investing in cultural and heritage assets. Further detail on how the Fund will operate from 2022-23 onwards will be set out later this year.

■ Levelling Up Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund

Jonathan Edwards:

[\[52467\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of extending the delivery date for the first round of the (a) Levelling Up Fund and (b) Community Renewal Fund.

Neil O'Brien:

In the first round of the Levelling Up Fund, we will prioritise projects which are able to demonstrate investment or begin delivery on the ground in the 2021-22 financial year. We would expect all funding provided from the Fund to be spent by 31 March 2024, and, exceptionally, into 2024-25 for larger schemes.

I understand that lead local authorities and applicants are eager to hear investment decisions and begin delivery of UK Community Renewal Fund projects. We have received a fantastic response to the launch of the Community Renewal Fund, along with the Levelling Up Fund. Given the significant level of interest, officials are continuing to assess Community Renewal Fund bids in line with the published assessment process.

Officials will shortly provide further guidance to enable lead local authorities to plan for the delivery phase of the Community Renewal Fund. This guidance will include confirmation of the timeline for project delivery, grant funding agreements and publication of the monitoring and evaluation framework. This combined with direct local support provided by the Cities and Local Growth Unit, will I hope alleviate any challenges faced by successful projects.

■ Local Government Finance

Rachael Maskell: [\[53271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent assessment he has made of the state of local government finance (a) nationally and (b) in York.

Rachael Maskell: [\[53272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he plans to take to tackle the deficits in local government finances in York.

Rachael Maskell: [\[53274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of City of York Council on their financial situation.

Kemi Badenoch:

In this year's Settlement, the Government made available an increase in Core Spending Power in England from £49 billion in 2020-21 to up to £51.3 billion in 2021-22, a 4.6% increase in cash terms. This saw City of York Council's Core Spending Power increase to over £140 million in 2021-22, an increase of 5%.

The Government also allocated more than £12 billion directly to councils since the start of the pandemic, with more than £6 billion of this un-ringfenced, recognising the value and need for an increase in local leading. City of York Council received £12.8 million in additional unringfenced Covid funding in 2020-21 and a further £4.4 million in 2021-22, a total of £17.2 million.

The Government will set out the future plan for local government funding at the 2021 Spending Review, which will be an opportunity to look at local government funding in the round. Following this DLUHC will provide further details of the proposed allocation of resources to each local authority through the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

■ Local Government: Carbon Emissions

Rachael Maskell: [\[53284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he will take to ensure that all decisions made by local authorities are compatible with the Government's net zero emissions target.

Eddie Hughes:

DLUHC is responsible for the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which clearly sets out that the Government expects the planning system to help mitigate and adapt to climate change and implement the move to a decarbonised future. The Framework expects Local Plans to take account of climate change over the longer term; local authorities should adopt proactive strategies to reduce carbon emissions and recognise the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008

As part of our current programme of planning reforms we intend to do a fuller review of the NPPF to make sure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible

Government departments have provided extensive support for local authorities to act on climate change, including over £1.2 billion in dedicated grants last year, and £12 billion is available to support large scale net zero and levelling up projects through the UK Infrastructure Bank. Not to mention extensive other sources of funding that have the flexibility to be used to support net zero, such as the £4.8 billion Levelling Up fund.

■ **Parking: Fines**

Zarah Sultana:

[\[54024\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure that private parking industries do not circumvent the removal of false debt recovery charges from the values of Penalty Charge Notices in the event that they proceed to a court claim.

Neil O'Brien:

My Department has recently consulted on debt collection fees in Private Parking Charges, Discount Rates, Debt Collection Fees and Appeals Charter: Further Technical Consultation, which closed on 27 August.

Government recognises that debt collection fees are a sensitive area. Widespread concerns have been raised by motoring organisations about the fees and practices of some parking debt recovery agencies. We will therefore carefully consider all consultation responses before making a final decision. We will publish the consultation response in due course.

■ **Parking: Regulation**

Mary Kelly Foy:

[\[54015\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps the Government is taking to (a) improve the regulation of the private parking sector and (b) protect motorists from unfair fines.

Neil O'Brien:

My Department is leading on the implementation of the Parking (Code of Practice) Act 2019, which includes the creation of an independent Code of Practice for private parking companies to improve standards. DLUHC is developing the Code of Practice through the British Standards Institution (BSI) in close consultation with key stakeholders, including landowners, consumer organisations, and the private parking industry, who are advising on its impact. If a parking company were to repeatedly break the new code, then their access to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) data would be blocked. This data includes information on the vehicle keeper, so a company blocked from accessing it would be unable to pursue parking charges.

In addition to the new code, DLUHC has developed the Parking Code of Practice Enforcement Framework, on which the department consulted and on 20 March 2021 published the consultation response, available online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/parking-code-enforcement-framework>.

The response to the consultation announced a series of fairer parking measures that include strengthening the current system of self-regulation by producing a Certification Scheme, independently assessed by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service, and to which parking trade associations must adhere if their members wish to request access to DVLA data. Further measures include: establishment of a Scrutiny and Oversight Board to monitor the new system and creation of a single, independent appeals service for motorists to turn to if they receive a private parking charge.

Finally, DLUHC recently consulted on proposals to bring private parking charges into closer alignment with Local Authority Penalty Charge Notices, including its system of 50% discounts for early payment. We are also developing an Appeals Charter which will protect motorists from charges that are unfair or issued in error.

We intend to publish the consultation response together with the new code of practice later this Autumn so that the industry could adopt the new code and the motorists benefit as early as possible.

■ Private Rented Housing: Pets

Zarah Sultana:

[54025]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will introduce legislative proposals to prevent landlords from prohibiting through tenancy agreements the keeping of pets by tenants.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government recognises the importance of pet ownership to many renting in the private rented sector. We have therefore taken steps to make it easier for responsible tenants to keep pets in the private rented sector.

We have revised the national Model Tenancy Agreement, the government's recommended contract for assured shorthold tenancies in the private rented sector, in order to make it easier for tenants with pets to find private landlords who will accept them. The revision aims to strike the balance between protecting private landlords from situations where their properties are damaged by badly behaved pets and ensuring responsible pet owning tenants are not unfairly penalised.

The Government has no plans at this time to amend the law relating to pets in the private rented sector.

■ Private Rented Housing: Reform

Dr Rupa Huq:

[52559]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will publish a white paper on reforms to the private rented sector by the end of October 2021.

Eddie Hughes:

We remain committed to delivering our reforms to the Private Rented Sector. Our priority is to bring forward a considered White Paper that works for landlords and tenants and it is important that we take the time to get the policy development right. We are working hard with stakeholders from across the sector to inform this and are making good progress. We will provide more details on publication in due course.

■ Regional Planning and Development**Steve Reed:**[\[52506\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will define levelling up.

Neil O'Brien:

Levelling up is about empowering local leaders and communities; growing the private sector and boosting living standards, particularly where they are lower; spreading opportunity and improving public services, particularly where they are lacking; and restoring local pride. As the Prime Minister set out in his speech on the 15 July 2021, the forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper will set out further details.

■ Retail Trade and Urban Areas**Steve Reed:**[\[53907\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, with reference to the Written Statement of 1 July 2021 on Revitalising high streets and town centres, whether it remains his policy to restrict the use of article 4 directions by local authorities.

Christopher Pincher:

Our new policy on Article 4 directions announced on 1 July requires that Article 4 directions are used appropriately and proportionately and are targeted so that they only apply to the smallest area possible. Any new Article 4 directions made by local authorities are required to be in accordance with this policy.

■ Tree Preservation Orders**Steve Reed:**[\[52508\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what data his Department holds on the number of tree preservation orders issued by local authorities in England in each of the last ten years.

Christopher Pincher:

None.

■ UK Community Renewal Fund**Wendy Chamberlain:**[\[52604\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when successful applications to the UK Community Renewal Fund will be announced; when

funds will be released to local authorities in Great Britain and to projects in Northern Ireland; for what projects funding has not been released according to the timeline set out in his Department's prospectus; and whether the deadline for completing projects under the Community Renewal Fund will be extended in response to that delay.

Neil O'Brien:

I understand that lead local authorities and applicants are eager to hear investment decisions and begin delivery of UK Community Renewal Fund projects. We have received a fantastic response to the launch of the Community Renewal Fund, and also to the Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund. Given the significant level of interest my officials are continuing to assess UK Community Renewal Fund bids in line with the published assessment process.

My officials will shortly provide further guidance to enable lead local authorities to plan for the delivery phase of the Community Renewal Fund. This guidance will include confirmation of the timeline for project delivery, grant funding agreements and publication of the monitoring and evaluation framework. This combined with direct local support provided by the Cities and Local Growth Unit, will I hope alleviate any challenges faced by successful projects.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Police Service of Northern Ireland: Uniforms

Tim Loughton:

[\[52398\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will publish details of the contract to supply new uniforms to the Police Service of Northern Ireland; and what checks his Department has undertaken to ensure that those uniforms are ethically procured.

Conor Burns:

Policing and Justice are devolved matters in Northern Ireland. The awarding of any contracts for the supply of uniforms is a matter for the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Department of Justice.

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Colum Eastwood:

[\[53363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what discussions the Government has had with political representatives in the United States on the Government's proposed legacy plans for Northern Ireland; and what assessment he has made of the implications for any legislative proposals of the views of members of the US Congress on the Government's legacy proposals.

Conor Burns:

The UK Government welcomes the deep and ongoing interest of US representatives in Northern Ireland issues.

Since the publication of the Command Paper in July, we have listened carefully to many different views on the Government's legacy proposals, including from US political representatives.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has undertaken significant engagement with US stakeholders that form part of our wider engagement, which will inform our next steps.

PRIME MINISTER

■ Northern Ireland Government: USA

Colum Eastwood: [\[53364\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, what discussions he has had with President Biden on the Government's proposed legacy plans for Northern Ireland; and what assessment he has made of the implications for any legislative proposals of the views of members of the US Congress on those plans.

Boris Johnson:

President Biden and I speak regularly on a broad range of issues, including Northern Ireland which was raised in our last in-person meeting on 21 September. I reiterated the Government's unshakable commitment to the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement and we agreed on the importance of protecting peace in Northern Ireland. Our Embassy in Washington regularly engages with the US Administration and Congress on Northern Ireland. The Government wants to work with all our partners in the United States, the European Union and Ireland to ensure that Northern Ireland can continue to prosper.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021

Caroline Lucas: [\[53866\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if he will publish the details of all meetings he has held in the last 12 months with (a) Heads of States (b) Ambassadors (c) business leaders and (d) civil society, where COP26 was the leading topic of discussion.

Caroline Lucas: [\[53867\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, if he will publish details of all meetings he has attended with (a) Heads of States, (b) Ambassadors, (c) business leaders and (d) civil society where COP26 was the leading topic of discussion in the last 12 months.

Boris Johnson:

A successful COP26 is at the top of the Government's agenda. I regularly raise climate change and COP26 in my bilateral meetings. Most recently, during my visit to the US and attendance at the UN General Assembly, I raised climate change with the heads of state or government from Brazil, Colombia, South Korea, Turkey, and the US. I co-hosted a climate roundtable with the UN Secretary General where we called on major economies to be more ambitious in cutting emissions and encouraged

developed countries to increase mobilisation of climate finance to meet the \$100 billion goal. Details of my meetings are published and can be found on Gov.uk.

SCOTLAND

■ Fire and Rescue Services: Clyde Naval Base and RNAD Coulport

Grahame Morris:

[\[52472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent discussions he has held with Ministry of Defence colleagues on the adequacy of contingency planning arrangements in relation to the response of all relevant fire and rescue agencies to maximum credible safety critical incidents at the (a) Faslane and (b) Coulport naval bases.

Mr Alister Jack:

The Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Ministry of Defence work closely on defence policy in relation to Scotland.

Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, in conjunction with external authorities, routinely conduct practical Emergency Arrangements exercises which cover maximum credible incidents and meet statutory and regulatory requirements, at both Faslane and Coulport. Over the last 12 months, exercises have included nine independently controlled and assessed fire exercises, involving vessel crews and on-site Fire and Rescue Services.

There have been structured tabletop exercises and four successful practical demonstrations of the revised on-site Fire and Rescue crews' response in November 2020, to the satisfaction of the MOD specialist authority. In August 2021, a practical Naval Base fire and rescue exercise was conducted jointly with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

TRANSPORT

■ Airports: Immigration Controls

Sarah Owen:

[\[52607\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government is taking to support airports with long queues at the border.

Robert Courts:

From the start of the pandemic, we have taken a robust approach to preventing importation of Covid-19, including from new variants. This has involved the introduction of new border health measures which have at times resulted in longer queues at airport border crossing points.

To address this, we have looked to automate and streamline checks at the border. The Passenger Locator Form was automated in May and the rollout of upgraded Border Crossing (BX) systems across the UK has been progressed to an expedited timetable. This includes the upgrade of systems used at Border Force officer desks

and the upgrade of eGates. Not only are these measures ensuring compliance with the UK's extremely robust border regime, they have also helped smoothen the processing of passengers at the border.

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[\[52406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support he is offering to the civil aviation industry while covid-19 public health restrictions on international travel remain in place; and if he will make a statement.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation industry because of Covid-19 and firms experiencing difficulties have been able to draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor. In total, we estimate that by the end of September 2021 the air transport sector (airlines, airports and related services) will have benefited from around £7bn of Government support since the start of the pandemic. This includes support through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The Department for Transport works closely with HM Treasury on matters related to aviation. We continue to take a flexible approach and keep all impacts and policies under review.

■ Driving Instruction

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[53253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to provide financial support for driving instructors that specify in car and trailer training (B+E training) in response to that training being made non-mandatory.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport and Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) are working across government to establish the impact on the trainer market from the regulatory changes relating to B+E testing.

DVSA will continue to encourage people who want to drive a car and trailer to get professional training to promote road safety. We are exploring options for an industry-led accreditation that could offer a standardised non-statutory testing approach and plan to meet with key stakeholders including trainers and insurers to discuss this further.

DVSA will be extensively promoting the importance of professional car and trailer training for all motorists, will encourage motorists to access online guidance on towing safely and will continue to remind motorists of the need to carry out trailer safety checks.

Brendan O'Hara:

[53254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will implement a compulsory accreditation scheme to replace the DVLA's car and trailer training (B+E), similar to the CBT training that motorcycle drivers must undertake.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) will continue to encourage people who want to drive a car and trailer to get professional training to promote road safety. We are exploring options for an industry-led accreditation that could offer a standardised non-statutory testing approach and plan to meet with key stakeholders including trainers and insurers to discuss this further.

DVSA will be extensively promoting the importance of professional car and trailer training for all motorists, will encourage motorists to access online guidance on towing safely and will continue to remind motorists of the need to carry out trailer safety checks.

Car drivers towing trailers and caravans will continue to be subject to roadside enforcement checks by DVSA.

Brendan O'Hara:

[53255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has conducted an (a) impact and (b) risk assessment on removing the requirement for specific car and trailer training.

Trudy Harrison:

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) takes its commitment to road safety extremely seriously and it will work with the industry and stakeholders to drive forward the importance of safe driving and safe towing.

The vocational test changes will not affect the standard of driving required to drive a heavy goods vehicle (HGV), with road safety continuing to be of paramount importance. Any driver who does not demonstrate utmost competence will not be granted a licence.

Legislative changes are usually subject to a post implementation review which gives the opportunity to review and potentially update the changes made. The Department will keep these changes under review to ensure they are effective and help increase HGV testing capacity to meet demand whilst ensuring road safety is not compromised in the process.

The DVSA is exploring options for an industry-led accreditation that could offer a standardised non-statutory testing approach, and is engaging with key stakeholders, trainers and insurers, to discuss this issue.

The DVSA is also in discussions with the training industry to understand their capacity to deliver the off-road manoeuvres element of the vocational test and will work with them to develop a robust and clear process by which to assess, accredit and audit any trainers who wish to assess the manoeuvres element of the test.

■ Heathrow Airport: Railways

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[53320]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has had recent discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the inclusion of the Western Rail Link to Heathrow in the Autumn Spending Review.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department for Transport has submitted its Spending Review bid to HM Treasury. Ministers and officials have had, and will continue to have, discussions with HM Treasury during the Spending Review process.

■ High Speed 2 Railway Line

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[53323]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment has he made of the implications for his policies of the letter from rail industry leaders to the Prime Minister of 13 September 2021 on the HS2 eastern leg.

Andrew Stephenson:

Levelling up all areas of the country, including the North, remains at the centre of this government's agenda. The rail schemes that will be set out in the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands will transform rail connectivity across the North and Midlands, playing a crucial role in driving economic growth and productivity, bringing people closer to opportunity, and spreading greater prosperity right across the country. Government will publish this plan soon, and it will confirm how we intend to take forward the HS2 Eastern Leg.

■ Highway Code

Huw Merriman:

[53936]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he has taken to raise public awareness of the update on smart motorways in the Highway Code, introduced in September 2021.

Trudy Harrison:

Improvements to The Highway Code to improve safety on motorways and other high-speed roads came into effect on Tuesday 14 September 2021, with the publication of a revised edition on the Government website: www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code.

National Highways provided a news release to national transport correspondents, the road safety trade media, and driver and vehicle consumer press including quotes from the Roads Minister, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and road safety stakeholders. The news release generated more than 280 news stories covering the changes in a factual, positive manner, with many offering guides on 'what drivers need to know'.

The Department pre-briefed influential roads and motoring stakeholders to encourage them to update their members, and National Highways wrote to stakeholders involved in the consultation to thank them and ask them to update members.

The DVSA sent direct emails to the driver, rider, and vocational training sectors, trainer bookers, professional drivers, vehicle operators, Highway Code email alert subscribers and learner drivers and riders, with nearly half a million people notified of the changes.

National Highways and DVSA published links to updated Highway Code pages on their social media channels, amplified by the Department across corporate channels, the THINK! campaign, and tweets from the Secretary of State and the Roads Minister.

National Highways also published a news story on its website and updated its pages detailing progress on delivering the *Smart Motorway Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan*, each linking to The Highway Code on GOV.UK.

National Highways recognise that making drivers aware of the changes requires more than can be done on the day of publication and is seeking out appropriate opportunities to further publicise updates, including:

- A communications campaign in Autumn 2021 to highlight the e-call feature, that automatically contacts the emergency services in the event of a collision, that is built into new cars;
- Raising awareness of using the emergency phones in emergency areas with timings to be confirmed, and about Red X compliance, currently planned to take place later this year;
- Referencing and linking to the new Highway Code in future waves of National Highways' breakdown campaign, with the next one being later this autumn 2021;
- Referencing the new rules in National Highways' continuing work to deliver the smart motorway evidence stocktake and improve drivers' confidence in using smart motorways; and
- Communications around the next print edition of the Highway Code in spring 2022.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Driving Licences

Stephanie Peacock:

[52571]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the average processing time was for an HGV driving licence application renewal in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021 to 31 August.

Trudy Harrison:

The table below shows the average processing time for vocational (which includes both HGV and bus) driving licence renewal applications.

CALENDAR YEAR	AVERAGE DAYS TO ISSUE A RENEWAL VOCATIONAL DRIVING LICENCE
2018	2.94
2019	2.45
2020	4.74
2021 (to 31 August)	12.02

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Qualifications

Judith Cummins:

[\[53261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many HGV Driver Certificate of Professional Competence certificates were issued in each of the last three years.

Trudy Harrison:

Drivers who successfully pass the initial Certificate of Professional Competence qualification are issued with a Driver Qualification Card (DQC). Drivers must renew their DQC every five years by undergoing 35 hours of periodic training.

The table below shows the total number of DQCs issued and renewed since 2018 for all vocational drivers. It is not possible to determine if the card relates to lorry or bus entitlement.

YEAR	CARDS ISSUED
2018	152,091
2019	516,583
2020	118,727
2021 (to date)	79,317

Certificates of Professional Competence for lorry drivers were introduced in 2009. The higher number of cards issued in 2019 reflects the number of lorry drivers who were renewing their card for a second time.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Training

Judith Cummins:

[\[53259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) quality and (b) effectiveness of Driver Certificate of Professional Competence training providers.

Judith Cummins:

[\[53260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) quality and (b) effectiveness of Driver Certificate of Professional Competence training courses.

Trudy Harrison:

Responsibility for approving Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) courses and providers in Great Britain rests with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

DVSA conduct almost 1400 DCPC centre and course audits a year and the training delivers a positive outcome for drivers. Where issues with training are identified, DVSA will work with the provider to address weaknesses. If the outcome is unsatisfactory, centre approval will be removed.

■ **Large Goods Vehicles: Concrete**

Jane Stevenson:

[\[53343\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plan to remove the temporary permitted weight limit of 32 tonnes on volumetric concrete mixers; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

There is no temporary permitted weight limit of 32 tonnes for volumetric concrete mixers (VCMs). 32 tonnes is the standard weight limit applicable to 4-axle rigid HGVs.

Following consultation in 2017, the Government implemented a temporary arrangement whereby a limited number of VCMs would be permitted to temporarily operate at weights higher than the standard 32 tonnes for vehicles of their design, using Vehicle Special Orders (VSOs). This was in recognition that, historically, some in the sector had operated VCMs at laden weights in excess of the 32-tonne limit. This temporary arrangement was put in place to allow time for the industry to adjust to the normal permitted weight limits over a reasonable timescale. It was not enacted as a step towards increasing permitted vehicle weights more widely.

■ **Motorcycles: Fossil Fuels**

Sarah Olney:

[\[53309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what is the deadline for ending the sale of motorcycles that operate on fossil fuels.

Trudy Harrison:

The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) was published on 14 July 2021 and sets out the Government's commitments and the actions needed to decarbonise the entire transport system in the UK.

Zero emission powered light vehicles are a clean and efficient way of getting around and can reduce congestion, air, and noise pollution from transport. While cars and

vans outnumber motorcycles on UK roads, motorcycles are an important and sizeable vehicle population, with 1.4 million licensed in 2020 and we do not want to see them remaining fossil fuelled as the rest of the vehicle fleet cleans up.

In the TDP, the Department commits to consulting this year on a phase out date of 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, for the sale of new non-zero emission powered two and three wheelers (and other L category vehicles).

■ Public Transport: Disability

Sarah Olney:

[53308]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that disabled passengers are aware of their rights on public transport.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Department is committed to ensuring disabled passengers are aware of their rights when using public transport. Our Inclusive Transport Strategy commits us to ensuring all operators across all modes of public transport provide information on passenger rights. Good progress has been made but we know there is still more we and the transport sector can do.

For the aviation sector, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) provides information on the rights for disabled passengers and those with reduced mobility on their website and has worked with airports and airlines to improve the accessibility contents on their websites.

As part of train operating company (TOC) licences we require each TOC to have an Accessible Travel Policy (ATP) setting out the level of services and facilities disabled passengers can expect, how to get staff assistance and how to get help if things go wrong.

For Maritime, passengers must be informed of their rights when making a booking and these passenger rights details must be provided on posters displayed at ports and on board vessels.

Our National Bus Strategy requires local authorities to produce Bus Service Improvement Plans which must include Passenger Charters providing information on what passengers can expect when using their services.

■ Railways

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[54003]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he has made an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report published on 16 September 2021 by the Rail Industry Association, entitled The Economic Contribution of UK Rail report, on the economic contribution of rail prior to the covid-19 outbreak.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[54004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the report by Oxford Economics, The Economic Contribution of UK Rail report, published on 16 September 2021, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the finding in that report that rail contributed £43 billion in Gross Value Added and supported 710,000 jobs in 2019.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

The Government welcomes the report by Oxford Economics on behalf of the Railway Industry Association. My officials are reviewing the report in detail, to consider implications for policy. The Government is already clear that the rail industry makes a large contribution to the economy and jobs in this country, and we are committed to continuing to support and enhance that contribution.

■ Railways: Electrification

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[53322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent comparative assessment has he made of the rate of rail electrification (a) the UK and (b) EU counterparts in each of the last three years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In the last three years (for which data is available), we have completed almost 700 track miles of electrification in England and Wales. There has not been a comparative assessment of the rate of rail electrification in other countries. However, Departmental ministers and officials engage with international partners to discuss issues of mutual interest, which include electrification practice. In Decarbonising Transport: a Better, Cleaner Britain, we have committed to delivering 'an ambitious, sustainable, and cost-effective programme of electrification, guided by the Network Rail-led Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy'.

■ Railways: Fleetwood

Cat Smith:

[\[53929\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on reconnecting Fleetwood to the railway network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Lancashire County Council has completed a Feasibility Study for the Fleetwood to Poulton scheme. We are reviewing the recommendations of the Study and expect to confirm next steps for the scheme following the conclusion of the Spending Review.

■ Road Traffic Offences

Mr Virendra Sharma:

[\[53856\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to carry out a full review of road traffic offences.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government takes road safety seriously and keeps the law under regular review. However, we do not currently have any plans to conduct a full review of all driving offences and penalties.

Roads: Accidents**Gerald Jones:**[\[53293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what information his Department holds on the number of road traffic fatalities where current legislation has prevented the perpetrator from being convicted.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department for Transport does not hold this information.

Travel: Coronavirus**Sarah Owen:**[\[52608\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in Europe on safe approaches to reopening international travel during the covid-19 outbreak.

Robert Courts:

Department for Transport Ministers and officials have met with their European counterparts throughout this year to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and the safe, sustainable resumption of international travel. These discussions have been productive and we will continue to engage closely as we seek to cautiously balance the reopening of international travel with managing the public health risks.

TREASURY**Afghanistan: Overseas Aid****Layla Moran:**[\[53333\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September to Question 49251 on Afghanistan: Overseas Aid, what estimate he has made of the effect of potential changes in gross national income to the allocated Official Development Assistance spending in 2021-22.

Mr Simon Clarke:

We will spend 0.5% of gross national income on official development assistance (ODA) in 2021. Any revisions to the level of allocated ODA spending in 2021-22 will be reflected at supplementary estimates in due course. The government remains committed to the International Development Act 2015 and intends to return to the 0.7% target when the fiscal situation allows.

■ Air Pollution: Taxation

Geraint Davies:

[\[53161\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to introduce taxes on air pollutants produced by industry.

Helen Whately:

The UK has been at the forefront of reducing industrial pollution. In January 2021, the UK launched its own Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to replace membership of the EU ETS. The UK ETS already puts a price on carbon emissions from energy intensive industries, as well as from power generation and some aviation, including domestic, UK-EEA, and UK-Gibraltar flights.

The UK also has a strong and proportionate regulatory framework in place to require industry to reduce emissions and industry has responded with investment and innovation to meet these standards. Regulations such as the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 play an important role in ensuring regulators and industry work together effectively to reduce pollution through a robust licensing and permitting regime. The Government recently consulted on creating a best available techniques process for the UK in which industry and regulators will reduce emissions by setting new standards for complex industrial processes.

■ Chevening Scholarships Programme: Finance

Patrick Grady:

[\[53928\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the oral contribution of the Deputy Prime Minister of 22 September 2021, Official Report, Column 277, that Chevening is funded by a charity and not the public purse, whether that charity has received any funding through the Gift Aid scheme in each of the last ten years.

Helen Whately:

HM Revenue and Customs has a statutory duty to maintain taxpayer confidentiality, and cannot comment on the affairs of individual organisations.

■ Child Trust Fund

Gerald Jones:

[\[53295\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many mature Child Trust Funds have been placed into protective accounts because the account holder could not be contacted; and what the total value is of funds in those accounts.

John Glen:

The requested statistics on protected Child Trust Funds can only be made available at a disproportionate cost.

■ Children: Day Care

Stella Creasy:

[\[53890\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the (a) forecasted expenditure and (b) actual expenditure for the tax-free childcare scheme for financial year 2020-21.

Mr Simon Clarke:

At the Spring 2020 budget, the forecast expenditure for Tax-Free Childcare in 2020/21 was £0.34bn. Tax-Free Childcare expenditure in 2020/21 was £0.24bn.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Sarah Olney:

[\[53311\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will extend the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme beyond 30 September 2021 until at least March 2022 for people who work within small- and medium-sized enterprises within the travel industry.

Lucy Frazer:

After nineteen months, the unprecedented Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) closed on 30 September 2021. Since the scheme's inception, the CJRS supported 11.6 million jobs across the UK, with employer claims totalling £68.5 billion, aiding businesses and protecting livelihoods. It was right to provide exceptional support while widespread Covid restrictions were in place. As the economy has reopened, the jobs market has recovered, vacancies are at record highs and the success of the government's vaccine programme has allowed us to lift almost all restrictions. As set out in the Plan for Jobs: Progress Update published on 13 September 2021, this approach has worked. It is right that we continue to wind down our temporary pandemic support, while continuing to support businesses to invest in the recovery, and supporting people into new jobs.

Our Plan for Jobs will continue to create jobs and ensure support for business continues, especially for those sectors most affected by necessary restrictions and which may take longer to bounce back, such as the travel and tourism industry. The following support package remains in place for businesses:

- o Over 90% of eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England are still benefitting from a 66% cut in business rates until 31 March 2022 – worth over £16bn since March 2020.
- o Hospitality and tourism firms are also still benefitting from a VAT reduction – paying only 12.5% in VAT from 1 October 2021 until 31 March 2022. This supports around 150,000 businesses, helping to protect 2.4 million jobs.
- o The arts and culture sector can still access support from the £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund to help protect jobs across the country, which was topped up at the Spring Budget by a further £390m.
- o Businesses continue to be able to access finance thanks to the Recovery Loan Scheme until the end of the year, and are protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises until next March.

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Aviation

Steve McCabe:

[52408]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of ending the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme on the aviation industry.

Lucy Frazer:

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was designed as a temporary, economy-wide measure to support businesses while widespread restrictions were in place. The scheme closed at the end of September, striking the right balance between supporting the economy as it opens up, continuing to provide support and protect incomes, and ensuring incentives are in place to get people back to work as demand returns. This approach has worked; the OBR have estimated that without the short-term fiscal easing announced in the Budget, and in particular the CJRS extension, unemployment would have otherwise been around 300,000 higher in the fourth quarter of this year than the 2.2 million in the central forecast.

Furthermore England has relaxed the rules on international travel, which will support the recovery of the aviation industry. A new system for a safe and sustainable return to travel has been set out, which separates countries into a red list and rest of world. As of Monday 11 October, England's red list was reduced to just 7 countries, with 47 countries coming off the red list. Passengers fully vaccinated with an authorised vaccine arriving in England from non-red countries or territories will only need to take a day two test and will not need to self-isolate or take a pre-departure or day eight test. From 24 October fully vaccinated passengers arriving in England from countries not on the red list can take a cheaper lateral flow test, instead of a PCR test, on or before Day 2 of their arrival into the UK. Anyone who tests positive will need to take a confirmatory PCR test which can be genomically sequenced to help identify new variants.

Eligible travellers vaccinated in over 100 countries and territories including Brazil, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Pakistan, South Africa and Turkey can avoid self-isolation, pre-departure testing and day eight testing requirements on arrival to the UK from non-red countries and territories, like UK vaccinated adults.

The Government recognises the particular challenges the aviation industry has faced as a result of Covid-19. The aviation and aerospace sectors are being supported with over £12 billion that has been made available through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) and grants for research and development.

The Government has shown throughout the pandemic that it is prepared to adapt support if the path of the virus changes. We continue to engage closely with sectors across the economy, including the aviation, travel and tourism industries, to understand their recovery horizons as the vaccine is rolled out and restrictions ease.

■ Dorneywood

Layla Moran:

[54008]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many days he has stayed overnight at Dorneywood in (a) 2020 and (b) 2021 to date.

Helen Whately:

This information on how many nights the Chancellor has stayed in Dorneywood during 2020 and 2021 is not held centrally.

■ Finance

Alex Cunningham:

[52486]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans her Department has to increase financial wellbeing throughout the UK.

John Glen:

In January 2019, the Government established the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), merging three former organisations (the Money Advice Service, The Pensions Advisory Service, PensionWise) to provide free-to-use financial guidance and offer more holistic support to customers.

In 2020, MaPS published the UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing which sets out five national goals to improve the UK's financial wellbeing by 2030. These include increasing the number of children and young people receiving a meaningful financial education, encouraging saving, decreasing the number of people often using credit for food and bills, increasing the availability of debt advice, and supporting financial planning for later life.

HM Treasury closely engages with MaPS on the strategy, which also includes three cross-cutting workstreams, focusing on gender, mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. MaPS are working with a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors to deliver this strategy and will publish delivery plans for the strategy in due course.

■ Financial Services: Minority Groups and Young People

Alex Cunningham:

[52487]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to improve financial inclusion for (a) young people and (b) marginalised communities.

John Glen:

The Government is strongly committed to tackling financial exclusion and wants everyone, whatever their background or income to be able to access useful and affordable financial products and services. Since March 2018, the Government has convened the Financial Inclusion Policy Forum, co-chaired by the Economic Secretary to Treasury and Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion. It brings together leaders from industry, charities, and consumer groups, as well as

government ministers and the regulators to provide leadership and promote collaboration to improve financial inclusion.

The Government has allocated £96 million of funding from dormant assets towards financial inclusion, which is being distributed by Fair4All Finance. The Government works closely with Fair4All Finance, which was founded to support those who are in financially vulnerable circumstances through fair and affordable financial products and services.

■ Heathrow Airport: Railways

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[53321\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to include the Western Rail Link to Heathrow in the upcoming Spending Review.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Spending Review will set UK Government departments' resource and capital budgets for the next 3 years (2022-23 to 2024-25) and devolved administrations' block grants for the same period. The Spending Review will conclude on 27th October alongside the Autumn Budget 2021.

■ Islamic State: Freezing of Assets

Brendan O'Hara: [\[52515\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many assets of people belonging to the Daesh terror organisation have been frozen in the UK; what is being done with those assets; and what assessment he has made of the potential to repurpose the Daesh's frozen assets for reparations for victims of the Daesh atrocities.

John Glen:

There is currently around £85,000 worth of funds frozen in the UK belonging to individuals and organisations associated with ISIL and Al-Qaida. The majority of these individuals and organisations are sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council and appear on its ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List. As this List concerns individuals and organisations with both ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliation, the UK has not attempted to make this delineation when reporting the value of frozen funds under this sanctions regime in the UK.

An asset freeze does not involve any change in ownership of funds or economic resources, or require funds or economic resources to be seized by the Government or Police. Accordingly, HM Treasury does not hold or own the assets of any sanctioned persons.

Instead, an asset freeze operates by preventing sanctioned persons from accessing either their own funds or receiving funds from others. HM Treasury alerts financial and other relevant institutions when individuals or organisations are sanctioned by the UN or the UK, and those institutions must then freeze the assets they hold. Anybody who contravenes these sanctions risks committing a criminal offence. The result is that the assets of sanctioned individuals and organisations are 'frozen'.

The United Nations counter-terrorism sanctions regime was created by UN Security Council Resolution 1267 (1999) and first imposed sanctions on the Taliban. It has been amended and extended on numerous occasions, most notably to include Al-Qaida in 2000 (Resolution 1333(2000)), and ISIL (Da'esh) in 2015 (Resolution 2253(2015)), and is now governed by Resolution 2368 (2017). The aim of Resolution 2368 (2017) is to apply financial sanctions in order to prevent terrorists from raising, moving and using funds, and therefore to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts. The UK is required to comply with its obligations pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions as a matter of international law and therefore to implement all UN sanctions.

Once the conditions for delisting or unfreezing assets set out in UN Security Council Resolution 2368 of 2017 are met, relevant assets would no longer be frozen in the UK.

Financial sanctions legislation does not enable the Government to seize frozen ISIL assets, refuse the release of frozen assets or use ISIL assets frozen in the UK to provide reparations for victims of the Daesh atrocities.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[53842\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for East Londonderry dated 4 August 2021 regarding preferred locations for the establishing of a Freeport facility in Northern Ireland.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Treasury has no record of receiving the letter of 4 August from the Hon Member regarding the creation of Freeports across the UK and the need for Northern Ireland to be included in this proposal, listing preferred locations. An email was received on 17 September from the Hon member's parliamentary office with a copy of the letter attached. I responded on 27 September.

■ **National Insurance: Barnsley East**

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[53992\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people are making National Insurance Contributions in Barnsley East constituency as at 23 September 2021.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[53993\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the total collective monetary cost to people in Barnsley East of administering the planned increase to National Insurance Contributions for the Health and Social Care levy.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC has not made an estimate of the administrative cost to people in the Barnsley East constituency. However, at the UK level, some estimates were presented in the tax information and impact note (TIIN):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-levy/health-and-social-care-levy>.

HMRC estimates (from the Survey of Personal Incomes) that around 40,900 people were liable to pay employee class 1 and/or class 4 NICs in the 2018 to 2019 tax year (latest available outturn) in the constituency of Barnsley East. HMRC does not publish this information at constituency level for projection years.

■ Non-domestic Rates

Kim Leadbeater:

[53376]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with the British Retail Consortium during the Government's Fundamental Review into business rates.

Lucy Frazer:

Treasury Ministers and officials have meetings with a wide variety of organisations in the public and private sectors as part of the process of policy development and delivery.

Details of ministerial and permanent secretary meetings with external organisations on departmental business are published on a quarterly basis and are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmt-ministers-meetings-hospitality-gifts-and-overseas-travel>.

■ Railways: West Midlands

Shabana Mahmood:

[53210]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what recent discussions officials in his Department have had with local leaders in the West Midlands on the Integrated Rail Plan.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government is committed to providing better rail connectivity between London, the Midlands and the North. The Treasury works closely with the Department for Transport to understand local leaders' views on the Integrated Rail Plan, which will soon set out how best to scope, sequence and integrate Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 Phase 2b and other major Network Rail programmes.

The West Midlands will benefit significantly from Phase One of High Speed 2, which will cut journey times between Birmingham and London to less than 50 minutes. Budget 2021 also included £50m to develop proposals for transport improvements around the HS2 Interchange station to help support local regeneration.

■ Social Services: Finance

Mr Clive Betts:

[53831]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49949 on Social Services: Finance, how much and what proportion of the £5.4 billion referred to is (a) to pay for the cap of £86,000, (b) towards paying providers a

fair rate, (c) additional money for local authorities to pay for care and (d) to be used for any other purposes.

Mr Simon Clarke:

As outlined in my response to your written question of September 15th, the government will set out its plans for spending across all public services at the Spending Review on October 27th. This will include adult social care spending.

■ **Universal Credit**

Gerald Jones:

[\[53294\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if she will make it her policy to reconsider the cessation of the temporary universal credit £20 uplift in response to the impact on household finances of rising energy prices.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has always been clear that the £20 per week increase to Universal Credit was a temporary measure to support households whose incomes and earnings were affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Now that the economy has reopened, the Government is focusing on supporting people to move into and progress in work

The Government is committed to supporting low-income families with the cost of living including with their energy bills through the Warm Home Discount, Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments. The Energy Price Cap is also in place to protect millions of customers from the sudden increases in global gas prices this winter. Despite the rising costs of wholesale energy, the cap still saves 15 million households up to £100 a year.

The Government has also recently announced the £500 million Household Support Fund which will support vulnerable households with essentials over winter as we enter the final stages of recovery from the pandemic.

■ **Waste Management**

Geraint Davies:

[\[53163\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had recent discussions with Ministerial colleagues on incentivising (a) an improvement in the performance of incineration through taxation and (b) the improvement of waste management generally.

Helen Whately:

In the Resources and Waste Strategy 2018, the government set out that incineration currently plays a significant role in waste management in the UK, and that the government expects this to continue. However, in the long term the government wants to maximise the amount of waste sent to recycling instead of incineration and landfill. As set out at Budget 2018, should wider policies not deliver the government's waste ambitions in the future, it will consider the introduction of a tax on the incineration of waste, operating in conjunction with landfill tax, taking account of the possible impacts on local authorities. All tax policy is kept under review. The

government also maintains and develops tax policies to support effective waste management, including the existing Landfill Tax and the world leading Plastic Packaging Tax which will be introduced from April 2022.

The government is committed to the improving of waste management and set out the Waste Management Plan for England 2021 earlier this year. Further detail available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-management-plan-for-england-2021>

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

■ Conversion Therapy

Julian Sturdy: [53886]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when the Government plans to publish the report based on research into people's experiences of conversion therapy.

Julian Sturdy: [53887]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, how much public funding is spent annually on supporting victims of conversion therapy.

Julian Sturdy: [53888]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, with reference to the announcement of 11 May 2021 on Government plans to ban conversion therapy, if she will publish a timetable for bringing forward legislative proposals on that matter.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government will publish a range of research related to the practice of conversion therapy at the launch of our consultation on the issue, which we are moving at pace to deliver. As the Minister for Women and Equalities set out in May of this year, responses to that consultation will inform legislation, which is being prepared for Spring 2022. Given the cross-cutting nature of conversion therapy, survivors of the practice may be engaging a range of public services including helplines and support relating to domestic abuse, homelessness and hate crime. The Government will put in place a package of support specifically for survivors of conversion therapy that will ensure they can find and access the help that they need.

■ Social Mobility

Stuart Anderson: [53342]

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with Ministerial colleagues on improving social mobility in the most deprived parts of the country.

Kemi Badenoch:

Levelling up is at the heart of the Government's agenda to build back better after the pandemic. Responsibility for driving forward the levelling up agenda has recently

moved to the new Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to embed levelling up commitments and create tangible improvements in every part of the UK.

The Minister for Women and Equalities announced the Equality Data Programme to ensure that geographic and socio-economic inequality is considered, alongside other factors, when identifying barriers to opportunity. Furthermore, since April, the Social Mobility Commission has been sponsored by the Equality Hub in the Cabinet Office, so that it can play a wider role in tackling socio-economic inequality.

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

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Employment

Shaun Bailey:

[\[53344\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimates she has made of the number of people who have found employment through Plan for Jobs skills and employment programmes.

Mims Davies:

The Department for Work and Pensions will be monitoring and evaluating the Plan for Jobs programmes throughout their implementation.

As of the 11th October, 86,000 young people have started a Kickstart job. Over 204,900 roles have been made available for young people to apply to through the scheme and over 307,500 jobs have been approved for funding.

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 above has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

Employment outcomes are available for Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) in England and Wales and JETS Scotland, and provided in the table below. It should be noted that JETS provides support for up to six months and many people who have started on the scheme will not yet have had time to achieve an employment outcome.

JETS Starts and Employment Outcomes

	PROGRAMME STARTS (TO END AUGUST 2021)	EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES (TO END AUGUST 2021)
JETS England and Wales (launched 5 October 2020)	168,020	41,830
JETS Scotland (launched 25 January 2021)	8,440	1,540

Note: JETS data are taken from the Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP) system. An employment outcome is defined as when an individual achieves £1,000 cumulative earnings within eight months of starting on the programme as identified via HMRC earnings information.

The number of people who have started on Job Finding Support (JFS) and Sector Based Work Academies (SWAPs) provision is provided in the tables below. Employment outcomes for these programmes are not currently available.

SWAPs Starts

1 APRIL 2020 - 31 MARCH 2021	64,500
1 April 2021 - 10 October 2021	40,050
Total since April 2020	104,550

Notes: A SWAP start is defined as someone attending the first day of the placement, which is usually the first day of pre-employment training. A start is only recorded where a claimant attended their placement. SWAPs starts data are collected by Jobcentre staff and reflect the number of SWAP starts by claimants in receipt of Universal Credit (UC), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Income Support (IS).

JFS Starts

MONTH	STARTS TO JFS
Jan-21	1,440
Feb-21	3,465
Mar-21	4,530
Apr-21	2,585
May-21	4,490
Jun-21	4,940

MONTH	STARTS TO JFS
Jul-21	5,740
Aug-21	4,420
Sep-21	4,080
Total	14,250

Notes: JFS Starts are taken from the Provider Referrals and Payments (PRaP) system. Starts occur where an initial meeting has taken place and participant has acknowledged receipt of appropriate documents such as the Job Finding Action Plan (JFAP). JFS Start volumes, particularly those in more recent months, are likely to increase as starts can be recorded retrospectively.

Through our Youth Offer we currently have over 135 Youth Hubs physically open to support young people across Great Britain get into work and the ambition is to have 150 open by the end of the year.

■ Employment Schemes

David Linden:

[\[52587\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 16 September 2021 to Question 48341 on Employment Schemes, what the evidential basis is for the assertion that work coaches are helping people already in work into better paid work.

Mims Davies:

Universal Credit is based on a strong system of support and an agreed relationship where both sides endeavour to do the best they can to achieve positive work outcomes and prevent a slide into welfare dependency. Our evidence shows that Work Coach support is effective at reducing the amount of time claimants spend on benefit and that Work Coaches can help working claimants overcome barriers to taking on more or better work.

■ Food Poverty: Pupils

Munira Wilson:

[\[53352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) research and (b) preparation his Department has undertaken on the impact of (i) rising energy prices, (ii) rising fuel bills, (iii) potential food shortages and (iv) the removal of the £20 uplift to universal credit on families' ability to fund their childrens' meals while at school.

Munira Wilson:

[\[53353\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what (a) research and (b) preparation his Department has undertaken on the impact of (i) rising energy prices, (ii)

rising fuel bills, (iii) potential food shortages and (iv) the removal of the £20 uplift to universal credit on families' ability to feed vulnerable children over upcoming school holidays.

David Rutley:

We have not undertaken research of this kind.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced with the success of the vaccine rollout. With record vacancies, our focus is on helping people back into work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; we have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job; and introduced Restart which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year. Our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

In April this year we increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25, helping eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins. We are also investing up to £221m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children are benefitting from a range of support, including healthy and nutritious meals as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

■ **Local Housing Allowance: Wales**

Hywel Williams:

[53838]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of local housing allowance rates in Wales.

Hywel Williams:

[\[53839\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of raising Local Housing Allowance rates in Wales on an annual basis to improve access to housing for people claiming Housing Benefit or the housing element of universal credit.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made.

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates were increased to the 30th percentile of local rents. This investment of nearly £1 billion provided 1.5 million claimants with an average of £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received.

We have maintained Local Housing Allowance rates at the same cash level for 2021/22. For example, the two-bedroom LHA rate in the North West Wales Broad Rental Market Area increased by over £50 a month.

For those who require additional support with housing costs, Discretionary Housing Payments are available. Since 2011 we have provided over £1 billion in Discretionary Housing Payments funding. We have allocated a further £140 million for Discretionary Housing Payments for 2021/22 in England and Wales.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

Rosie Cooper:

[\[53198\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to respond to a letter dated 11 August 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire reference, ZA57289 regarding a foster care allowance claim.

Guy Opperman:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member by the Minister for Welfare Delivery, on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 29 September 2021.

■ **Personal Income**

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[53301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of reversing the reintroduction of the Minimum Income Floor.

Mims Davies:

No assessment has been made.

The suspension of the Minimum Income Floor was a temporary measure to support self-employed claimants through the pandemic, kept under review in light of the latest economic and public health context. Since 31 July 2021, the pre-pandemic rules for the self-employed have started to apply again.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[53967\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish modelling of the combined impact of the (a) end of the £20 uplift to working tax credits and universal credit, (b) rise in National Insurance contributions, (c) rise in inflation and (d) rise in energy costs on disposable income of households.

David Rutley:

No such modelling of the combined impact of the end of the £20 uplift to Working Tax Credits and Universal Credit, the rise in National Insurance contributions, rise in inflation and rise in energy costs on disposable incomes of households has been done.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving around £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

■ Poverty: Children

Kirsten Oswald:

[\[52517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the combined effect of (a) increased energy prices and (b) the end of the £20 uplift to universal credit on levels of child poverty.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made of the combined impact of increased energy prices and the ending of the £20 uplift on child poverty.

The latest poverty figures (2019/20) demonstrate that absolute poverty rates (both before and after housing costs) for children have fallen since 2009/10. In 2019/20, 17% of children were in absolute poverty (before housing costs), compared to 19% in 2009/10.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work. This approach

is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by increasing the living wage, and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

In April this year we increased the value of Healthy Start Food Vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25, helping eligible low income households buy basic foods like milk, fruit and vitamins. We are also investing up to £221m in the Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has been expanded to every Local Authority across England. Participating children are benefitting from a range of support, including healthy and nutritious meals as well as fun and engaging activities covering the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

The Cold Weather Payment scheme also helps vulnerable people in receipt of certain in-come-related benefits to meet the additional costs of heating during periods of severe cold weather. Cold Weather Payments are targeted at those in receipt of eligible benefits with a pension element or disability component or where there is a child under five in the house-hold.

■ Rented Housing: Costs

Rachael Maskell:

[\[53285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will review the adequacy of Broad Rental Market Area boundaries and their relationship with the cost of housing in a particular locality.

David Rutley:

Broad rental market areas (BRMAs), of which there are 192 in Great Britain, are determined in accordance with requirements laid down in legislation. Each BRMA must contain a variety of property types and tenures, sufficient privately rented accommodation and access to facilities for health, education, recreation, banking and shopping. The boundaries of BRMAs are set by rent officers based on these factors. If at any time, rent officers decide that a boundary should be moved they must carry out a review, consulting with affected local authorities among others, and then submit a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions to decide.

In April 2020 Local Housing Allowance rates were increased to the 30th percentile of local rents. This investment of nearly £1 billion provided 1.5 million claimants with an

average £600 more housing support in 2020/21 than they would otherwise have received. We have maintained LHA rates at the same cash level for 2021/22, rather than reverting back to previous rates.

Local Housing Allowance rates are reviewed each year, taking account of local rental data collected by rent officers.

■ Social Security Benefits

Wendy Chamberlain:

[\[54017\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what definition her Department uses to classify social security claimants as vulnerable; what method is used to identify those claimants; and how that information is recorded.

David Rutley:

The Department does not identify or record claimants as 'vulnerable' or 'not vulnerable'. However, we often need to consider a customer's particular circumstances to provide the right service or ensure appropriate support. Where a staff member recognises that a customer has particular needs which should be flagged within their case file, they can do this by recording relevant information on the appropriate customer profile record. For example, in Universal Credit, complex needs information is recorded in profile notes within the claimant history.

In 2019 we created a central team in the Customer Experience Directorate who focus on supporting customers who require advanced support. We have also appointed over 30 regional Advanced Customer Support Senior Leaders across Great Britain; their role is to provide targeted support to customers who most need it.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[53235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 9 September 2021 to Question 43382 on Social Security Benefits: Disability, for what reason her Department does not have plans to publish the final report of the NatCen research project entitled The Uses of Health and Disability Benefits.

Chloe Smith:

My Department has no intention to publish this research at present. My Department is currently considering a range of policy options, and it is right to protect the private space within which Ministers and their policy advisers can develop policies without the risk of premature disclosure.

■ Social Security Benefits: Wales

Hywel Williams:

[\[53840\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate she has made of the number of people who have received an underpayment of their benefits in Wales each year since 2015.

David Rutley:

Details of fraud and error within the benefit system, including underpayments, are published on the Gov.UK website which can be accessed via the link below.

[Fraud and error in the benefit system: financial year 2020 to 2021 estimates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fraud-and-error-in-the-benefit-system-financial-year-2020-to-2021-estimates)

These estimates relate to the levels of fraud and error in the benefit system in Great Britain. They are underpinned by reviews of benefit claimants in England, Wales and Scotland. We are unable to break down the statistics by region as the sample sizes are too small.

The main cause of underpayments is claimant error. To help prevent underpayments, we work hard to make it easy for claimants to tell us about changes in their circumstances and where possible, we look to update claims automatically. In Universal Credit changes can be reported electronically through the online journal.

Data is increasingly allowing the Department to check entitlement and correct any over or underpayment at the earliest opportunity. The automated use of Real Time Information means that for Universal Credit, PAYE earnings are captured automatically before any payment is.

Hywel Williams:**[53841]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people have made benefit claims in Welsh in each year since 2015.

David Rutley:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Underpayments**Wendy Chamberlain:****[53345]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the National Audit Office report entitled Investigation into underpayment of State Pensions published on 22 September 2021, if she will set up a task force to target and prioritise assistance for pensioners who are most in need of support as a result of the underpayment of State Pension.

Guy Opperman:

The Legal Entitlements and Administrative Practice (LEAP) exercise to correct State Pension underpayments began in January 2021. We are prioritising older cases and those who we believe are the most vulnerable. The Department will write to affected individuals to inform them of the changes to their State Pension amount and of any arrears payment they will receive in accordance with the law.

■ Unemployment: Young People

Alex Cunningham:

[52488]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to support unemployed young people; and what plans she has to support job mobility.

Mims Davies:

The Government has provided an unprecedented economic support package to protect and create jobs, including a particular focus on young people.

The DWP Youth Offer provides wrap-around support to young people aged 18-24 who are in the intensive work search regime of Universal Credit and was introduced as part of the wider UK government Plan for Jobs package. It has been developed to combat youth unemployment and ensure that young people have the skills they need to look for, find and keep employment.

Through the Youth Employment Programme young people receive intensive Work Coach support and every young person is encouraged to take part in a wide range of work based opportunities including Kickstart placements, Sector Based Work Academy Programmes, traineeships, Mentoring Circles or apprenticeships, which can be taken up at any point in the 13-week programme.

This sits alongside Youth Hubs that are co-located and co-delivered with external partners to support young people with skills gaps, and Youth Employability Coaches that help those with significant complex needs and barriers into the labour market.

We currently have over 135 new Youth Hubs physically open to support young people across Great Britain and 150 Youth Employability Coaches, delivering tailored employment & skills support for those most at risk of longer term unemployment.

To support job mobility for people of all ages, we are supporting claimants to access the skills and training opportunities delivered by the Department for Education and devolved Governments, through our DWP Train and Progress initiative across Great Britain. This includes the expansion of the successful Sector-based Work Academy Programme in England and Scotland. Where it will help people into work, DWP claimants can access sector-specific training provided as part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, including L3 Skills Boot camps of up to 16 weeks' full time while remaining on benefit.

Additionally, we recognise that people need the skills and opportunities to progress, build their careers and increase their earnings. The independent In-Work Progression Commission published its report on the barriers to progression for those in persistent low pay on 1 July 2021. It makes a number of recommendations for the Government which we will consider carefully and respond to later in the year.

■ Universal Credit

Mr Laurence Robertson:

[52407]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total cost of universal credit has been to the Exchequer in each of the last five years; and what the cost per annum is of the £20 per week uplift.

David Rutley:

Extending the £20 increase by 12 months would cost over £6 billion per year, roughly equivalent to adding 1p on the basic rate of income tax and an additional 3p increase in fuel duty.

Actual and forecast Universal Credit expenditure are published in the Benefit Expenditure and Caseload Tables and can be found in, Table 1a and Table 1b, at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953118/outturn-and-forecast-autumn-budget-2020-revised.xlsx

The Department for Work and Pensions estimates the temporary Universal Credit £20 uplift, in 2020/2021, cost around £5bn and estimates the six month extension in 2021 cost around £2.2bn in Great Britain, which can be found here: [Economic and fiscal outlook - March 2021 - Office for Budget Responsibility \(obr.uk\)](#) - Welfare spending, 3.79 to 3.83 on pages 133 to 134.

Gerald Jones:

[53296]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make it her policy to reconsider the cessation of the temporary universal credit £20 uplift in response to the impact on household finances of rising energy prices.

David Rutley:

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; we have also recruited an additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job; and introduced Restart which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year. Our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

The Cold Weather Payment scheme also helps vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet the additional costs of heating during periods of severe cold weather. Cold Weather Payments are targeted at those in receipt of eligible benefits with a pension element or disability component or where there is a child under five in the household.

Mary Kelly Foy:

[54013]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what comparative assessment she has made of the potential effect of the removal of the £20 uplift to universal credit on (a) disabled people and their families and (b) people who are not living with a disability.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made of the potential effect of the removal of the £20 uplift to universal credit on disabled people and their families or people who are not living with a disability.

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

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We have seen strong growth in the number and rate of disabled people in employment and Universal Credit claimants with health conditions or disabilities who,

following the outcome of a work capability assessment, are determined to have limited capability for work and work related activity – meaning they are not required to look for work or to prepare for work – are awarded an additional amount of benefit, currently £343.63 per month.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving around £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

■ Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit

Rachael Maskell:

[53966]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of increased energy prices on people in receipt of working tax credits and universal credit following the end of the £20 uplift.

David Rutley:

The Chancellor announced a temporary six-month extension to the £20 per week uplift at the Budget on 3 March to support households affected by the economic shock of Covid-19. Universal Credit has provided a vital safety net for six million people during the pandemic, and the temporary uplift was part of a COVID support package worth a total of £407 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work.

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We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

The Cold Weather Payment scheme also helps vulnerable people in receipt of certain income-related benefits to meet the additional costs of heating during periods of severe cold weather. Cold Weather Payments are targeted at those in receipt of

eligible benefits with a pension element or disability component or where there is a child under five in the household.

■ **Universal Credit: Barnsley East**

Stephanie Peacock: [53990]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many employed people are receiving universal credit in Barnsley East constituency as at 23 September 2021.

David Rutley:

The latest available statistics, currently to 12 August 2021, on the number of people who are on Universal Credit and are in employment, by parliamentary constituency, are published monthly 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>

Stephanie Peacock: [53991]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of ending the £20 uplift to universal credit on the number of people living in poverty in Barnsley East constituency.

Mary Kelly Foy: [54012]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential effect of the removal of the £20 uplift to universal credit on the number of people in (a) relative and (b) absolute poverty in County Durham.

David Rutley:

No such assessments have been made of the effect of ending the £20 uplift on the numbers of people living in poverty in County Durham or Barnsley East.

It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the £20 uplift on poverty. This is due to the uncertainty around the speed and distribution of the economic recovery, and the resulting effect on the caseload.

The latest poverty figures (2019/20) demonstrate that absolute poverty rates (both before and after housing costs) have fallen since 2009/10. In 2019/20, 14% of people were in absolute poverty (before housing costs), compared to 16% in 2009/10.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by increasing the living wage,

and by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving around £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

■ Universal Credit: West Midlands

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[53214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of the end to the £20 a week universal credit uplift on household incomes in (a) Birmingham Ladywood constituency, (b) Birmingham City region and (c) the West Midlands.

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[53215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of the decision to remove the £20 uplift to universal credit from October 2021 on poverty levels in (a) Birmingham Ladywood constituency, (b) Birmingham City region and (c) the West Midlands.

David Rutley:

No such assessments have been made of poverty levels or household incomes in Birmingham Ladywood, Birmingham City region or the West Midlands.

It is not possible to produce a robust estimate of the impact of removing the £20 uplift on poverty or related issues. This is due to the uncertainty around the speed and distribution of the economic recovery.

The latest poverty figures (2019/20) demonstrate that absolute poverty rates (both before and after housing costs) have fallen since 2009/10. In 2019/20, 14% of people were in absolute poverty (before housing costs), compared to 16% in 2009/10. This government believe that work is the best way out of poverty, and the latest statistics (2019/20) show that children in workless households are around 5 times more likely to be in absolute poverty, before housing costs, than those where all adults work.

There have been significant positive developments in the public health situation since the uplift was first introduced. With the success of the vaccine rollout and record job vacancies, it is right that our focus is on helping people back into work. This approach is based on clear evidence about the importance of employment, particularly where it is full-time, in substantially reducing the risks of poverty.

Through our Plan for Jobs, we are targeting tailored support schemes of people of all ages to help them prepare for, get into and progress in work. These include: Kickstart, delivering tens of thousands of six-month work placements for Universal Credit claimants aged 16-24 at risk of unemployment; we have also recruited an

additional 13,500 work coaches to provide more intensive support to find a job; and introduced Restart which provides 12 months' intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who are unemployed for a year. Our Plan for Jobs interventions will support more than two million people.

We recognise that some people continue to require extra support, which is why we have introduced a £421 million Household Support Fund to help vulnerable people in England with essential household costs over the winter as the economy recovers. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41m for the Scottish Government, £25m for the Welsh Government and £14m for the NI Executive), for a total of £500 million.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Climate Change Update

Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change (Greg Hands): **[[HCWS321](#)]**

A year on from the publication of the Ten Point Plan the Government can confirm more than £5.8 billion of investment in green projects has been secured, along with at least 56,000 jobs in the UK's clean industries.

This major green investment boost, helps to drive forward the government's ambitions to make the UK a global leader in green technology and finance. It includes more than £650 million in advancing offshore wind this year alone, supporting almost 3,600 jobs across the Humber and North-East and over £900 million in accelerating the shift to zero emissions vehicles. As part of this Envision AESC will invest over £400 million in battery manufacturing for example, as part of a £1bn project with Nissan and Sunderland Council to create a flagship Electric Vehicle Hub. ENI Spa has invested more than £400 million in offshore wind.

This week's Global Investment Summit in London is expected to attract almost 200 leading industry figures from around the world to invest in the best of UK green business and innovation. Securing private investment for clean technology is a core part of the Government's strategy to meet our world-leading emissions reductions targets over the next decade and achieve Net Zero by 2050. Our upcoming Net Zero Strategy, to be published this week, builds on the Ten Point Plan, setting out how we will deliver on our net zero commitments, giving businesses the certainty they need to invest.

Further progress since the Ten Point Plan includes:

- Securing around £1.5bn of investment into our offshore wind industry, supported by the government's £160m scheme to upgrade ports and infrastructure. Renewables now represent almost 40% of the UK's total electricity generation.
- Kicking off the biggest-ever round of our flagship renewable energy scheme for low carbon electricity (Contract for Difference) with £200 million for offshore wind projects and £24m for floating offshore wind.
- Publishing the Hydrogen Strategy to grow the UK hydrogen economy, consulting on design of the £240m Net Zero Hydrogen Fund, and announcing funding of seven real-world hydrogen transport pilots.
- Committing £20 million to increase on-street charge points for electric vehicles and providing £50m to support charge point installations.
- Publishing our Transport Decarbonisation Plan and National Bus Strategy, as well as supporting Coventry to become UK's first all-electric bus city and consulting on world-leading pledge to end the sale of all new, polluting road vehicles by 2040 and

net zero aviation emissions by 2050. This is on top of more than 300 new walking and cycling schemes.

- Providing £1 billion to upgrade schools, hospitals, and council buildings with energy efficiency measures and committing £222 million to upgrade socially rented homes. Local Authorities through the Green Homes Grant scheme have also started installing upgrades to around 50,000 low-income households.
- Announcing £19.5 million of grant funding for UK projects developing novel carbon capture technology and we have kicked off the process to decide the first carbon capture cluster locations in our industrial heartlands.
- Launching the floods investment programme that is on track to better protect 336,000 properties.
- Awarding 90 projects under the second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, totalling £80 million of investment, and launched several schemes under the Nature for Climate Fund to expand our pipeline of tree planting projects in England.
- Launching the £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, providing funding for low-carbon technologies and systems across the areas of the 10 Point Plan.
- Launching our landmark North Sea Transition Deal and Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy.

DEFENCE

■ Armoured Cavalry Programme: AJAX Update

Minister for Defence Procurement (Jeremy Quin):

[\[HCWS322\]](#)

I wish to provide a further update to Parliament on the Ajax equipment project being delivered as part of the Armoured Cavalry Programme.

1. Health and Safety

The review by the MOD's Director of Health, Safety and Environmental Protection on the Health and Safety aspects of the Noise and Vibration concerns raised on Ajax is now in its final stages. The Report runs through the chronology of the Ajax programme and key decisions made regarding safety in order to ensure a clear understanding of the current background and is being subjected to a formal Maxwellisation process. I look forward to the Report being finalised. I will publish it in full.

2. Update on Personnel

The health of our service personnel is our top priority. At 30 September 2021, the total number of people exposed to noise and vibration from Ajax was 310, of whom 11 are civilians and 10 are now Veterans. All 310 individuals have now been contacted and offered assessments for noise and vibration.

On noise, at 30 September 2021, 270 people have been assessed and 40 people have declined assessment or have so far been unavailable to attend. Of the 270 individuals

who have been assessed, 231 have returned to duty having maintained or returned to pre-exposure levels of hearing. Of the 231, as an extra precaution, 166 people are receiving enhanced hearing surveillance. Of the remaining 39 people who have been assessed, 34 remain under specialist outpatient care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham/Royal Centre for Defence Medicine; most of these are under-going a period of hearing rest prior to reassessment, at which point we expect a significant number to return to full duties. There are a remaining 5 individuals who have been medically downgraded (potentially requiring a change of duties within the Armed Forces) or discharged, either for reasons unrelated to hearing or with hearing loss as a major or minor cause. In the case of hearing loss being identified Ajax may or may not be confirmed as a contributory factor. I am withholding a more precise breakdown of those downgraded or discharged because individuals could be identified resulting in a potential breach in medical confidentiality.

Vibration injuries is a highly specialised area, requiring a graduated assessment process. All 310 individuals exposed have been offered a vibration assessment, with around 125 having so far declined assessment. The process is ongoing but, at 30 September, 45 individuals have been referred for specialist assessment of symptoms which could be associated hand-transmitted vibration, 9 individuals have been referred for specialist assessment of symptoms which could be associated with whole body vibration and 9 individuals have been referred for both. None of the individuals exposed to Ajax have had a change in medical grading or been medically discharged due to vibration.

I will continue to update the House on the number of personnel affected by noise and vibration, including if any trends become apparent once the data has been further analysed.

3. Programmatic Issues

I have made clear that Ajax requires a full time, dedicated Senior Responsible Owner. I am pleased to report that we have now appointed David Marsh to the position, who took up the role on 1 October with the endorsement of the Infrastructure & Projects Authority. As the new SRO, he is now in the process of reviewing the Armoured Cavalry Programme to determine what actions need to be taken to put the programme back on a sound footing.

On 6 September, following authorisation by the Ajax Safety Panel, the independent Millbrook trials recommenced. As planned, and following a further meeting of the Safety Panel, these trials continued at Bovington to provide a wider range of surfaces on which to test the vehicle. These trials involved General Dynamics crew and real-time monitoring of noise and vibration. Trials have been conducted on the turreted AJAX variant and on the ARES variant, both of which were Capability Drop 1 vehicles. The trials were run at the Millbrook Proving Ground and at Bovington. This has generated hundreds of Gigabytes of data which is currently being processed. Subject to Safety Panel authorisation, trials of a second ARES Capability Drop 1 vehicle will commence shortly at the Millbrook Proving Ground. On 7 October the Safety Panel also authorised military personnel to conduct essential maintenance on the vehicle and marshalled movement.

Since my last statement data has continued to be gathered and analysed to determine the root cause of vibration in the vehicles. In parallel design modifications have been developed to reduce the vibration experienced by the crew. Testing continues to determine the effectiveness of the modifications and whether they would help ensure the vehicle meets the Army's requirement.

Investigations into excess noise also continue. An in-line attenuator has been designed and we are now validating its effectiveness to address the noise transmitted through the communications headsets.

The focus for the MOD and General Dynamics remains on delivering long-term solutions for noise and vibration to ensure Ajax meets the Army's need. Until then, it is not possible to determine a realistic timescale for declaration of Initial Operating Capability or the later introduction of Ajax vehicles into operational service with the Army. We will not accept a vehicle that is not fit for purpose.

Ajax is an important capability for the Army and we are committed to working with General Dynamics for its delivery. We have a robust, firm price contract with General Dynamics under which they are required to provide the vehicles as set out in the contract for the agreed price of £5.5bn.

■ Closure of Service Police Legacy Investigations

Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):

[\[HCWS323\]](#)

In February 2017, the then Secretary of State for Defence announced that the Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) would close and any remaining Iraq legacy investigations would be reintegrated into the service police system. Service Police Legacy Investigations (SPLI), led by a senior Royal Navy Police officer took over these remaining investigations at the beginning of July 2017.

I can today announce that the SPLI completed its investigative caseload in December 2020 and, following the completion of administrative functions, officially closed its doors on 30 September 2021.

In total, SPLI assessed 1,291 allegations, of which 178 were pursued through 55 separate investigations. The SPLI complied fully with the requirements of the Armed Forces Act 2006 (in referring cases to or consulting the Service Prosecuting Authority (SPA)) and with the High Court's direction to work closely with the SPA to ensure cases were completed as promptly as possible while maintaining the necessary rigour. None of the IHAT or SPLI investigations have resulted in any prosecutions.

One significant challenge throughout the investigations was the issue of the credibility of allegations made against UK service personnel. While we accept that some allegations were credible, this does not detract from the fact we know, from the investigations and from the Al-Sweady public inquiry, that some were not. We know that Phil Shiner, formerly of Public Interest Lawyers, obtained Iraqi clients improperly – through the use of financial incentives – and acted with a lack of integrity. In 2017, the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal found allegations of misconduct when representing claims against British soldier

– including dishonesty – proven to the criminal standard of proof and he was struck off the Roll of Solicitors.

The vast majority of the more than 140,000 members of our Armed Forces who served in Iraq did so honourably. Many sadly suffered injuries or death, with devastating consequences for them and their families.

However not *all* allegations and claims were spurious, otherwise investigations would not have proceeded beyond initial examination and no claims for compensation would have been paid. It is sadly clear, from all the investigations the UK conducted, that some shocking and shameful incidents did happen in Iraq. We recognise that there were four convictions of UK military personnel for offences in Iraq including offences of assault and inhuman treatment. The Government's position is clear – we deplore and condemn all such incidents.

It is also clear that in some cases the original Royal Military Police investigations – conducted in arduous, battlefield conditions, with limited resources and under strict Force Protection measures – did not manage to secure all the required evidence, with the result that opportunities to hold those responsible to account may now have been lost. I apologise unreservedly to all those who suffered treatment at the hands of UK forces which was unacceptable.

The closure of SPLI marks the completion of the remaining investigations stemming from operations in Iraq. However, we are aware that further serious allegations may arise in the future, and that where credible these would have to be investigated in line with our obligations under international and domestic law.

Looking ahead, any historical criminal allegations will be referred to the Defence Serious Crime Unit. This was recommended in the Lyons/Murphy Review of the Service Justice System, and is further supported by Sir Richard Henriques, a retired judge who I appointed to conduct a review of how allegations on operations are raised and investigated. His review will help ensure we have the best possible framework, skills and processes in place, should this be necessary in the future.

The completion of the SPLI investigations brings us closer to the end of a decade of extensive litigation and large-scale investigations. While the Iraq Fatality Inspector continues to look at a small number of remaining cases, we can start to draw a line under the legacy of our operations in Iraq and to focus on the future.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Evaluation of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society (Nigel Huddleston):

[\[HCWS320\]](#)

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the National Lottery Communities Fund (TNLCF) have recently published a series of reports detailing the

evaluation of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. The reports will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The reports [can also be found online](#).

The £200 million Coronavirus Community Support Fund ('the Fund') was part of the unprecedented £750 million of government funding to support voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations to continue their vital work during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding was provided by DCMS. TNLCF managed, distributed and oversaw the funding. Additional management support was provided by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

The purpose of the Fund was to increase community support to people disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis, through the work of VCSE organisations; and reduce temporary closures of essential VCSE organisations, and so reduce the burden on public services.

The funding went to 8,200 organisations who in turn supported an estimated 6.5 million people. This included children and young people (supported by 39% of grantholders), people with mental health conditions (40%) and older people (32%).

Without the £200 million fund almost one fifth of recipients would have been forced to close their doors, while over half revealed that they would have delivered significantly fewer services if it had not been for assistance from the Fund. Over 6,200 employees of these organisations were brought back or prevented from being furloughed, and over 4,200 new staff members were recruited. This is in addition to grantholders mobilising 136,000 existing volunteers and over 47,000 new volunteers that they had not worked with previously.

The CCSF has also played a major role in the Government's commitment to tackling loneliness across all grants, with 63% reporting they had promoted ways of building social connections during the pandemic, 79% reporting that beneficiaries felt less lonely, and 70% reporting beneficiaries had more access to social contact.

The findings also underline the positive impacts felt by volunteers who were mobilised during the pandemic. 84% of people who volunteered through the Fund felt like they were making a difference, and 66% people felt it gave them a sense of purpose.

■ **Wireless Infrastructure Strategy: Call for Evidence**

Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure (Julia Lopez): [\[HCWS315\]](#)

I am repeating the following Written Ministerial Statement made on 14 October 2021 in the other place by My Noble Friend, the Minister for Arts, the Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay:

The Government wants to ensure that the UK has world-class fixed and wireless digital infrastructure as soon as possible, unlocking the huge economic and social benefits these will bring.

On 24th June 2021 the Government therefore announced that we will develop a Wireless Infrastructure Strategy - a long-term policy framework for the development, deployment and adoption of 5G and advanced wireless networks in the UK, ensuring the UK has the

wireless coverage to meet our connectivity needs. It will build on the policies outlined in the 2018 Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR), and subsequently the 2020 National Infrastructure Strategy, to transform the UK's telecoms infrastructure.

To support this Strategy, DCMS is launching a [call for evidence](#) to understand in greater detail:

- the future wireless connectivity needs of the UK;
- the extent to which the UK market is likely to be able to meet those needs up to 2030;
- how the legal and policy framework can best continue to support investment, competition, innovation and adoption of wireless infrastructure;
- how the government can support the development and deployment of future wireless networks, including 6G.

We will use responses to this call for evidence to inform the development of the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy. This call for evidence will run for six weeks, closing on 24 November 2021.

Telecommunications policy is reserved and we will work with the Devolved Administrations to develop the Wireless Infrastructure Strategy.

EDUCATION

■ Qualifications and assessments in 2021/22

The Secretary of State for Education (Nadhim Zahawi):

[[HCWS314](#)]

My noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for the School System) at the Department for Education (Baroness Barran), made the following written statement on 11 October 2021:

The Department for Education committed to our intention that exams and assessments would go ahead in 2022 in April. On 12 July, recognising that students taking exams in 2022 have had considerable disruption to their education, Ofqual and the department published joint consultations outlining detailed proposals for:

- [changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022](#) and
- [arrangements for vocational and technical and other general qualifications in academic year 2021/22](#).

The department and Ofqual confirmed the permitted scope of adaptations for vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) included in performance tables, Functional Skills Qualifications and T Levels in an announcement on [6 August](#) following analysis of responses to the VTQ consultation. Depending on the purpose of the qualification, a range of adaptations for VTQs and other general qualifications have been or will be used including, but not limited to:

- a reduction in number of internal assessments, whilst ensuring all content is taught

- longer and more assessment windows
- social distancing adaptations (for example, professional discussion in place of certain practical activities)
- greater flexibility in invigilation rules (for example, to allow subject teachers to invigilate their own subject)

On 30 September, the department and Ofqual published the [decision document](#) outlining the decisions taken by the department and Ofqual following analysis of responses to the consultation on changes to the assessment of GCSEs, AS and A levels in 2022.

The department and Ofqual engaged with a wide range of sector representatives during the consultation period. The proposals that were set out in the consultation received a high degree of support and we have therefore confirmed a package of measures that includes four elements:

- a choice of topics in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history, and choice of topic or content in GCSE geography
- the provision of advance information on exams in those subjects at GCSE, AS and A level where there is no choice of content
- changes to the requirements for the delivery of practical activities in science subjects, and assessment in art and design
- the provision of support materials in the exam in GCSE maths, physics and combined science

We have confirmed that DfE's policy intention is for advance information to be published by exam boards in early February 2022 to support student revision. The government retains the flexibility to deploy advance information at an earlier point if there is significant further disruption to education.

The changes for both general and vocational and technical qualifications will be for one year only.

Ofqual also set out its approach to grading for general qualifications, confirming that 2022 will be a transition year to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students taking exams in 2022 have experienced disruption to their education. Ofqual set out its plans for grading to be based around a profile that reflects a mid-point between 2021 and 2019 grades in 2022. In 2023, Ofqual plans to return to results that are in line with those in pre-pandemic years.

While it is our firm intention that exams will go ahead next year, supported by the permitted adaptations, we understand that contingency arrangements are also needed in the unlikely event that exams cannot go ahead fairly or safely. The department and Ofqual plan for Teacher Assessed Grades to be used in the event that exams cannot take place, and we have jointly launched a [consultation](#) on improvements to the 2021 process for GCSE, AS and A levels and confirmed the [contingency arrangements that will apply to vocational and technical qualifications](#). The consultation closes on 13 October and we will announce final decisions as soon as possible.

Finally, we have confirmed that in 2022 results days will return to their normal timing, on 18 August for AS/A level and 25 August for GCSEs. Vocational and technical qualifications used to progress in a similar way to GCSEs and A levels will be awarded on or before the same days, and other VTQ results will continue to be awarded throughout the year.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Gibraltar: Future Relationship with the European Union

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss): [\[HCWS316\]](#)

On 31 December 2020, the UK Government, together with the Government of Gibraltar, agreed a Political Framework with the Kingdom of Spain on how a future agreement between the UK and the European Union (EU) in respect of Gibraltar would function in the interests of all parties.

This represented the first stage of the two-part process whereby the EU would examine a request from Spain, in agreement with the UK, to initiate the procedure for the negotiation of a separate UK-EU agreement in respect of Gibraltar.

On 5 October 2021, the EU concluded its internal processes necessary to begin the UK-EU negotiations. While the EU mandate has not been published we understand it has been amended from the Commission's draft mandate published on 20 July 2021. Importantly it now references the role of the European Border and Coastguard Agency (Frontex) in delivering the fluid movement of people between Gibraltar and the Schengen area. Both the UK Government and Government of Gibraltar have been clear that the operation of frontline Schengen external border checks on the territory of Gibraltar by Spanish officials would not be acceptable.

There remain however a number of areas where the opening EU position directly conflicts with the Political Framework agreed between the UK and Spain. These issues will need to be addressed in the UK-EU negotiations to ensure that the pragmatic and careful balance of the Political Framework is maintained. The UK is committed to working constructively to address these issues with the objective of concluding a treaty in line with the Political Framework. Formal negotiations began in Brussels on 11 October and further detailed conversations will follow in the coming weeks.

The UK Government continues to work side-by-side with the Government of Gibraltar. We agreed our joint approach to negotiations at the UK-Gibraltar Joint Ministerial Council held in Gibraltar on 29 March 2021. At the core is a shared aim to secure future prosperity for Gibraltar and the surrounding region. This can be delivered through a treaty which brings confidence, legal certainty and stability to the lives and livelihoods of the people of Gibraltar and neighbouring communities.

While fully committed to seeking a treaty based on the Political Framework, the UK Government and Government of Gibraltar are working closely to ensure robust plans are in place for all eventualities, including if there is no negotiated outcome. Although

confident an agreement can be reached, it is only prudent to prepare for all eventualities. The UK will stand fully behind Gibraltar, its people and its economy in any scenario.

We remain steadfast in our support for Gibraltar and will not agree to anything that compromises UK sovereignty.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Changes to the Blood Donor Selection Criteria

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Sajid Javid):

[\[HCWS312\]](#)

I would like to inform the House about changes that the Government will be making to the blood donor selection criteria. This announcement forms part of the wider steps the Government has taken to make blood donation more equitable.

In 2019, the Government commissioned the 'For the Assessment of Individualised Risk' (FAIR) Steering Group to consider whether changes could be made to the blood donor selection criteria to ensure it was as effective and inclusive as possible.

On 14 June 2021, in response to the FAIR Steering Group's work, the Government implemented changes that enable men who have sex with men in long-term relationships to give blood. These changes put in place a gender-neutral selection policy, where deferrals are now based on higher risk behaviours associated with acquiring infections.

Following further work by the FAIR Steering Group, I can announce that the Government will be making an additional change to the blood donor selection criteria, which will increase inclusivity without compromising the safety of donated blood.

As part of its work, the FAIR steering group reviewed the effectiveness of the question prospective donors are asked about whether they have recently had sex with a partner who may ever have had sex in an area where HIV is endemic (including most of sub-Saharan Africa). In reviewing the evidence, the Steering Group considered the other questions that are already on the pre-donation questionnaire that help to identify high-risk donors and the associated deferrals already in place, as well as the effect of routine screening of all donations for HIV and other blood-borne viruses. The FAIR Steering Group concluded that the question could be removed without impacting the safety of the blood supply. Furthermore, they determined that removing the question would help to improve inclusivity and equity for Black African donors. This is especially important due to the ongoing need for more Black African donors who can have rarer blood types, which will help to improve and save lives in the UK.

The Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SaBTO) reviewed the Steering Group's findings and agreed that the removal of this question poses no additional safety risks to the blood supply and recommended the change was made to the pre-donation selection criteria.

The Government has now reviewed the evidence presented by the FAIR Steering Group together with SaBTO's advice and has accepted this recommendation. This means that the question asking whether donors had recently had sex with a partner who may ever

have had sex in an area where HIV is endemic will be removed from the blood donor selection criteria. This is a progressive and welcome step forward, reducing limitations for people to donate blood and creating a fairer system for blood donation.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working with NHS Blood and Transplant to implement this change. We will have monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure the safety of donors and patients, including continued monitoring of both acute and chronic infections in new and regular donors. The changes will be reviewed in twelve months.

HOME OFFICE

■ Anti-Slavery Day

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Safeguarding (Rachel Maclean):
[\[HCWS317\]](#)

Modern slavery is an abhorrent crime. Tens of millions of victims around the world are coerced, deceived, and forced into a life of abuse, servitude, and inhumane treatment.

This happens in the UK as well; to British citizens and to those trafficked from abroad. Today, on the UK's Anti-Slavery Day, we pause to reflect on the trauma that victims suffer, the cruelty of those that exploit them and the bravery of survivors attempting to rebuild their lives.

This Government is committed to eradicating modern slavery. Over the past year we have continued to work towards this aim with our partners in the Devolved Administrations, in law enforcement and across the criminal justice system, with local government and our health and welfare sectors, with our international partners, with business, civil society, and academia.

Together we have continued to identify and provide support to thousands of victims of modern slavery through our contract with the Salvation Army. The number of law enforcement investigations has continued to increase. Conviction rates for cases prosecuted through the courts have also increased.

The Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service now covers in total two thirds of all local authorities across England and Wales; a key milestone to better support child victims delivered through our National Referral Mechanism Transformation Programme.

The HO has invested a further £1.4m this year to support the police modern slavery response, bringing the total investment to £15m since 2016. This funding has helped to drive the increase in modern slavery investigations and operations.

And during our G7 Presidency, G7 members agreed to joint action on forced labour in global supply chains and reaffirmed their commitment to upholding human rights and international labour standards. Modern slavery and human trafficking is a global problem and we continue to provide global leadership to tackle it.

We are committed to driving greater transparency in supply chains to ensure the private and public sectors use their leverage to tackle the risks of modern slavery in the goods

and services they procure and provide. In March this year we launched the Government registry of modern slavery statements on GOV.UK to enhance transparency. Statements covering over 21,000 organisations have now been added to the registry.

This Government continues to lead by example. We have continued to progress work on public procurement that we committed to in the world's first Government modern slavery statement that we published in March 2020. And we will soon publish further detail of the actions Government Departments have taken to prevent modern slavery in their supply chains.

We have continued to fund the Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre to improve the evidence base on modern slavery and to help inform our policy response. And the Government has recently launched the Modern Slavery Prevention Fund to test and develop innovative approaches to preventing modern slavery in the first place, aiming to stop this harm before it starts.

Tomorrow, our landmark Nationality and Borders Bill will progress to Committee stage in the House of Commons, and the modern slavery measures in this Bill will seek to bring clarity for decision makers and victims, and maintain our commitment to ensuring victims of modern slavery are identified and supported as early as possible.

These actions demonstrate the Government's relentless commitment to addressing this crime. We will soon provide further detail in our annual report on modern slavery.

But we are not complacent. The nature of modern slavery continues to evolve. We have committed to publish a new Government strategy for modern slavery next year to ensure we continue to lead the way with our partners in bringing an end to this crime.

TRANSPORT

■ Draft Legislation: The Train Driving Licences and Certificates (Amendment) Regulations 2022

Minister of State for Transport (Chris Heaton-Harris):

[\[HCWS310\]](#)

As part of the Government's EU transition programme, the Department for Transport, working with other Government Departments, has been negotiating bilateral arrangements with France to support the continuation of cross-border rail services, which provide significant economic and social benefit to the United Kingdom. The purpose of these draft regulations, which are being published today, is to provide for the continued recognition of EEA issued train driving licences ("European TDLs") in the UK section of Channel Tunnel cross-border area, so that a bilateral agreement (currently agreed in principle at a technical level) for the mutual recognition of British and European TDLs will be able to be ratified once in place. Without making these regulations, and the proposed agreement they will implement, European TDLs would cease to be valid in the Channel Tunnel border area from 31 January.

These Regulations will provide for the continued recognition of European TDLs only in the UK section of the Channel Tunnel Fixed Link up to Ashford International Station and

Dollands Moor freight terminal in Kent. This will be reciprocated in France with respect to British train driving licences up to Fréthun freight and passenger terminals in Calais.

The draft regulations make the necessary amendments to domestic train driving licensing legislation to support the implementation of the proposed bilateral agreement. This will be achieved by amending the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010.

The agreement, and by extension these regulations, are fully compatible with our fundamental red lines in these negotiations, which are to support the continuation of cross-border services, which provide economic and social benefit to the UK, while conferring no role for the EU courts or the European Union Agency for Railways in UK territory and avoiding dynamic alignment with EU law.

The bilateral agreement has now been agreed in principle at a technical level and is expected to be ready for signature soon. Subject to approval by Parliament, the intention is that the regulations will be made and come into force after the bilateral agreement has been signed. In the unlikely event that France is not subsequently able to ratify the bilateral agreement, we will look to revoke the changes and recognition of European TDLs put in place by these Regulations.

The Regulations are being published in draft 28 days before they are due to be laid for affirmative debate. This is required under the paragraph 14 of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 because the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010 were made using powers under the European Communities Act 1972.

The draft Regulations and accompanying Explanatory Memorandum can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/amendments-to-train-driving-licensing-regulations>

■ Motor Vehicle Driving Licences

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[HCWS311]

The need to tackle the HGV driver shortage is a top priority for my Department and this Government is committed to finding solutions to mitigate its effect and take urgent action. With 25 proactive actions taken by my Department to resolve the long-term HGV driver shortage in recent weeks, we are already seeing results, with a 300% increase in the number of HGV provisional licence applications. This is a real achievement, but it is important that we continue to build on this success.

The haulage sector has been experiencing a chronic shortage of HGV drivers worldwide for some time. In Great Britain the issue has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, which meant that driver testing had to be suspended for much of 2020, delaying entry to the industry of potential drivers. In addition, there are longer-term issues surrounding attracting and retaining drivers to the industry such as: anti-social hours, poor diversity, relatively low pay and poor driver facilities.

The Department for Transport and other government departments have been working alongside the haulage industry to ensure that we attract, recruit, train and test drivers who

want to enter the profession, including increasing capacity for testing candidate drivers through measures taken by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and prioritising licence applications within the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

Streamlining the HGV driving licence regime is an important step in getting drivers tested and into jobs quickly, relieving the pressure on the haulage industry from the driver shortage. On 10 September 2021, following public consultation, I announced a number of measures to simplify the HGV licencing regime and bring forward legislation that would remove the current staged process for getting an HGV licence in Great Britain.

It will mean that drivers will not need to hold a Category C (rigid lorry) licence before applying for a Category C + E (articulated lorry) licence, removing a stage in the process for those drivers who wish to acquire a category C + E licence. This measure will be addressed through a draft affirmative statutory instrument which is laid before Parliament today.

This legislation will help to make the process from learner to qualified driver quicker by removing certain steps and allow it to respond more rapidly to the acute need for drivers at the heavier end of the vehicle spectrum. High driving standards will be maintained through existing pre-test training and gaining on-road driving experience.

To make rapid progress on this, we are seeking to make use of the urgent procedure under paragraph 14(6) of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. As Secretary of State for Transport, I am of the opinion that, by reason of urgency, the requirements for the statutory instrument to be made after being published in draft together with a scrutiny statement should not apply.

Forgoing the 28-day publication period will allow earlier laying of the legislation than would have otherwise been possible and strengthen the steps we have already taken to increase testing capacity and ease supply chain issues as quickly as possible. Arrangements will be in place to ensure that the changes made by the legislation are operationally effective as soon as the legislation is in force.

Tackling the causes and effects of the HGV driver shortage is a top priority for my Department and the driving licence regime and its legislation must support our efforts. This as part of 25 measures we have taken so far, will help us to reduce the impact of this shortage on the people of Britain.

■ Summary of Updates to International Travel

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[\[HCWS319\]](#)

As trailed in my Oral Statement on 20 September, as of the 4 October, we have:

- Replaced the traffic light system with a single red list and simplified travel measures for eligible arrivals from the rest of the world based on passengers' vaccination status.
- Removed the requirement for eligible fully vaccinated passengers to take a pre-departure test, providing that they are arriving into England from a non-red list

country or territory and have not been to a red list country or territory in the last ten days. The Devolved Administrations have also aligned on this policy.

We have also made the follow changes in respect of international travel:

Lateral Flow Devices for Arrival Tests

From 4am on 24 October, arrivals into England who are considered fully vaccinated, along with most under 18s, who have not been in a red list country in the last 10 days will be able to take a lateral flow test on or before day 2 of their arrival, instead of a PCR test. This change will cut the costs of tests in time for travellers returning from half-term breaks and these tests can be booked from 22 October.

Passengers will need to take a photo of their lateral flow test result and send it back to their private testing provider for verification. Anyone who tests positive will need to self-isolate and take a free NHS confirmatory PCR test.

Red List Review

The Government has conducted the first review of the red list under our new and simplified system of international travel. As of 4am on Monday 11 October, 47 countries including South Africa, Brazil, Mexico and Thailand were removed from the red list.

Given the success of the vaccination programme in the UK and the latest evidence of variants across the world, including the fact that the Delta variant is now dominant in many countries as it is in the UK, we have been able to significantly reduce the red list. However, we remain concerned about the presence of Mu and Lambda variants in the small number of countries we have kept on the red list. We will keep this list under review.

The following 7 countries and territories now make up the red list:

COLOMBIA DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ECUADOR HAITI PANAMA PERU VENEZUELA

All passengers arriving into England from a red list country, or those who have been in a red list country or territory in the last 10 days, will have to quarantine at a Managed Quarantine Service facility for 10 days upon their arrival in England.

Expansion of the Inbound Vaccination Policy

As of 4am on Monday 11 October, we also expanded our inbound vaccination policy to include eligible fully vaccinated passengers who have not been in a red list country in the ten days before their arrival into England, to the below countries:

ALBANIABAHAMASBANGLADESHBOSNIA & HERZEGOVINACOLOMBIAEGYPTGHANAGRENADAHONG KONGINDIAJAMAICAJORDANKENYAKOSOVO MALDIVESMOLDOVAMOROCCONIGERIAORTH MACEDONIAOMANPAKISTANSERBIASKITTS & NEVISST LUCIAST VINCENT & THE GRENADINESTURKEYUKRAINEVIETNAM

In addition, we have expanded the policy to a further set of countries and territories which were removed from the red list at this review:

	NAMIBIA	THE PHILIPPINES	SOUTH
BRAZIL	CHILE	GEORGIA	INDONESIA
MONTENEGRO	AFRICA	THAILAND	

Our inbound vaccination policy now covers over 100 countries and territories, and eligible fully vaccinated passengers will be treated the same as those vaccinated in the UK.

Eligible fully vaccinated passengers who have not been in a red list country in the ten days before their arrival into England will no longer need to take a pre-departure test before their departure, a post-arrival test on day 8 or self-isolate upon their arrival. This now includes UN staff and volunteers vaccinated as part of the United Nations vaccine rollout.

Clinical Trial Participants

From the end of October, we will also recognise as fully vaccinated people participating in COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials from countries and territories including Japan, Canada, Australia and the EU, provided they can supply adequate proof of their participation. This is in recognition of their vital work in helping to tackle the virus and builds on the agreements made at the meetings with G7 counterparts that I chaired in May and September this year.

Acceptance of UK Pre-departure Test Certification via the EU Digital Covid Certificate (DCC)

As of 4am on Monday 11 October, non-vaccinated passengers arriving into England are allowed to present proof of a negative pre-departure test via the EU Digital Covid Certificate, in either paper or digital formats.

Changes to FCDO Travel Advice

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) has lifted its advice against all but essential travel for over 80 countries and territories. The change means people will be able to travel to a larger number of destinations with greater ease.

The FCDO will no longer advise against travel to non-red list countries on COVID-19 grounds, except in exceptional circumstances such as if the local healthcare system is overwhelmed. Many travel insurance companies use FCDO travel advice as a reference point in their policies – typically excluding cover for places where government advises against essential travel, however people will now be able to purchase travel insurance for a wider range of destinations across the globe.

The FCDO will continue to advise against all but essential travel for all red list countries and territories, where the risk to British travellers is “unacceptably high”.

Whilst public health is a devolved matter, the Government works closely with the devolved administrations on any changes to international travel and aims to ensure a whole UK approach.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ Household Support Fund

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):

[\[HCWS313\]](#)

Our £407 billion COVID support package has protected jobs and livelihoods through the worst of the pandemic. With the UK economy rebounding, our Plan for Jobs is working, with *the* number of payrolled employees *now* above pre- *pandemic* levels and vacancies are at record levels. Thanks to the formidable force of our jabs and jobs armies, and an expansion of the Government's Plan for Jobs worth over £500 million, we are building back better – helping people to move into better-paid work, progress, and increase their financial resilience. Our approach is boosting pay, prospects and prosperity for the long-term.

However, we recognise that some people may require extra support over the winter as we enter the final stages of recovery, which is why vulnerable households across the country will now be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials. The Household Support Fund will provide £421 million to help vulnerable people in England and allocations to individual local authorities are set out below. The Barnett Formula will apply in the usual way, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million (£41 million for the Scottish Government, £25 million for the Welsh Government and £14 million for the NI Executive), so the fund totals £500 million.

The Household Support Fund is available to councils in England from this month and will run over the winter to 31 March 2022. The funding will primarily be used to support households in need with food, energy and water costs, with flexibility to support with wider essentials. In cases of genuine emergency (where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need), the Household Support Fund can also be used to support housing costs. At least 50% of the funding will be reserved for households with children and up to 50% is available for vulnerable households without children, including individuals. Local Authorities have the flexibility to design their schemes to best suit local needs, within the parameters of the guidance.

This new Fund will bolster existing measures we have introduced for low-income households, such as increasing the national living wage, expanding the £220 million Holiday Activities and Food Programme, doubling free childcare for eligible working parents and increasing the value of Healthy Start vouchers by over a third. The Household Support Fund also sits alongside the support available through the Warm Home Discount, the Cold Weather Payment scheme and the almost £30 billion Government is projected to spend in 2020/21 on housing benefit and the housing element of Universal Credit.

Table attached for the: **Household Support Fund Indicative Funding Allocations per County Councils/Unitary Authorities for the period 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022**

Attachments:

1. Household Support Fund Indicative Funding Allocations [Hh Support Fund Indicative Funding Allocations.pdf]

■ Plan for Jobs Extension**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**
[[HCWS318](#)]

Our Plan for Jobs is working. With the UK economy rebounding strongly, *the* number of payrolled employees is *now* above pre- *pandemic* levels and vacancies are at record-levels. Our unprecedented £407 billion support package protected jobs and livelihoods through the worst of the pandemic and the formidable force of our jabs and jobs armies means we are building back better – helping people move into decent, well-paid jobs and get the skills they need to succeed.

We are investing a further £500 million to expand the Plan for Jobs to build on its successes to help people of all ages fulfil their potential, in particular younger and older jobseekers and those on low-incomes.

We are extending our Kickstart scheme until the end of March 2022, which has so far helped over 85,000 young people take a confident first step in their careers. This will allow thousands more young people to benefit and enable employers a further opportunity to apply for funding for roles, especially those who were unable to take on young people while COVID restrictions were in place. New applications for roles will be accepted until 17 December 2021, though employers will be expected to move quickly to fill their approved roles.

We are extending our Youth Offer to 2025. This will ensure young people can continue to benefit from intensive work coach support through the Youth Employment Programme, specialised Youth Employability Coaches and over 135 Youth Hubs are already providing support to thousands of young people across England, Scotland and Wales. We are also expanding eligibility, with 16 and 17 year olds able to join alongside 18 – 24 year olds claiming Universal Credit and searching for work.

For older workers, who often face specific challenges remaining in and returning to work, we will be funding a new support package. This will ensure they receive more intensive, tailored support during their work search journey, as well as information and guidance on later life planning, helping them make informed choices and supporting them to plan their career and stay in, or return to work.

And for low-paid workers, from April 2022, we will bolster our work coach support for people on Universal Credit to help them boost their earnings through a focus on career progression advice, with Jobcentre specialists working with local employers to identify opportunities for people to progress in work.

We are also extending JETS – our Job Entry Targeted Support Scheme – to September 2022, which has so far supported over 175,000 people across the UK by providing light-touch employment support for six months within the first year of unemployment. And our Job Finding Support (JFS) scheme will continue to prioritise support for those coming off

furlough through online, tailored, one-to-one support for those newly unemployed and claiming Universal Credit, including recruitment advice from a skilled adviser, support with CVs, and mock interviews.

This expansion of our Plan for Jobs and Jobcentre network is an example of our commitment to invest in skills and jobs, helping people to move into well-paid work, progress, earn more and increase financial resilience – boosting pay, prospects and prosperity.