



Daily Report

Monday, 8 November 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 8 November 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:49 P.M., 08 November 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

■ Business: Debts

Seema Malhotra:

[68280]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the increase in business debt incurred as a result of the covid-19 pandemic (a) by constituency, (b) by region and (c) in England.

Paul Scully:

BEIS does not hold data on the total debt incurred by all businesses. However, UK Finance (a trade body for the banking and finance industry) does hold end of year loan balances, both private and government-backed, and overdraft balances for SMEs only and by UK regions. SMEs are defined by UK Finance as those businesses with total annual turnover under £25 million.

The total loan and overdraft balances for all UK businesses, including large businesses, was £279bn in 2018, £270bn in 2019, and £290bn in 2020 – a 3.2% decrease between 2018 and 2019, and 7.3% increase between 2019 and 2020.

Tables 1 & 2 below provide end of year breakdowns of loan and overdraft balances for SMEs only by region for 2018, 2019 and 2020; the most recent data available. Data by constituency is not readily available.

Table 1: Total SMEs end of year loan balance (£ billion & percent change from previous year)

YEAR	2018	2019	2020
<i>London</i>	£18.5bn	£17.5bn (-5.4%)	£27.7bn (+58.2%)
<i>South East</i>	£10.5bn	£10.2bn (-2.1%)	£16.4bn (+59.9%)
<i>South West</i>	£9.6bn	£9.5bn (-1.3%)	£13.1bn (+38.1%)
<i>East Midlands</i>	£4.5bn	£4.4bn (-1.9%)	£6.8bn (+53.4%)
<i>West Midlands</i>	£7.3bn	£7.2bn (-2.4%)	£10.7bn (+49.2%)
<i>East of England</i>	£5.7bn	£5.7bn (-1.0%)	£8.4bn (+47.7%)
<i>Yorkshire & Humber</i>	£5.9bn	£5.7bn (-4.2%)	£8.7bn (+54.6%)
<i>North East</i>	£2.7bn	£2.5bn (-4.8%)	£3.8bn (+51.4%)
<i>North West</i>	£7.9bn	£7.6bn (-4.2%)	£12.2bn (+59.0%)
<i>Wales</i>	£3.7bn	£3.6bn (-4.3%)	£4.9bn (+37.7%)

YEAR	2018	2019	2020
Scotland	£6.8bn	£6.9bn (+1.5%)	£10.4bn (+50.8%)
Northern Ireland	£6.8bn	£6.5bn (-4.3%)	£7.2bn (+10.8%)
Total	£89.9bn	£87.3bn(-3.0%)	£130.3bn(+49.3%)

Source: UK Finance

Table 2: Total SMEs end of year overdrawn balance (£ billion & percent change from previous year)

YEAR	2018	2019	2020
London	£1.6bn	£1.4bn (-13.1%)	£0.9bn (-35.9%)
South East	£0.9bn	£0.9bn (-0.4%)	£0.6bn (-40.4%)
South West	£1.0bn	£0.9bn (-6.4%)	£0.6bn (-36.8%)
East Midlands	£0.5bn	£0.5bn (-5.4%)	£0.3bn (-35.8%)
West Midlands	£0.9bn	£0.8bn (-2.5%)	£0.6bn (-29.3%)
East of England	£0.7bn	£0.7bn (-3.3%)	£0.5bn (-32.3%)
Yorkshire & Humber	£0.7bn	£0.7bn (-5.5%)	£0.5bn (35.4%)
North East	£0.3bn	£0.3bn (-0.8%)	£0.2bn (-16.6%)
North West	£0.9bn	£0.8bn (-5.2%)	£0.5bn (-36.3%)
Wales	£0.4bn	£0.4bn (-2.6%)	£0.3bn (-34.4%)
Scotland	£0.9bn	£0.8bn (-6.1%)	£0.6bn (-30.8%)
Northern Ireland	£1.0bn	£0.9bn (-9.3%)	£0.8bn (-17.0%)
Total SMEs	£9.9bn	£9.3bn (-6.1%)	£6.3bn (-32.6%)

Source: UK Finance

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Naz Shah:

[69109]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when the Janssen covid-19 vaccine will be administered in the UK.

Paul Scully:

The UK Government announced on 30 October that it will donate all 20 million Janssen doses it has ordered to COVAX. Eighty percent of the adult population in the

UK is now double vaccinated and a winter boost campaign is well underway. Given the maturity of our vaccination programme and strength of existing supplies to meet domestic requirements, we have been able to identify these as doses we are able to reallocate to COVAX to distribute to those most in need.

Janssen aim to prioritise deliveries to countries based on need, so COVAX will receive the much-needed vaccines as soon as they come off the production line.

Ben Lake:

[\[69166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether the Government plans to secure further covid-19 vaccination doses via COVAX.

Paul Scully:

We have already secured the doses we need for everyone in the UK who requires a booster this Autumn/Winter therefore procurement through COVAX is not needed to support the current booster campaign: I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given to the Hon. Member for Slough on 1st November 2021 to Question [63848](#)

■ **Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy: Annual Reports**

Owen Thompson:

[\[67212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, when his Department plans to publish its annual reports and accounts for 2020-21.

Paul Scully:

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, plans to publish its annual report and accounts for 2020-21 in due course.

■ **Fireworks: Regulation**

Naz Shah:

[\[69110\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to review the existing laws on supply and distribution of fireworks.

Paul Scully:

The Government takes the issues associated with the sale and use of fireworks seriously. That is why there is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks that controls the sale, availability and use.

We have no current plans to place further restrictions on the sale of fireworks to the public but we continue to monitor the situation. We are committed to promoting the safe and considerate use of fireworks through our programme of action, including through education and awareness raising.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[69154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the Government Response to the House of Commons Petitions Committee Report on Fireworks, published in March 2020, what progress his Department has made in implementing those recommendations of the inquiry into fireworks which were accepted;

and what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on those recommendations.

Liz Saville Roberts:

[\[69155\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of devolving to the Welsh Government powers regulating the sale and use of fireworks currently existing under the Fireworks Act 2003.

Paul Scully:

Officials at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy engage with counterparts at the Welsh Government regularly, to ensure the safety of the public across the UK. This has included discussion of the House of Commons Petitions Committee Report and the steps the Government has taken to address their recommendations.

The Government has now implemented the recommendations it accepted following the Petition Committee's report, complementing the ongoing programme of action which continues to tackle the key issues associated with fireworks. This includes the 2021 fireworks public safety information programme, with all campaign materials translated into Welsh.

■ Future Fund

Chi Onwurah:

[\[68262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how much investment support was allocated via the Future Fund to businesses in (a) London and the South East, (b) the North East and (c) the UK; and how many businesses in each region who received support via the Future Fund had their loans converted into equity stakes.

Paul Scully:

The requested information is provided in the table below:

LOCATION	VALUE OF INVESTMENT (£ MILLIONS)	NUMBER OF COMPANIES	NUMBER OF CONVERSIONS
London and the South East	774	780	114
The North East	27	30	2
The United Kingdom	1,137	1,190	173

■ Living Wage

Rachael Maskell:

[\[68352\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how he assesses the adequacy of the National Living Wage on levels of poverty according to the cost of living in different areas.

Paul Scully:

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) is an independent and expert body which makes annual recommendations on the appropriate rates for National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage, and on other wage-related issues. Its Commissioners are balanced between employer and worker representatives and independent Commissioners. The LPC base their recommendations on economic, labour market and pay analysis, independent research, and stakeholder evidence.

Having a UK-wide minimum wage policy provides clarity for employers that operate across the UK. This reduces the burden on business and reduces the scope for non-compliance due to mistakes.

The increases in April 2022 will benefit people across the UK, but particularly those in regions such as the North East, East Midlands and Northern Ireland. The LPC will publish further detail on this as part of its full report later this year.

■ Migrant Workers: Research

Chi Onwurah:

[\[68258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on financial barriers preventing talented researchers from relocating to the UK.

Paul Scully:

The record level of investment announced for the UK research base at the Spending Review lays the strong foundation to realise our ambition to make the UK the most exciting place in the world for top research and innovation talent.

In July, the Government published the R&D People and Culture Strategy, which sets out our actions to attract, retain and develop talented people, making sure R&D careers in the UK are appealing to talented individuals and teams both domestically and internationally. This includes reviewing restrictions and costs and developing our understanding of the impact of the cost of moving to the UK on researchers, their teams and their families.

In line with the strategy, we are working with the Home Office to drive reforms to improve high skilled migration routes for innovators, entrepreneurs and top talent and we are working with the Office for Talent to launch an online service to attract highly skilled, international talent.

Public Houses: Harlow**Robert Halfon:** [\[68212\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support pubs in Harlow.

Paul Scully:

The Department regularly meets with representatives from across the hospitality sector to discuss how it can recover and build back from the pandemic. We have provided an unprecedented support package of £352 billion, including grants, loans, business rates relief, VAT cuts and the job retention scheme, which hospitality businesses have access to. We have published a new Hospitality Strategy: Reopening, Recovery, Resilience to ensure England's pubs, bars, restaurants and other hospitality venues can thrive long-term.

My Rt. Hon. Friend Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer set out further steps to help the economy recover in the Autumn Budget. These included extending the Recovery Loan Scheme until June 2022, providing over £1 billion to ensure businesses can continue to access loans and other finance, and a 50% business rates discount for hospitality businesses for the year 2022-23. Pubs will directly benefit from draught beer and cider cuts by 5%, as well as simplifying alcohol duty and freezing duty rates on beer, cider, wine and spirits.

Small Businesses: Feltham and Heston**Seema Malhotra:** [\[68279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate he has made of the number of small to medium-sized enterprises that have closed in Feltham and Heston in each of the last 18 months.

Paul Scully:

The number of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises¹ (SMEs) in Feltham and Heston in March 2021 was 5,150². The number of SMEs in Feltham and Heston in March 2020 was 5,010³. This suggests there was a net increase of around 140 SMEs between March 2020 to March 2021. Data on business closures is not available at the constituency level. Data on SME size and location and data on business closures is not available on a monthly basis".

¹ *Business with 0 to 249 employees*

² *Source: ONS, UK Business: Activity, Size and Location – 2021 (The data contained in this analysis are produced from a snapshot of the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) taken on 12 March 2021. Only VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises are included.) -*

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation>

³ *Source: ONS, UK Business: Activity, Size and Location – 2020 (The data contained in this analysis are produced from a snapshot of the Inter Departmental Business*

Register (IDBR) taken on 13 March 2020. Only VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises are included.) -

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/business/activitysizeandlocation/datasets/ukbusinessactivitysizeandlocation>

CABINET OFFICE

■ Cabinet Office: Ivory

Luke Pollard: [69176]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of ivory items owned by or collated by his Department.

Michael Ellis:

We have not made any estimates of the number of ivory items owned by or collated in this Department, or by any institutions owned or managed by the Government.

■ Cabinet Office: Written Questions

Jake Berry: [68243]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to Question 58823 tabled by the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen on 19 October 2021.

Michael Ellis:

A comprehensive reply on the details of government heating systems will be given to the Rt. Hon. Member in due course.

■ Chief Scientific Advisers: Mathematics

Stephen Metcalfe: [67139]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether he plans to appoint a Chief Mathematical Adviser.

Michael Ellis:

While there are currently no plans to appoint a Chief Mathematical Adviser, we consult a wide range of advisers on a regular basis, including those with mathematical expertise.

■ Disability: Coronavirus

Daisy Cooper: [69199]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government will include in the terms of reference for its public inquiry into covid-19 (a) specific analysis of the impact of covid-19 on disabled people and (b) the impact of covid-19 on disabled people with additional protected characteristics.

Michael Ellis:

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed that a statutory public inquiry into COVID-19 will begin in spring 2022. The Prime Minister also confirmed that bereaved families and other groups will be consulted before terms of reference are finalised. Further details, including in respect of the terms of reference, will be announced by the independent chair in due course.

■ **Eurostat****Margaret Ferrier:**[\[67174\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the removal of the UK from the Eurostat database.

Michael Ellis:

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

Professor Sir Ian Diamond | National Statistician

Margaret Ferrier MP

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

4 November 2021

Dear Ms Ferrier,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what recent assessment has been made of the implications of the removal of the UK from the Eurostat database (67174).

Since the UK's departure from the EU, the UK statistical system has continued to collect and publish our wide range of high-quality data and analysis to inform the UK on social and economic matters. This ensures Government, Parliament, and the public continue to have the statistics they need to inform their decisions.

Our statistics continue to be produced according to our Code of Practice for Statistics, ensuring official UK statistics are trustworthy, quality-assured, and meet society's needs. Furthermore, in line with our strategy, Statistics for the Public Good, we continue to apply the highest international standards to our work, enabling comparability both over time and internationally.

Outside of the EU, it is no longer appropriate for the UK to be bound into European regulations on statistics, however, we remain strongly committed to co-operating with our colleagues in other national statistical institutes across Europe and the rest of the

world, with a view to making UK statistics as widely and easily available as possible for international comparison, analysis and research.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[38182\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. member for West Lancashire, of 12 March 2021, on the Good Friday Agreement, reference ZA55909.

Rosie Cooper: [\[66177\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, pursuant to Question 38182 tabled on 22 July 2021, when he plans to respond to the letter of 12 March 2021 from the hon. Member for West Lancashire on the Good Friday Agreement, reference ZA55909.

Michael Ellis:

The Government recognises the great importance of the effective and timely handling of correspondence, and I apologise for the significant delay in responding to the important points raised by the hon. Member on behalf of her constituent.

We have responded to the hon. Member's letter, which was received in May, on 8 November.

■ Ministers: Leave

Kirsten Oswald: [\[68322\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the (a) Written Statement by the Prime Minister of 4 February 2021 on the Ministerial and Other Maternity Allowances Bill, HCWS765, and (b) oral contributions of the Paymaster General of 11 February 2021, Official Report, col. 559 and 1 March 2021, Official Report, col. 60, when the Government plans to present a report to Parliament setting out considerations and proposals on adoption and parental leave, absences for sickness and other reasons, and unpaid roles.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the honourable member to the Written Ministerial Statement made by my honourable friend, the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith), on 15 July 2021.

■ Supply Chains

Dr Luke Evans: [\[69204\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of reviewing national preparedness for potential stresses on just-in-time supply chains.

Michael Ellis:

There are arrangements in place across Government to understand the risks to supply chains and to ensure proportionate contingency plans are in place to mitigate those risks. There are currently many complex global issues affecting many countries - not just the UK. However, the Government does recognise the impact of supply chain issues on UK businesses and households.

On 8 October 2021, the Prime Minister appointed Sir Dave Lewis as the UK Government's supply chain adviser to provide advice on both immediate improvements and any necessary long term changes.

■ UK Relations with EU**Ruth Jones:**[\[68445\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent assessment she has made of the strength of EU-UK relations.

Michael Ellis:

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement allowed the beginning of a new relationship between a sovereign UK and our European partners and friends. We will continue to be natural partners with the EU on many of the world's more pressing issues such as our shared commitment to democracy and human rights, building back better from COVID-19, cooperation on climate change and biodiversity, global health, and economic resilience. But there remain significant issues in the relationship, including the Northern Ireland Protocol, which we need to put onto a durable footing.

■ Veterans**John Healey:**[\[68111\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the figures published by his Department in January 2019 on Population projections: UK armed forces veterans residing in Great Britain 2016 to 2018, whether he plans to publish more recent figures.

Leo Docherty:

For the first time, a question was added to the England and Wales census asking respondents if they have previously served in the UK Armed Forces. A range of new statistics on the veteran population will be published by the Office for National Statistics once the data collected from the census is analysed, including the total number of veterans residing in England and Wales. In Scotland, the census will be carried out in 2022, and will also include a question asking respondents whether they have previously served. In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) will collect data on the total number of veterans in Northern Ireland and the 11 Local Government Districts.

■ Veterans UK: Standards

Tonia Antoniazzi: [\[69165\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what process his Department has put in place to independently review and scrutinise the work of Veteran's UK advisors.

Leo Docherty:

The next Quinquennial Review of the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, due to commence in 2022, will review the process in place for Veterans UK Advisors.

COP26

■ Air Pollution

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64546\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he is taking to help ensure that countries commit to reductions in air pollution at COP26.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64547\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what priority reductions in air pollution levels have in the Government's COP26 negotiating platform.

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[64548\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the urgency of taking steps to tackle air pollution on public health; what steps he will take at COP26 to ensure that any agreement includes a roadmap to improve air quality; and if he will make reference to the inalienable right to breathe clean air in any agreement.

Michael Ellis:

Carbon emission reduction policies do, in fact, have the potential to improve air quality; rapidly moving away from coal towards renewable energy will provide cleaner air and better health outcomes for all citizens. As set out in the Net Zero Strategy, the UK will pursue decarbonisation options that leave the environment in a better state for the next generation by improving air quality, minimising adverse impacts on human health. The UK is continuing to take urgent action to curb the impact air pollution has on our citizens and communities, including through our landmark Environment Bill and Clean Air Strategy.

■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Aviation

Ruth Jones: [\[67259\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, how many and what proportion of UK Government ministers travelled by air to COP26 in Glasgow.

Ruth Jones:

[\[67260\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, how many and what proportion of world leaders travelled to COP26 by air.

Michael Ellis:

Our default approach is that travel to and from Glasgow is by train or other appropriate public ground transportation. COP26 will be carbon neutral. Our principal priority is to reduce emissions from the conference with any unavoidable carbon emissions from COP26 to be offset. We are working to achieve PAS2060 Carbon Neutrality validation for COP26 to ensure this approach. We have also encouraged delegates to consider low-carbon travel options and will be offsetting the emissions associated with travel, including those of the COP President and UK officials in the run up to COP26.

■ **UN Climate Conference 2021: Children and Young People**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[69143\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps he has taken to ensure that children and young people have been able to participate in COP26.

Michael Ellis:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to [PQ 61212](#) on 1 November.

■ **UN Climate Conference 2021: Turkey**

Ruth Jones:

[\[67256\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the absence of President Erdogan of Turkey from COP26 in Glasgow on the outcomes of that conference.

Michael Ellis:

COP26 is a critical moment for the future of our planet. We welcome President Erdogan's announcement that Turkey plans to reach net zero by 2053 and that Turkey has ratified the Paris Agreement. The UK looks forward to hearing more on Turkey's climate plans and working with the delegation from Turkey to bring key negotiations issues to a constructive conclusion at COP26.

■ **UN Environment Programme: Carbon Emissions**

Ruth Jones:

[\[64732\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the UN Environment Programme's The Emissions Gap Report 2021; and if he will make a statement.

Michael Ellis:

The UN Environment Programme's Emissions Gap Report 2021 makes clear, if countries deliver on their 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and net

zero commitments which have been announced by the end of September, we will be heading towards average global temperature rises of 2.2C.

In the opening days of COP26 momentum has continued to build, with new net zero commitments from the likes of India (the world's third largest emitter), meaning that over 90% of the global economy is now covered by a net zero target.

But we know that to keep 1.5C within reach we need more, so we will continue to press leaders for more ambitious climate action.

DEFENCE

■ Afghanistan: Refugees

John Healey:

[\[68113\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy applications his Department has yet to process.

James Heappey:

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) is one of the most generous schemes of its type in the world. Since its inception in April 2021, more than 88,000 applications have been received. This number is far higher than the total number of Afghans who ever worked for the UK. Processing those applications and determining eligibility is a very high priority and I have directed significant additional resource to this task.

As of 30 October, all of the 60,000 applications received prior to 31 August, have been reviewed and processing by the eligibility team is under way. Many of these are not appropriate for the ARAP scheme and we are redirecting those to the appropriate alternative mechanism where possible. In other cases, employment checks or verification of information requiring third party input is in progress. This group of applications continues to be our highest priority.

Since 1 September, more than 28,000 additional applications have been received, and we continue to receive them at a rate of over 100 per day. These applications are our next priority for processing; around 3,000 of them are currently being processed.

John Healey:

[\[68114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the average length of time taken is for an Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy application to be processed.

James Heappey:

The time taken to process individual Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) applications varies enormously on a case by case basis. A dedicated casework team at PJHQ continues to work closely with applicants to support them throughout the application process and to help bring their case to a timely conclusion.

Dan Jarvis:

[\[68274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps he is taking to support (a) Afghan nationals and (b) their dependents previously employed by the National Directorate of Security whose Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy application has been rejected.

James Heappey:

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy scheme was established to support former Locally Employed Staff and their dependents who are assessed to be at serious risk of threat to life. Those previously employed by the Afghan National Directorate of Security who have not worked directly for the UK, would not automatically qualify for relocation under ARAP. However, there is some discretion within the rules to consider, on a case-by-case and exceptional basis, those who worked in meaningful and prominent enabling roles alongside HMG. Approval in such cases is dependent upon the extent of the individual's relationship with HMG, the scale of their contribution to our mission, and an assessment of the risks they face.

John Healey:

[\[69003\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to the letter from the Minister for Afghan Resettlement on 29 October 2021, if he will list the (a) dates officials from his Department visited bridging hotels housing personnel under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy and (b) names of those hotels.

Leo Docherty:

During the period of 27 September to 9 October 2021 personnel from the Ministry of Defence visited over 80 hotels to speak to personnel recently arrived from Afghanistan. For security reasons it would be inappropriate to provide further details regarding these hotels or their locations.

John Healey:

[\[69004\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the letter from the Minister for Afghan Resettlement on 29 October 2021, if he will name the third sector partners his Department are working with to provide pastoral care to people under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy in the UK.

Leo Docherty:

Networks that currently exist to support the Armed Forces Community have specific service-related knowledge, skills and experience which may allow them to provide support to Afghans with experience of serving alongside the British Armed Forces. Third sector partners within those networks are able to support Afghans in a variety of ways depending on the scope of their charitable objects and we will be drawing on all these partners to provide this support. Until these processes are established we would not wish to publicly name these charities in order to avoid raising expectations before a delivery mechanism is in place.

John Healey:

[\[69005\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the letter from the Minister for Afghan Resettlement on 29 October 2021, how many properties his Department has

made available to accommodate Afghan personnel in the UK; and how many Afghan families have been housed in those properties.

Leo Docherty:

To date, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has made 551 properties available, in three tranches, for lease to Local Authorities to assist with housing Afghan families.

Currently, Local Authorities have signed 26 leases on properties with the MOD. 59 more leases are being negotiated and an interest has been expressed in a further 13.

■ **Armed Forces: Carers**

Sarah Atherton:

[\[67318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to guidance for Defence Primary Healthcare on identifying unpaid carers, published in 2018, how many and what proportion of Defence Primary Healthcare practices have a carers lead in place.

Leo Docherty:

Of 107 Defence Primary Healthcare Medical Centres (practices), 95 (89%) currently have a carers lead in place.

■ **Armed Forces: Discharges**

Stephen Morgan:

[\[69169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many former armed forces personnel discharged because of their sexuality has his Department written to offering to return their medals.

Stephen Morgan:

[\[69170\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent estimate he has made of the number of applications that have been (a) received and (b) granted under the scheme allowing former armed forces personnel discharged over sexuality to apply to have service medals restored.

Leo Docherty:

It is deeply regrettable that, because of their sexuality, some members of the Armed Forces were, in the past, treated in a way that would not be acceptable today. Following a policy announcement on the return of medals on 16 February 2021, the Ministry of Defence has received five applications from former Armed Forces personnel who were discharged for reasons related to their sexuality, and who forfeited their medals as a result. A further application was received from a veteran who had voluntarily surrendered their medals having been dismissed in such circumstances. One of the veterans who forfeited their medals has had them restored, and the veteran who had voluntarily handed their medals in has been provided with replacements. Four cases remain under active review and we are in contact with the applicants about the progress of their case.

■ Armed Forces: Mental Health

Crispin Blunt: [\[68096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing pastoral support to non-religious armed forces personnel alongside religious chaplaincy services.

Crispin Blunt: [\[68097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to recruit non-religious pastoral carers to provide belief-based support for the 56,000 regular and reserve personnel who currently identify as having no religion.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) takes all aspects of the health and wellbeing of its personnel very seriously. We are working to create and sustain an inclusive environment where people of all faiths and beliefs feel able to be authentic in the workplace, feel respected and are able to achieve their full potential.

MOD encourages and supports a number of faith and belief staff networks to support and connect people with each other and help to create a better working environment for our staff. These networks also play an important role connecting Defence to local faith and belief communities, who often have a strong interest in our work.

The Humanists and non-religious in Defence (HAND) Network is a thriving internal community, led by a strong champion, promoting the interest of the non-religious community within Defence. The HAND Network is working together with the MOD's Diversity and Inclusion team on an active ongoing project which seeks to address the delivery of pastoral care to non-religious Defence personnel.

■ Armed Forces: Sexual Offences

Dan Jarvis: [\[68275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Justice on steps he is taking to investigate (a) sexual harassment and (b) rape cases through the Service Justice System.

Dan Jarvis: [\[68276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what support he is providing to (a) serving personnel and (b) veterans who have been victims of (i) sexual harassment and (ii) rape while serving in the armed forces.

Leo Docherty:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has made it absolutely clear that there is no place for sexual offending and unacceptable behaviour in the Armed Forces. We recognise the great courage it takes to come forward and report a sexual offence and anyone found to fall short of the Services' high standards or to have committed an offence is dealt with appropriately.

MOD Ministers regularly engage with their counterparts in other Government Departments, including the Ministry of Justice. Whilst we are confident the Service Justice System (SJS) can and will deal with the most serious offences, we must do better. Therefore, earlier this year, we announced an intention to publish a Defence-wide strategy for dealing with rape and serious sexual offences in the SJS. The strategy will aim to reduce the prevalence and impact of rape and other serious sexual offending in the Armed Forces and improve the handling of those cases in the SJS. It will learn from the Government's recent response to the review of the end-to-end handling of rape cases in the Civilian Justice System and the Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy to create a robust approach.

The MOD continues to tackle unacceptable behaviour. We are implementing the recommendations from the Wigston Review into inappropriate behaviour and those made in the 2020 progress review led by Danuta Gray, which concluded that good progress had been made. We have recently published a Joint Service Publication which provides direction and guidance on combatting unacceptable behaviours and also provides a range of support to personnel experiencing sexual harassment. Last year we published advice on identifying sexual harassment and how to obtain support, and also established an independent 24-hour bullying, harassment and discrimination helpline. For veterans, a wide range of support and signposting is available from Veterans UK, including through its Veteran Welfare Service. In addition, the Veterans Gateway offers guidance on accessing public, private, and charitable services in the UK, making it easier for veterans to access advice on a range of issues and signpost individuals to the organisation best placed to support.

■ **Army: Deployment**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[66171]

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when was the last time the UK deployed a Brigade formation.

James Heappey:

Over the course of Operations HERRICK (2002 - 2014) and TELIC (2003 - 2011) the British Army continuously trained and prepared a series of Brigade level deployments, including full Mission Rehearsal Exercises on an enduring six monthly rotational basis.

The British Army has also regularly conducted collective training at Brigade level over the years including most recently Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3 in Oman in 2018.

There are a series of planned exercises that focus on Brigade level and above training, including 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team deploying on Ex SWIFT RESPONSE in 2022 and the deployment of elements on Ex CERBERUS 22.

Furthermore, the British Army regularly participates in the DEFENDER series, a US led multinational exercise in Europe, at the Brigade level.

■ Clyde Naval Base: Buildings

Brendan O'Hara: [\[68295\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when combustible cladding was last added to any new or existing building at HMNB Clyde.

Jeremy Quin:

The most recent high rise building completed at Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde with an external wall system that investigations have revealed to have combustible elements was handed over to the Royal Navy in 2019.

All high rise buildings currently occupied on the Defence estate which have been identified as having combustible external wall systems, have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

■ Clyde Naval Base: High Rise Flats

John Healey: [\[68118\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what equipment do firefighting crews at HMNB Clyde have to tackle high-rise tower block fires.

Jeremy Quin:

The detection of a fire by the building fire safety systems allow Firefighters to provide an early intervention to an incident, therefore internal firefighting is likely to be the technique adopted (dependent on the Incident Commander's Operational Assessment). This would be achieved using standard firefighting equipment carried on the Structural Fire Vehicle, such as breathing apparatus, vehicle hose reels, branches and 70 and 45mm hoses.

Firefighting crews further utilise the internal fire safety systems within the building such as dry/wet risers and Firefighting Shafts/Stairwells. There is always close cooperation between the Defence Fire Service and the civilian Scottish Fire and Rescue Service who can attend any incident through standing processes as required.

Brendan O'Hara: [\[68293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when combustible cladding was first identified as having been used on 22 multi-storey accommodation blocks at HMNB Clyde.

Jeremy Quin:

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) were informed of combustible external wall systems on 17 of the 22 high rise accommodation blocks at HMNB Clyde in December 2013, when an independent report was commissioned by Head of Establishment Clyde. Following this report substantial fire compartmentation works were carried out by MOD's contractor mitigating the risk of retaining the external walling system. The subsequent fire risk assessments have confirmed that the buildings remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

The external wall systems on these high rise buildings do not contain Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) used on the external wall system of Grenfell Tower. In

2017, MOD confirmed that it had no high rise residential buildings containing ACM within their external walling systems.

The 22 high rise buildings at the Clyde are primarily of a block and brick construction. The partial cladding is on the top floor and around an inner core. Investigations are ongoing as to what remediation if any is required to these wall systems.

All high rise buildings currently occupied on the defence estate which have been identified as having combustible external wall systems, have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[68296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what steps his Department is taking to remove combustible cladding on multi-storey accommodation blocks at HMNB Clyde; and what his planned timescale is for that removal.

Jeremy Quin:

Investigations to determine the level of required remediation are underway. Should removal be recommended as part of remedial works, timescales will be determined once investigations are complete.

All high-rise buildings currently occupied on the defence estate which have been identified as having combustible external wall systems have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[68297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what estimate he has made of the cost of removing combustible cladding from the 22 multi-storey accommodation blocks and any other buildings at HMNB Clyde; and whether the contractors who constructed the accommodation blocks or his Department will pay for the cost of that work.

Jeremy Quin:

At Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde, investigative works are ongoing to assess the extent and type of combustible external wall systems on the accommodation blocks so that remediation plans (if required) and associated costs may be established.

■ Clyde Naval Base: Housing

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[68294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the combustible cladding on 22 multi-storey accommodation blocks at HMNB was last inspected.

Jeremy Quin:

The last inspection of accommodation blocks at HMNB Clyde took place in May 2021. This consisted of a check of the external wall systems of a sample of six accommodation blocks, which represent the three different design types of the 22 accommodation blocks.

■ Military Exercises

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[66172\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when was the last time the UK exercised at Division level.

James Heappey:

At this moment in time there is currently not a planned Divisional Exercise deployment. However the Army has a substantial and sophisticated exercise programme in place to ensure that it is trained and ready to operate at the divisional level. This includes training with Allies and partners.

The UK recently took part in Exercise WARFIGHTER a US led exercise (Mar- Apr 21), which saw HQ 3 (UK) Division deploy to Fort Hood, Texas as part of III (US) Corp.

The last time a full Army Division deployed for training purposes was Exercise White Rhino, which took place in West Germany in September 1989.

■ Ministry of Defence: Buildings

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[69094\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what checks were carried out on all new building projects on his estate, including at HMNB Clyde, following the fire at Grenfell in 2017, to ascertain if combustible cladding was being used on those new buildings.

Jeremy Quin:

The Grenfell Tower fire occurred on 14 June 2017. In response to the concerns about building cladding and following Government advice the MOD surveyed the defence estate to establish if any MOD-owned sleeping accommodation blocks over six storeys were clad with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) during July-August 2017. This found that MOD had no buildings above six storeys clad with ACM.

In December 2018, the then MHCLG issued an updated Advice Note which meant that all buildings at a height in excess of six storeys with any external cladding and containing residential accommodation had to be assessed to ascertain the type of cladding used.

All buildings on the Defence Estate were re-surveyed (surveys completed in July 2019), which identified 28 buildings (subsequently reduced to 27) which had external wall systems requiring further investigation.

Work continues to confirm the remediation required, if necessary on the high rise buildings identified at HMNB Clyde.

All currently occupied high-rise buildings on the defence estate identified as having combustible external wall systems have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[69095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many building projects on his estate, including at HMNB Clyde, following the fire at Grenfell in 2017, were found to be using, or were planning to use combustible cladding in the construction.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[69096\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many building projects on his estate, including at HMNB Clyde, that were found to be using, or were planning to use combustible cladding in the construction were halted, following the fire at Grenfell in 2017.

Brendan O'Hara:

[\[69097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many building projects on his estate, including at HMNB Clyde, that were found to be using, or were planning to use combustible cladding in the construction were allowed to continue following the fire at Grenfell in 2017.

Jeremy Quin:

Following the Grenfell fire new Government regulations were issued on combustible materials. These initially focussed on Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) used on the Grenfell Tower. Investigations confirmed that none of the external wall systems employed in the MOD's highrise buildings contained ACM nor were any highrise buildings already designed and being delivered to the MOD expected to contain ACM.

Further regulations have since been issued by the relevant authorities.

All new builds on the defence estate are subject to these revised Building Regulations. The consideration of whether combustible external walling systems can be provided on buildings is defined within National Building Standards and is related to building height.

In addition, in 2020 the MOD introduced a policy directive instructing that all new external walling systems should comprise of non-combustible components.

In all highrise buildings currently occupied on the defence estate identified as having combustible external wall systems, a current Fire Risk Assessment is in place and the buildings remain legally compliant for continued occupation.

■ Ministry of Defence: High Rise Flats

John Healey:

[\[68112\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many high rise buildings on the defence estate have had flammable cladding removed from them since June 2017.

Jeremy Quin:

One high rise building at HMS Nelson is currently undergoing remediation works and the external wall system is being removed.

All high rise buildings currently occupied on the defence estate which have been identified as having combustible external wall systems, have a current Fire Risk Assessment in place and remain legally compliant for continued occupation. Work continues to investigate and provide remediation where appropriate.

■ **Portsmouth Dockyard: Insulation**

John Healey: [\[69001\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, on what date did remediation work to remove the flammable cladding from HMS Nelson begin.

Jeremy Quin:

One high rise building at HMS Nelson is currently undergoing remediation works and the external wall system is being removed. This work commenced in February 2021.

■ **Shipbuilding**

Bob Blackman: [\[68230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 on the publication timeline for the National Shipbuilding Strategy refresh.

Emma Hardy: [\[68408\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 will impact the publication timeline for the National Shipbuilding Strategy refresh.

Jeremy Quin:

It remains our intent to publish the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh later this year.

■ **Type 45 Destroyers: Repairs and Maintenance**

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[69019\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has plans to accelerate the Power Improvement Project, in response to the current availability of Type 45 destroyers.

Mr Kevan Jones: [\[69020\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, for what reason the roll-out of the Power Improvement Programme has been delayed.

Jeremy Quin:

There are no immediate plans to accelerate the Power Improvement Programme (PIP) for the Type 45 Destroyers, although we continually review optimal delivery within the Complex Warship Support Plan. The programme is dependent on the availability of ships to undertake the upgrade, balanced against the Royal Navy's current and future operational commitments. PIP conversions are planned to take into

account the regular Upkeep cycle to maximise overall class availability and meet the readiness profile required to meet Defence outputs. HMS DAUNTLESS, the first of class to undergo the Type 45 Power Improvement Programme, is currently at the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead where equipment is being set to work following installation. The next phase of the programme will see DAUNTLESS undertake a rigorous trials programme in harbour and subsequently at sea.

Three Type 45 Destroyers are currently available for operational tasking.

■ **Type 83 Destroyers: Procurement**

Mr Kevan Jones:

[\[69021\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, when the concept and assessment phase for the Type 83 destroyer will formally begin.

Jeremy Quin:

On current plans, Navy Command intends to formally commence the concept phase for Type 83 in early 2022 with the assessment phase to follow in due course.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Broadband: Standards**

Martyn Day:

[\[69148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 57186 on Broadband: Standards, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of embedding an official broadband speed standard of measurement in Ofcom's Broadband Speeds Codes of Practice, to ensure internet service providers deliver a standardised supply to consumers.

Julia Lopez:

Standards for measuring broadband speeds as a part of the Broadband Speeds Codes of Practice are a matter for Ofcom as the independent regulator for the sector.

In November 2020, significant changes to Ofcom's Broadband Speeds Codes of Practice came into effect which require providers who have signed up to provide customers with 'live sync speeds'. This means people and businesses should receive more accurate information about the capabilities of their individual lines before they enter their contract.

In addition, Ofcom is conducting a review of the codes and aims to publish its findings by the end of the year. This will include an assessment of how well Ofcom believes the current code of practice is working.

■ Channel Four Television: Privatisation

John Nicolson: [\[68323\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if the Government will require Channel 4's current office and headcount in Glasgow to be maintained in the event that it is privatised.

John Nicolson: [\[68324\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department will take to protect investment in the creative sector in Scotland in the event that Channel 4 is privatised.

Julia Lopez:

We value Channel 4's contribution to the creative sector across the UK and, if we decide to sell Channel 4, we would want to see it demonstrate a continued commitment to its impact outside of London.

Channel 4's regional footprint is an issue we have specifically consulted on, and we are in the process of examining all of the evidence we have received before any decision is made.

■ Cricket: Racial Discrimination

Navendu Mishra: [\[69213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps her Department plans to take to tackle racism and discrimination in cricket following the report into allegations of racism at Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

Nigel Huddleston:

Racism has no place in cricket, sport, or society at large. The government welcomes the firm action taken so far by the England Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in stripping Yorkshire County Cricket Club (YCCC) of its ability to host international matches and commissioning a full review of the governance structures in place at the YCCC. We urge the ECB to continue to look at this with the utmost scrutiny and take further action where needed to stamp out racism in the game.

The government has already made clear its commitment to tackling racism and all forms of discrimination in sport, as set out in the sport and physical activity strategy 'Sporting Future'.

We continue to work closely with our arm's length bodies, national governing bodies of sport and sector partners to tackle racism and discrimination in sport. Sport England, UK Sport and the other home nations' sports councils recently published the results of a detailed, independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport. Each Council is working at pace to develop their own specific action plans to further deliver on diversity and inclusion commitments and address the recommendations from the review.

■ Digital Technology: Harlow

Robert Halfon:

[68215]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to improve digital connectivity in villages in Harlow constituency.

Julia Lopez:

The government is committed to delivering lightning-fast, reliable broadband to everyone in the country. That is why in March this year we launched the first phase of the government's £5 billion Project Gigabit to ensure that hard to reach communities are not left out of the revolution in connectivity.

Significant Building Digital UK (BDUK), County and Local Council investment alongside commercial activity has led to Harlow and Epping Forest District Council areas being among the best connected parts of the UK for Gigabit broadband.

According to the latest data, the Harlow constituency area currently has over 91% gigabit-capable coverage availability to homes and businesses, well ahead of the UK average at 58%. Similarly, the Epping Forest District Council area has over 85% gigabit availability.

Rural premises around the villages, that have not yet been upgraded by commercial activity, or the government funded superfast project, are able to apply for the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme, allowing residents and suppliers to target investment where demand exists for very high speed connectivity. This scheme is open for communities and businesses living in rural areas not in line for commercial rollout or government-funded projects, to provide immediate help with the costs of installing gigabit. You can find an eligibility checker on our [website](#).

The constituency of Harlow has already made good use of the scheme, with 21 vouchers having been connected and a further 23 vouchers awaiting connection for a combined value of £90,631.

The supply side of Project Gigabit, which will target all remaining sub-gigabit properties in Essex, including the Harlow constituency, is planned to launch between May and July 2023. This project aims to give all residents and businesses access to future-proofed very high speed connectivity.

■ Football Index: Compensation

Mike Amesbury:

[66262]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to offer redress for those affected by the Football Index collapse.

Chris Philp:

The government appreciates the significant impact that the collapse of the novel gambling product Football Index had on former customers. Administration proceedings for BetIndex, the company which operated Football Index, are continuing, and are looking at the assets and liabilities of the operator and what is owed to customers. It is likely that this process will result in some amounts being

reimbursed to creditors. There is no compensation scheme for losses caused by a gambling firm ceasing to operate and the government does not think it would be appropriate to use public funds for these purposes.

■ Football: Harlow

Robert Halfon: [68213]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support grassroots football in Harlow.

Robert Halfon: [68214]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to support grassroots rugby in Harlow.

Nigel Huddleston:

Sports and physical activity are an incredibly important part of living an active lifestyle. All generations and communities should be able to enjoy the physical and mental health, wellbeing, social and other benefits of being active.

Over the last decade, the Department has invested £1,211,653 into a wide range of grassroots sport projects within the Harlow constituency through Sport England. This sum includes £104,310 on projects specifically supporting football, and £82,265 on rugby.

The government also committed a further £205 million in the budget on 27 October, to transform grassroots football facilities across the UK. In England, the Football Foundation will prioritise 70% of the investment in category 1 and 2 levelling up areas such as Harlow, and direct significant investment to multi-sport facilities. This is part of our pledge to ensure every community has the pitches they need by 2030, in support of a potential UK & Ireland FIFA World Cup 2030 bid. The Harlow Local facility Football Plan can be viewed online on the [Football Foundation website](#).

■ Gambling: Internet

Ronnie Cowan: [65451]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what her planned timetable is for commencing trials of a single customer view for online gambling; and whether she has discussed those trials with gambling operators.

Chris Philp:

The Gambling Commission has worked closely with the Information Commissioner's Office to understand how a single customer view can be delivered in compliance with all relevant data protection requirements. The Information Commissioner's Office recently published [a report](#) confirming it should be possible under data protection law for data to be shared safely and securely between online operators to help prevent gambling related harm. The report does not comment on how any single customer view should work in practice. We expect the industry to prioritise the trial of its

planned single customer view solution as a next step and will continue to monitor developments closely.

■ **Gambling: Reviews**

Ronnie Cowan:

[\[65449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of Public Health England's review of the evidence on gambling harms, published on 30 September 2021.

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[65533\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether a gambling ombudsman could be established without primary legislation; and what plans she has for establishing such an ombudsman.

Mr Richard Holden:

[\[65534\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she has assessed the available data on gambling and gambling harm; and if she will bring forward proposals to fund the collection and assessment of those data through a statutory levy.

Chris Philp:

The government launched its Review of the Gambling Act 2005 on 8 December with the publication of Terms of Reference and a Call for Evidence. The Review is wide-ranging and aims to ensure that the regulation of gambling is fit for the digital age. The Call for Evidence included questions on the need for changes to the system of consumer redress, the appropriate mechanism for recouping the societal and regulatory costs of gambling and on barriers to high quality research. We will publish a white paper setting out our conclusions and vision for the sector in due course, and this will include an indication of how any changes will be implemented, whether by legislation or other means.

Public Health England's review will be a valuable contribution to our Gambling Act Review and we are considering it carefully. Alongside the Review, we will work with the Department of Health and Social Care and key stakeholders to address the knowledge gaps identified in the evidence review and improve data collection more broadly.

■ **Performing Arts: Intellectual Property**

Kenny MacAskill:

[\[69201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether he has had discussions with or issued guidance to the Performing Rights Society on their issuing of claims for payment from publicans and others for performance rights when premises were closed as a result of the covid-19 lockdown.

Julia Lopez:

Neither the Secretary of State at this Department, nor Ministers at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy have had discussions with PRS for Music or

issued guidance on this matter. The Government is aware that PRS for Music put in place measures at the start of the pandemic to ease licensing requirements at the time. The Government was not involved in these: licensing matters are private and commercial arrangements between PRS for Music and its licensees.

■ **Streaming: Standards**

Tim Loughton: [\[68992\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, when the Government plans to publish its response to the consultation on audience protection standards on video-on-demand services which closed on 26 October 2021; and if he will set out a timetable on the implementation of steps to improve protection standards.

Tim Loughton: [\[68993\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Government consulted the British Board of Film Classification as part of the recent consultation on audience protection standards on video-on-demand services; and whether the Government has made any assessment of the value to VoD consumers of BBFC age ratings being applied more consistently on such services.

Julia Lopez:

The government is considering levelling the playing field between traditional broadcasters and on-demand streaming services to provide a fair competitive framework, and to give viewers confidence that equivalent standards are applied regardless of the technologies they choose to use.

The Department has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including video-on-demand providers, broadcasters, Ofcom, and the British Board of Film Classification. The government is considering responses to the recent consultation, which closed on the 26 October, and will respond in due course.

EDUCATION

■ **All Saints School York**

Rachael Maskell: [\[67188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 25 October 2021 to Question 62774 on All Saints School York, what assessment he has made of the impact of the ringfencing of that funding for All Saints School in a separate funding pot from the Dioceses of Middlesbrough with the Diocese of Leeds on the ability to transfer funds from wider Dioceses of Leeds schooling budget for a rebuild project for All Saints York in the context of limited funds being available.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department allocates annual condition funding to schools and those responsible for school buildings to support them to meet their duties in maintaining schools in a safe and operational condition.

Large Voluntary-Aided (VA) bodies are eligible to receive a School Condition Allocation (SCA) to invest in priorities across the schools for which they are responsible. VA bodies are also allowed to form a chain, and, if that chain meets the relevant eligibility requirements, to receive a single allocation of SCA.

The Dioceses of Leeds and Middlesbrough have formed a chain for the purposes of SCA and received an allocation of £3,112,383 in the 2021-22 financial year. It is for the Diocese of Leeds and the Diocese of Middlesbrough to collectively agree how to prioritise their allocation, taking account of capital need across their combined school estate. The department does not insist on any ringfencing of this grant other than the funding be spent on capital projects, within the permitted time frame and for the purposes set out within the terms and conditions.

■ Brain: Injuries

Chris Bryant: [\[67083\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department has taken to include Acquired Brain Injury in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.

Chris Bryant: [\[67084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to ensure that additional training on acquired brain injury awareness is in place for school-based staff, particularly named lead professionals who support pupils with an Acquired Brain Injury and Special Educational Needs Coordinators.

Chris Bryant: [\[67086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he has taken to ensure that children and young people with an Acquired Brain Injury have a return to school pathway plan that provides tailored support for them, their family and their teachers.

Chris Bryant: [\[67087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps officials in his Department is taking with officials in other Government departments to establish a joined up approach to support children and adults with an Acquired Brain Injury.

Will Quince:

It is important that children with medical conditions, such as acquired brain injury, are supported to receive a full education.

A pupil's acquired brain injury could manifest in different ways. Support should be tailored to their own learning barriers, irrespective of their diagnosis. The special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice asks schools and colleges to address pupils' individual educational needs, regardless of their condition.

Under Section 100 of the Children and Families Act 2014, governing boards are required to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions and to have regard to statutory guidance. The guidance covers a range of areas and is available

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>.

To be awarded qualified teacher status, trainees must meet the Teachers' Standards, which include a requirement that they adapt teaching to meet the strengths and needs of all pupils. The performance of all existing teachers in maintained schools must be assessed every year against the Teachers' Standards. It is the responsibility of school leaders to determine the training needs of their staff, within their approach to school improvement, professional development and performance management.

In line with the approach that we expect school-based staff to identify and intervene to support any pupil who presents with difficulties in learning, we expect that training should relate to the specific learning needs an individual child has. For example, we have a contract with NASEN (the Whole School SEND consortium) to support schools, this includes training for school staff on how to tailor provision for different types of learning needs.

The SEND system is designed to get the right support in place for all children and young people with additional needs, so they are able to fulfil their potential, just like other children.

The reforms to the SEND system are key to this. The government has strengthened systems for joining up education, health and care support for those with complex needs, and placed families at the heart of the decision-making about their children. The Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan process is crucial in meeting the needs of those with complex needs. The arrangements are intended to support:

- Joint working between health, social care and education
- Multi-professional assessment of a child or young person's needs involving relevant experts
- The development of an individual EHC plan to meet those needs

This should provide a basis for the sharing of information and of expertise to ensure the needs of children and young people with acquired brain injury are supported in school.

■ Children in Care

Tim Loughton: [R] [\[68100\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans his Department has for the future use of social outcomes partnerships in supporting looked-after children.

Tim Loughton: [R] [\[68101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of increasing the use of social outcomes partnerships to support looked-after children.

Will Quince:

At present, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has no plans to expand the future use of Social Outcome Partnerships/Social Impact Bonds within the context of children who are Looked After.

The department has previously engaged with the model in 2018, as part of the government's commitment to supporting care leavers to live independent lives. The department has commissioned three projects, as part of the Care Leavers Social Impact Bond programme, to deliver support to care leavers, aged 16-25. These projects are yet to receive a full evaluation.

In May 2021 a summary report was published by the department, which documents current experience with Social Outcome Partnerships/Social Impact Bonds:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1003308/CSC_Summary_report_20210629_TH.pdf.

■ Coronavirus Catch-up Premium**Munira Wilson:****[69203]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to publish the data collected (a) by Renaissance Learning on catch up needs for pupils in England and (b) by Ipsos MORI on catch up premium funds.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department commissioned Renaissance Learning, and their subcontractor the Education Policy Institute, to collect data from a sample of schools to provide a baseline assessment of education lost and catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England, and to monitor progress over the course of the 2020/21 academic year and the autumn term 2021.

The latest findings from this research, published 29 October, includes data from the 2020/21 summer term and a summary of all previous findings. Complete findings from the 2020/21 academic year can be found on gov.uk:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupils-progress-in-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year-interim-report>.

The department has a contract with Ipsos MORI, in consortium with Sheffield Hallam University and the Centre for Education and Youth, to undertake a mixed-methods research study, which includes gathering data through surveys of school leaders, interviews and case studies, to examine how they have responded to the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, including how they are tackling the issue of lost education.

Interim results from the study will be published before the end of the year and will be used to understand school recovery approaches, including use of the catch-up premium, and how best to support schools going forwards. The research is set to continue in the 2021/22 academic year, with a final report at the end of 2022.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Daisy Cooper:

[68466]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect on covid transmission in areas where the local Director of Public Health has introduced extra measures in line with the contingency framework, including isolation of under 16s whose siblings have tested positive for covid-19.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department's priority is to maximise the number of children and young people in face-to-face education or childcare and minimise any disruption, in a way that best manages the COVID-19 risk.

Whilst the Directors of Public Health have discretion over local public health measures within a national framework, the advice in the contingency framework does not reverse the national policy for self-isolation which changed on 16 August. Unless they test positive, fully vaccinated adults, children and young people aged under 18 years and 6 months are not required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive case of COVID-19. The contingency framework provides guidance on the following measures: testing, face coverings, shielding, attendance restrictions as well as educational visits and events.

The department is monitoring measures in regions and continually seeking to improve its understanding of their effectiveness. Current data which is publicly available on case rates is broken down by region. Attendance data for nurseries and schools is also available here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[67201]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to increase levels of school-based covid-19 vaccination for children.

Mr Robin Walker:

NHS England is delivering the vaccination programme for 12 to 15 year olds, and thousands of schools have already received visits from the School Age Immunisation Service teams to get consented children vaccinated. NHS England has additionally launched an out-of-school community offer for 12 to 15 year olds to get their vaccines via other routes, such as through vaccination centres. This is running in parallel to the in-school programme. Parents of children aged 12 to 15 years old have received a letter from the NHS with more information on the vaccination programme, including information about how to book an appointment out of school.

Additionally, the department has published new guidance for schools on the vaccination programme. This includes useful information and resources, including a template letter that can be used to communicate with parents. Please see the

following for the published guidance provided to schools:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cT6adcSVsLer0kvcSul4QcBYdlmdqb5x>.

■ **Dance and Music: Education**

Mr Steve Baker:

[67138]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment his Department has made of the cost-effectiveness of the Music and Dance Scheme; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department has a long-term commitment to ensuring that high-quality dance and music education is not the preserve of the elite, but the entitlement of every single child.

The Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) allows exceptionally talented children to attend specialist music and dance education providers. The scheme provides bursaries and grants totalling around £30 million per annum to children and young people with exceptional potential, regardless of their personal circumstances, to benefit from world-class specialist music or dance training.

The department regularly assesses the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of all programmes, including the MDS. The department is working with MDS providers to improve the information collected from them each year, so future assessments can be improved.

Following the Spending Review, the department will continue to invest around £115 million per annum in cultural education over the next three years, though our music, arts and heritage programmes, and this includes the Music and Dance Scheme.

■ **Drugs: Misuse**

Rachael Maskell:

[66233]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of education in schools on drug misuse; and whether he will take further steps to reduce the risk of substance misuse in schools.

Mr Robin Walker:

From September 2020, relationships education became compulsory for all primary school-aged pupils, relationships and sex education compulsory for all secondary school-aged pupils, and health education compulsory for all pupils in state-funded schools.

The statutory guidance for health education now sets out the following content on drugs, and supplements drug education as a statutory subject in maintained schools as part of the national curriculum for science in key stage 2 and key stage 3:

- Primary - the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking.

- Secondary - building on primary and in addition covers the associated legal and psychological risks of taking drugs.

In health education, there is a strong focus on mental wellbeing, including a recognition that mental wellbeing and physical health are linked. This includes teaching about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, including drug misuse. The department is committed to supporting schools in their delivery of the new subjects and has published non-statutory implementation guidance titled 'Plan your Relationships, Sex and Health Education Curriculum', alongside teacher training materials. Both are designed to provide teachers with further clarity and practical advice on how to implement the curriculum, to help all teachers increase their confidence and quality of teaching. Online training was available for schools during the 2020/21 academic year, delivered through the regional network of teaching schools.

Support covers all the teaching requirements in the statutory guidance and including a teacher training module on drugs alcohol and tobacco, as part of a wider suite of teacher training materials: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-training-drugs-alcohol-and-tobacco>.

The department has worked with Public Health England (now the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) to make sure good quality teaching resources are available for teachers delivering drug, alcohol and tobacco education. Lesson plans on drugs, alcohol and tobacco are now available on the PSHE Association's website: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/drug-and-alcohol-education-%E2%80%94-lesson-plans>.

The department is developing plans for monitoring implementation of relationships, sex and health education over time, including measuring teacher confidence in teaching the statutory requirements and whether additions or other changes to the curriculum will be required. We will of course consult widely over any proposed amendments to its content.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime

Rachael Maskell: [66234]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with the Home Secretary on helping ensure that young people are not drawn into County Lines or other forms of drug dealing.

Rachael Maskell: [66235]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what comparative assessment has he made of the risk of excluding young people from school and children being exploited by county lines drug trafficking.

Will Quince:

The Department for Education works closely with the Home Office to prevent young people becoming involved in serious youth violence and county lines. This includes

being an active part of the Crime and Justice Taskforce, a cross-Whitehall Cabinet Committee, chaired by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister. This collaboration has culminated in an announcement in the cross-government Beating Crime Plan of an investment of over £45 million in specialist support in both mainstream and alternative provision schools in serious violence hotspots. This will help prevent young people who are disengaging from education from getting involved in serious violence, county lines, and criminal exploitation.

Whilst the department has not done a comparative assessment specifically on county lines, evidence is clear that engagement in education is a protective factor against exposure to external harms and exploitation. While permanent exclusion itself does not drive crime, children who are permanently excluded are often the most vulnerable and are therefore at higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime. This is why the department is clear that permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort and exclusion from school should not mean exclusion from good quality education or from support needed to reduce risk and vulnerability. The forthcoming Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review will set out our plans for reforming alternative provision to incentivise early support and to ensure that those who are permanently excluded remain safe and supported in high-quality education.

■ **Family Hubs: York**

Rachael Maskell:

[67189]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to allocate funding to support family hubs in York.

Will Quince:

On 2 November, the government launched a £12 million family hubs transformation fund to support local authorities in England that do not currently have family hubs, to transform to a family hub model of service delivery and open family hubs by March 2024. Further details on the family hubs transformation fund can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-hubs-transformation-fund>.

The government has also recently announced £300 million to transform services for parents and babies, carers and children in half of local authorities in England. We will set out more detail in due course on how this funding will be allocated.

■ **Higher Education: Private Sector**

Andrew Percy:

[68199]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the accuracy of statistics on (a) employment and (b) further education used by private higher education providers when advertising their courses to self-funded students.

Alex Burghart:

The government is clear that we expect providers to ensure they are fully complying with their consumer law obligations, including ensuring any advertisement of courses is accurate and transparent.

Where a private higher education (HE) provider chooses to register with the Office for Students (OfS), the regulator plays an important role in ensuring students are better able to exercise their consumer rights. It is an OfS registration condition that providers have due regard to relevant guidance about how to comply with consumer protection law. It is a further condition that all registered providers co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education, and that they make students aware of their ability to use the scheme.

In addition, the OfS aims to ensure that all students can access, succeed in, and progress from higher education by ensuring students have access to relevant information to help them make choices that are right for them, and to also ensure students will receive a baseline level of quality. Statistics about student outcomes at OfS regulated providers are included in 'Discover Uni', which is owned and operated by the UK higher education funding and regulatory bodies and is an official, reliable source of information to guide student choices.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has published advice on consumer law for all HE providers (including those not on the OfS register), setting out its view on how the law operates to help students understand their rights and help providers treat their students fairly. This is available via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers>. The CMA has been clear that there are obligations under the law and providers must ensure they are meeting them.

The Advertising Standards Authority is the UK's independent self-regulator of advertising across all media. Its work includes acting on complaints and proactively checking the media to take action against misleading, harmful or offensive advertisements that contravene its Advertising Codes. The Advertising Codes cover advertising and marketing communications, which are likely to include HE providers' course information on websites, leaflets and posters directed at prospective students.

■ Pre-school Education: Pay

Preet Kaur Gill:

[68396]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what progress he has made on acting on the findings of the Social Mobility Commission report dated August 2020 that (a) one in eight of the early years workforce is paid under £5 an hour and (b) the average wage is £7.42 an hour.

Will Quince:

The government recognises that high-quality childcare, with a well-qualified workforce, has a powerful impact on children's outcomes. As part of the Spending Review on 27 October we announced that we are investing additional funding for the early years entitlements worth £160 million in 2022-23, £180 million in 2023-24 and £170 million in 2024-25, compared to the current financial year. This funding is for local authorities to increase hourly rates paid to childcare providers for the

government's free childcare entitlement offers and reflects the costs of inflation and national living wage increases.

■ **Primary Education: National Curriculum Tests**

Seema Malhotra:

[\[69087\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent discussions he has had with secondary school leaders on the school readiness of the 2021-22 year 7 cohort.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department regularly engages with secondary school leaders and organisations, representing them on a wide range of issues around pupil progress, including on the transition to secondary school.

■ **Pupil Premium**

Stephen Timms:

[\[68104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy to increase the pupil premium in real terms each year for the duration of this Parliament.

Stephen Timms:

[\[68105\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether it is his policy to deliver enhanced pupil premium funding for pupils who have been eligible for support over four or more of the past six years.

Mr Robin Walker:

This government is committed to levelling up opportunities to make sure everyone has a fair chance to realise their potential and ensure no-one is left behind. The pupil premium furthers this objective by helping schools improve the academic attainment and wider outcomes of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Total pupil premium funding is increasing to more than £2.5 billion in the 2021-22 financial year, up by £60 million from 2020-21. This reflects an increase in funding in approximately two thirds of schools, as more children have become eligible for free school meals. The department plans to announce rates for the 2022-23 financial year later this year, in line with the usual timetable. Announcements for future years will be made in due course.

The department is continuing to deliver year on year real terms per pupil increases to school funding. As part of the spending review, by the 2024-25 financial year, we are investing a further £4.7 billion in the core schools budget, of which the pupil premium is an important part, compared to previous plans. On top of that, the government has announced an additional £1 billion for a recovery premium over the next two academic years (2022/23 and 2023/24). Building on the pupil premium, the recovery premium will help schools deliver evidence-based approaches to support the most disadvantaged pupils.

The department periodically reviews and assesses the effectiveness of all its policies, and this includes the pupil premium.

■ School Meals: Standards

Jo Gideon: [67294]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if his Department will implement a strategy to ensure that School Food Standards are met.

Will Quince:

We already have a robust set of regulations in place around food standards in schools, established by The Requirements for School Food Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to all food provided in schools making compliance mandatory for all maintained schools including academies and free schools.

School governors have a responsibility to ensure compliance and should appropriately challenge the headteacher and the senior leadership team to ensure the school is meeting its obligations.

Should parents that feel the standards are not being met at their child's school may make a complaint using the school's own complaints procedure.

■ Schools: Closures

Seema Malhotra: [68282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment has he made on the impact of school closures on the long term financial prospects of school children.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department continually reviews the evidence base on the potential economic impact of the time pupils have spent out of the classroom as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and are aware of a wide range of estimates which are based on little or no mitigation measures.

The department has commissioned an independent research and assessment agency to provide a baseline assessment of catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England and monitor progress over the course of the 2020/21 academic year. The latest findings from the research were published on gov.uk: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1029841/Understanding_progress_in_the_2020-21_academic_year_Report_4_October2021.pdf. The department is currently exploring options to assess progress over the course of the current academic year.

The department's latest evidence suggests that pupils are showing some degree of recovery in education loss. In summer 2021, primary pupils were on average around 0.9 months behind in reading and 2.8 months behind in maths compared to where they would otherwise have been in a typical year. This is an improvement since spring 2021, where primary pupils were around 2 months behind in reading and 3.1 months behind in maths. For secondary pupils, they were on average around 1.8 months behind in summer 2021.

That is why the department is investing nearly £5 billion on measures to support further recovery such as the National Tutoring Programme, teacher development,

and the recovery premium to support teachers to implement evidence-based interventions to address education gaps. This is in addition to a strong core funding settlement which will see core schools funding rise by £4.7 billion by the 2024/25 financial year compared to existing plans.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[68302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the funding schools require in addition to their learning budgets to manage ongoing costs relating to covid-19 in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Mr Robin Walker:

Teachers, school leaders, and pupils have made a huge contribution to the nation's efforts to respond to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 outbreak, and the department is very grateful for their continued hard work. Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has ensured that all schools continued to receive their core funding as normal, regardless of any periods of reduced attendance.

The department recognises that some schools may be facing pressures this winter. However, this should be seen in the wider context of funding for schools. At the recent spending review, we announced we are continuing to deliver year on year, real terms per pupil increases to school funding, investing a further £4.7 billion in the core school budget by the 2024-25 financial year compared to previous plans.

This settlement includes a further £1.6 billion in the 2022-23 financial year, on top of the £2.4 billion increase over 2021-22 levels, already announced as part of the 2019 spending round, which will help the school sector respond to the pressures we know they are facing.

School leaders have the flexibility to make their own decisions on how to prioritise their spending to invest in a range of resources and activities that will best support their staff and pupils.

In addition to the increase in core funding for schools, schools will receive a £1 billion recovery premium over the next two years to help those pupils most in need of support to catch up. This will help to deliver evidence-based approaches to support the most disadvantaged pupils and means every school in England will have more money to support young people's recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

This £1 billion comes on top of recovery interventions announced previously, including £1.5 billion investment in tutoring in schools and colleges, £400 million investment in expanding training opportunities in early years and schools settings, £950 million in flexible funding for schools, £200 million for summer schools, £17 million for early language support, and the opportunity for year 13 students to repeat their final year in the 2021-22 academic year.

■ Secondary Education: Assessments

Sam Tarry:

[67302]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made contingency plans to support students in secondary education who were affected by exam cancellations in the last year.

Mr Robin Walker:

Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, the department has acted swiftly to help minimise the impact on pupils' education and provided extensive support for schools.

Whilst we believe that exams are the fairest way of judging students' performance, the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak meant we could not guarantee all students would be in a position to fairly sit their exams either in 2020 or 2021. Teachers were best placed to determine grades for GCSE, AS and A level qualifications in the absence of exams, as they have a good understanding of their students' performance.

Given that some students have suffered more disruption than others, students were only assessed on the content they had been taught. Teachers were able to use evidence from across the duration of a student's course to determine their grade.

Parents and pupils can have confidence in the grades awarded this summer. Supported by thorough guidance and a robust quality assurance process, the department trusted teachers' judgements as they were best placed to understand the content students have covered and their students' performance. Further to this, an appeals system was also in place as a safety net to fix any genuine errors that were not identified earlier on, and the Joint Council for Qualifications published detailed guidance to centres setting out the process for appealing results.

The department also encouraged schools and colleges to support students to take autumn exams if they have the capacity. In addition, we helped schools and colleges to offer autumn exams to students by assisting with additional space and invigilators where required, as well as covering fee deficits to ensure that exam fees are not passed on.

For those students who need support in catching up on lost education, we have announced education recovery funding of nearly £5 billion. Our latest investment of £1.8 billion is targeted at those we know will need it most, delivering a universal uplift of hours for those with the least time left in education, in 16-19 colleges and an additional £1 billion to extend the recovery premium for disadvantaged pupils for the next two academic years.

■ Skills Bootcamps

Chi Onwurah:

[68265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how much funding has been allocated to the Skills Bootcamp scheme, by (a) skill type and (b) region; and how many Skills Bootcamps are located in each region.

Alex Burghart:

We have invested £43 million in the 2021-22 financial year to deliver Skills Bootcamps across the country, covering a wide range of digital, technical and green skills. And we are going further with the investment announced at the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 to significantly expand this exciting training programme.

Skills Bootcamps funding for this financial year has been allocated to providers across the country. This has included through a competitive procurement process, where the highest quality bids across all nine geographical regions in England were awarded contracts, selected according to demonstrated local skills needs.

More information about availability of specific Skills Bootcamps courses, including the recently announced Skills Bootcamps in HGV driving, is regularly updated on the Free Courses for Jobs website on GOV.UK.

For instance, Gateshead College has Skills Bootcamps in skill areas including cyber security, data engineering and digital marketing. We are pleased that initial findings indicate that this training has been well received and is already preparing adults to take on new, skilled jobs. Outcomes data from Wave 1 Skills Bootcamps, which will be published later this month, will give a full breakdown of the outcomes that our training has achieved to date.

We are confident that Skills Bootcamps have the potential to transform the adult skills landscape and are pleased that the positive outcome of the Spending Review means that we can go further with this training model, ensuring thousands of adults learn new skills and move into better jobs. The three-year settlement for this spending period should also give providers and employers greater confidence in delivering this style of training, allowing them to better plan new skills provision in their area.

Chi Onwurah:[\[68266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many individuals have participated in Skills Bootcamps by (a) skill type and (b) region since the beginning of those schemes.

Chi Onwurah:[\[68267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to maximise the uptake of the Skills Bootcamp across (a) age groups and (b) regions.

Chi Onwurah:[\[68268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the success rate of the Skills Bootcamp scheme in increasing employment among participants.

Alex Burghart:

We anticipate that approximately 16,000 Skills Bootcamps places will be provided in this financial year, backed by £43 million from the National Skills Fund, and the department plans to continue expanding the programme with the new investment, which was announced at Budget this October.

The process evaluation, published last month, concluded that Skills Bootcamps were well received by all involved and that there is overwhelming support for Skills Bootcamps to continue. In addition, the learner survey indicated that nearly four-in-five (79%) were satisfied with their course overall.

The outcome data, which the department plans to publish soon, will give a much fuller picture, including the number of people who participated in Skills Bootcamps and the positive outcomes that the Skills Bootcamps have already delivered, preparing adults to take on new, skilled jobs.

Skills Bootcamps are available across all nine regions of England. Local areas and Skills Bootcamps providers encourage uptake of Skills Bootcamps courses through targeted marketing, ensuring that participation represents the diversity of the local population. In addition, in the new year the department plans to launch a new campaign to help people access the skills they need to get the job they want, whatever their stage in life. The campaign will aim to raise awareness and boost understanding of skills offers among adults, including Skills Bootcamps, which will help to maximise uptake amongst adults across the country.

■ Special Educational Needs

Tom Hunt: [\[67276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to help strengthen participation of parents and young people in the SEND system.

Tom Hunt: [\[67278\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how his Department plans to allocate the £8.6 million funding announced for 2021-22 for supporting participation of parents and young people in the SEND system.

Will Quince:

The department is committed to strengthening the participation of parent carers and young people in the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system, as evidenced by the £8.6 million provided in 2021-22 to support the effective involvement of parent carers and young people in designing SEND policies and services.

At a local level, this includes providing development support and making available up to £17,500 to each Parent Carer Forum (PCF) to strengthen parent carer participation, an increase of £2,500 compared to 2020-21. Our funding also supports coproduction at a national level, including via FLARE, a national engagement group of disabled young people with representation from each region, and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.

In addition, the £8.6 million of investment includes funding to ensure families are able to access high quality and impartial information, advice and support, including continued provision of a national helpline to provide advice for families.

Tom Hunt: [\[67279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what proportion of Ofsted's school education inspection framework involves consideration of SEND provision.

Tom Hunt: [\[67280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether a school can receive a Good rating from Ofsted where the inspection found an inadequate provision for SEND.

Mr Robin Walker:

These are matters for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you directly and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

■ Vocational Guidance: Publicity

Stuart Anderson: [\[67262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to promote awareness of vocational career routes in schools.

Alex Burghart:

The department is determined to take action so that all young people can learn about the high-quality opportunities that technical education and apprenticeships can offer. Through the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill, we aim to strengthen the Baker Clause so all pupils will have the opportunity to have encounters with providers of approved technical education and apprenticeships.

We expect to see schools setting up career events, assemblies and options evenings so that providers can talk to pupils about what they offer and what it is like to learn in a different environment. The school must prepare and publish a policy statement setting out the circumstances in which education and training providers will be given access to pupils and ensure that this is followed. The policy statement must include:

- Any procedural requirement in relation to requests for access
- Grounds for granting and refusing requests for access
- Details of premises or facilities provided to a person who is given access

As well as steps taken to ensure compliance with the Baker Clause, we are making sure that all government careers information is available in one place to enable people to make informed decisions on the education, training and employment options that are right for them. This will include information on routes into apprenticeships, including higher and degree apprenticeships, and T Levels via an improved course directory accessible via the National Careers Service website.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agricultural Products: UK Trade with EU

Emily Thornberry: [\[56302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many goods exported to countries in the European Union from the UK have faced sanitary and phytosanitary checks since 1 January 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [\[56507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many UK exporters have faced sanitary and phytosanitary checks exporting to countries in the EU since 1 January 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

The EU introduced sanitary and phytosanitary controls on all exports from Great Britain (GB) to the EU on 1 January 2021. Since then, all animal and animal product exports must have an appropriate export health certificate (EHC) and plants and plant products require a phytosanitary certificate (PC).

Each commodity type in a consignment will require a minimum of one EHC but in some cases, mixed load consignments or packages may require multiple EHCs. Physical checks conducted by the EU are not notified to the UK and therefore we are unable to confirm how many exporters have faced checks at EU border control posts. Minimum percentages for specific checks are set out in the Official Controls Regulation for both the EU and the UK to comply with.

Since 1 January, 1,533 GB plant exporters have applied for 28,904 PCs (this figure include plants moving to Northern Ireland).

Likewise, there have been 159,000 EHCs issued for animal and animal products commodities exported to EU member states from approximately 1,300 businesses.

Emily Thornberry: [\[56304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many goods exported from the EU to the UK have faced sanitary and phytosanitary checks since 1 January 2021.

Emily Thornberry: [\[56307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many EU exporters have faced sanitary and phytosanitary checks exporting to the UK since 1 January 2021.

Victoria Prentis:

The UK is introducing sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) import controls in a phased manner, supporting businesses as they come through the pandemic and ensuring that we do not disrupt food supply. From 1 January 2022, high-priority plants and plant products and live animals will be subjected to full import controls with checks taking place at destination. We will be introducing pre-notification requirements for all

other regulated SPS goods from 1 January 2022 and full import controls from July 2022 onwards.

We cannot break down individual business numbers easily. Approximately 1,400 businesses registered for pre-notification and the following checks have been conducted:

73,401 consignments of regulated plants and plant products have been imported to the UK from the EU: 59,210 (80.67%) were subjected to SPS documentary checks of which 48 failed (0.07%).

49,822 were subject to identity checks (67.88%) of which 12 failed (0.02%).

11,310 faced physical SPS checks (15.41%) and 22 failed such checks (0.03%).

9796 consignments of live animals were imported into the UK from the EU. All were subject to documentary checks and 2122 (22%) were subjected to physical inspection.

■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff

Luke Pollard:

[\[67249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 1 November 2021 to Question 64729, on Rivers: Sewage, what the hourly pay for staff in the Digital Engagement and Creative Content team is; and how many hours it took to produce the video.

Rebecca Pow:

The information is not available in the form requested. Individual staff costs cannot be easily identified to provide a precise figure for the production of that specific video alongside their other creative content commitments that day.

The video was produced alongside other creative content commitments that day. It is not possible to break down the exact production hours.

■ Disposable Wipes

Sir Gary Streeter:

[\[68107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to ensure that single use wet wipe products do not falsely claim to be biodegradable.

Sir Gary Streeter:

[\[68108\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans he has to strengthen regulation on single use wet wipes.

Sir Gary Streeter:

[\[68109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to require UK manufacturers of single use wet wipes to ensure that their products are fully biodegradable.

Rebecca Pow:

We are considering a range of options to tackle the drain blockages and fatbergs caused by wet wipes and are working to assess the effects of wet wipes containing plastic on sewers to identify possible solutions. In general, we prefer to help people and companies make the right choice, rather than banning items outright. Alongside our upcoming consultation on single-use plastic items, we will be asking some questions about wet wipes to help us build our evidence base, inform our policy approach and take appropriate action.

The Defra guidance on making an environmental claim has been updated recently to include the Competition Markets Authority's published guidance available here: [Make an environmental claim for your product, service or organisation - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/make-an-environmental-claim-for-your-product-service-or-organisation). This guidance aims to help businesses understand and comply with their existing obligations under consumer protection law when making any environmental claims.

We will continue to encourage the water industry and wet wipe manufacturers to work together to raise consumer awareness about the appropriate disposal of wet wipes and other non-flushable products, and to ensure that the labelling is clear. This will be crucial for generating meaningful behavioural change with consumers.

■ Disposable Wipes: Plastics**Fleur Anderson:****[68476]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to ban the manufacture and sale of wet wipes containing plastic.

Rebecca Pow:

We are considering a range of options to tackle the drain blockages and fatbergs caused by wet wipes and are working to assess the effects of wet wipes containing plastic on sewers to identify possible solutions. In general, we prefer to help people and companies make the right choice, rather than banning items outright. Alongside our upcoming consultation on single-use plastic items, we will be asking some questions about wet wipes to help us build our evidence base, inform our policy approach and take appropriate action.

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We will continue to encourage the water industry and wet wipe manufacturers to work together to raise consumer awareness about the appropriate disposal of wet wipes and other non-flushable products, and to ensure that the labelling is clear. This will be crucial for generating meaningful behavioural change with consumers.

■ Flood Control: Finance

Rachael Maskell:

[68368]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will focus new funding for flood prevention on flood mitigation through upper catchment management.

Rebecca Pow:

Flood and coastal risk management (FCERM) investment takes place where the risk is highest, wherever it is across the country. This Government is investing a record £5.2 billion in FCERM schemes. As part of that investment, we are committed to doubling the number of schemes which include nature-based solutions, such as upper catchment measures.

The Environment Agency's FCERM [Strategy](#) encourages greater use of nature-based solutions that take a catchment led approach to improve resilience to both floods and droughts.

The recently completed [£15m national pilot programme](#) of Natural Flood Management work has demonstrated the growing impact that these types of interventions can have, not only on managing flood risks but also helping to restore nature and reduce carbon emissions.

■ Hedges and Ditches

Sarah Olney:

[68391]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to restore the UK's hedgerow network.

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 recognise the role of hedgerows and fund their creation and management.

For example, a Hedgerow Standard has been included within the initial phase of piloting of the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme. Within this Standard, farmers will be rewarded for carrying out actions including maintaining or creating hedgerow trees on their land. 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, restoration 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.

■ Livestock: Exports

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[65375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has for implementing a ban on the export of live animals for slaughter.

Jo Churchill:

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, which received its Second Reading in the House of Commons on 25 October, will ban live exports of livestock and equines for slaughter and fattening from Great Britain. We plan to adapt the existing journey log approval system and will be engaging with industry on the implementation of the ban before introducing regulations.

■ Members: Correspondence

Rosie Cooper: [\[67109\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 18 August 2021 on the protection of uplands, reference ZA57406.

Rebecca Pow:

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 1 November 2021.

■ Onions

Emily Thornberry: [\[68151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what funding his Department has allocated from 2021-22 to 2024-25 to support the development of the UK onion industry.

Victoria Prentis:

While no specific provision for the onion sector has been allocated from 2021-22 to 2024-25, sources of funding available to the onion industry between now and 2024-25 could include the three funds available under the Farming Innovation Programme, the forthcoming Farming Investment Fund, and existing Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisations under the Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme.

■ Plastics

Stuart Anderson: [\[65507\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to reduce the amount of single-use plastics.

Jo Churchill:

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042. The Resources and Waste Strategy, published December 2018, sets out how we want to achieve this and move towards a circular economy where resources are kept in the system for as long as possible.

In October 2020, we introduced measures to restrict the supply of single-use plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds. The single-use carrier bag charge, which has led to a 95% reduction in the use of single-use carrier bags by the main supermarkets, has also been increased to 10p and extended to all retailers. We will be consulting later this year on banning a range of single-use plastic items, including single-use plastic plates, cutlery, and polystyrene cups. We will continue to review the latest evidence on problematic products and materials to take a systematic approach to reducing the use of unnecessary single-use plastic.

Our Environment Bill will enable us to change significantly the way that we manage our waste and take forward a number of proposals from the Resources and Waste Strategy, which will reduce consumption of single-use plastic further. The Bill includes key powers to create Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes; introduce Deposit Return Schemes (DRS); and establish greater consistency in the recycling system. Furthermore, from April 2022, plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled content will be subject to a tax of £200/tonne. Further details on the development of this tax can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/introduction-of-plastic-packaging-tax/plastic-packaging-tax#detailed-proposal>.

The Government has put together a package of over £100 million for research and innovation to tackle the issues that arise from plastic waste. £38 million was set aside through the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund, the last funding competition of which opened in June 2020. The Government has also committed £60 million of funding through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, alongside a £150 million investment from industry, towards the development of smart, sustainable plastic packaging (SSPP), which will aim to make the UK a world leader in sustainable packaging for consumer products.

■ **Plastics: Waste**

Fleur Anderson:

[68473]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Press release of 28 August 2021 entitled Next steps to tackle plastic waste, on what dates he plans to (a) open and (b) close his Department's consultation on single-use plastics.

Fleur Anderson:

[68474]

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the Press release of 28 August 2021 entitled Next steps to tackle plastic waste, whether the Government's consultation on single-use plastics will include a specific section on plastics in wet wipes.

Jo Churchill:

The Government intends to publish this consultation before the end of the year and our intention is that it will be open for responses for up to 12 weeks. Further

information about the details of the consultation and the items included will be shared in due course.

■ Tree Planting

Rachael Maskell:

[\[68366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) accelerate the UK's tree planting programme and (b) ensure that programme is on target to reach the Government's reforestation targets.

Rebecca Pow:

After centuries of deforestation, tree cover in the UK reached its low point in 1924, with only 5% of the UK forested after the First World War. We have now brought woodland cover back up to 13% across the UK.

The Government has committed to increasing tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament. In the England Trees Action Plan (ETAP), published in May and most recently the Net Zero Strategy, published in October, we set out commitments to improve tree planting rates, establishment and management of trees in England.

Further, within the Net Zero Strategy, we announced that we are boosting the existing £640 million Nature for Climate Fund with a further £124 million of new money, ensuring total spend of more than £750 million by 2025 on peat restoration, woodland creation and management in England – above and beyond what was promised in the manifesto.

Through the Nature for Climate Fund we have already provided funding to support planting in the Community Forests, including launching two new ones in Devon and Northumberland. Additionally, we have launched three woodland creation partnerships, developed the Woodlands for Water partnership, and launched the ground-breaking England Woodland Creation Offer.

We will continue to work with the Devolved Administrations to meet this UK-wide target in tree planting and establishment.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ Afghanistan: Overseas Aid

Charlotte Nichols:

[\[67289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the freezing of funds to the Taliban Government, what plans her Department has to ensure aid reaches people who require it in Afghanistan.

James Cleverly:

The Prime Minister has said that the Government will increase our overall assistance for Afghanistan to £286 million this financial year. On 31 October the Prime Minister announced the allocation of £50 million of that money for humanitarian purposes. The

UK Government is providing life-saving humanitarian assistance through the UN and other trusted Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on the ground, who are continuing to ensure that it reaches those who need it most. All aid that was being channelled through the Afghan Government has stopped. All UK aid is subject to strict monitoring and verification to ensure it is only used to help the vulnerable people it is intended for.

■ **Afghanistan: Refugees**

Crispin Blunt:

[\[68991\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how many vulnerable Afghans have been brought to the UK from Afghanistan since the end of the UK's evacuation flights on 28 August 2021.

James Cleverly:

The UK has supported over 1,300 people to leave Afghanistan since the end of Operation Pitting, this includes over 700 British Nationals and their dependents. The Government will continue to work with international partners to ensure those still in Afghanistan are able to depart the country safely. This includes holding the Taliban to their commitment to ensure safe passage.

■ **Afghanistan: Repatriation**

Kim Johnson:

[\[67296\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to secure safe passage out of Afghanistan for the nine former BBC staff and freelance journalists who have been subjected to a growing campaign of threats and violence.

James Cleverly:

It remains a top priority to help those British nationals and those Afghans eligible to come to the UK, to leave Afghanistan, including journalists. Since the end of the military evacuation, the Government has facilitated the departure of both Afghan and British nationals from Afghanistan. Although travel within Afghanistan remains dangerous, and many border crossings have been closed during this period, we have also helped both British nationals and eligible Afghans when they have crossed into third countries, from where our diplomatic missions have been able to support their onward travel to the UK. We will continue to work to take advantage of all opportunities to help those eligible to come to the UK to leave Afghanistan.

Kim Johnson:

[\[67297\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to repatriate British citizens and their families who are in Afghanistan and who have registered their presence and received no further information.

James Cleverly:

Our highest priority in Afghanistan is to help those British nationals, and those Afghans eligible to come to the UK, to leave Afghanistan. To help achieve this, the

UK Government continues to push the Taliban to allow free passage out of the country for foreign passport holders and eligible Afghans who wish to leave. Since the end of the military evacuation, we have facilitated the departure of British nationals and eligible family members on flights organised by the Qatari Government, and their onward journeys to the UK. We have also helped British nationals and eligible Afghans when they have crossed into third countries, from where our diplomatic missions have been able to support their onward travel to the UK. We will continue to work to take advantage of all opportunities to help those eligible to come to the UK to leave Afghanistan.

Lilian Greenwood:

[68241]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, what (a) advice and (b) consular assistance her Department is providing to British nationals (i) in Afghanistan and (ii) who have reached a third country from Afghanistan who wish to return to the UK; and how such advice and guidance is being made accessible to those people.

James Cleverly:

British nationals still in Afghanistan are strongly encouraged to register their presence with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office using a publically available form on our foreign travel advice page for Afghanistan. If they register, they will receive important updates on available consular services, as well as the advice that is publically available on the travel advice page. We advise British nationals who have reached a third country from Afghanistan to make contact with the nearest British Embassy, Consulate or High Commission where full consular services remain available.

■ Bangladesh: Religious Freedom

Feryal Clark:

[66265]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations she has made to her Bangladeshi counterparts on protecting the religious freedoms and freedom of belief of (a) Hindus, (b) all minority religious groups and (c) people with no religion in Bangladesh; and if she will make a statement.

Amanda Milling:

The UK Government is concerned about the recent violence at Hindu Durga Puja celebrations across various districts in Bangladesh. We engage with the Government of Bangladesh on the importance of freedom of religion or belief, which remains a priority for the UK Government. Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia, tweeted his concern on 21 October. The British High Commissioner to Bangladesh discussed the violence with Foreign Minister Momen on 26 October, and on 19 October expressed his condolences to the victims of the violence and the UK's support for those working for religious tolerance and harmony in Bangladesh and around the world.

■ Belarus: EU External Relations

Tony Lloyd:

[\[68124\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans she has for engagement in the Vienna conference on Belarus due to take place on 22 November 2021.

Wendy Morton:

The UK has taken a leading role in the international response to the Belarusian political crisis, working closely with partners. We welcome opportunities to maintain the spotlight on the shocking actions of the Belarusian authorities and to keep pressure on Lukashenko to change his behaviour. UK officials are in touch with their Austrian colleagues regarding planning for the upcoming conference on Belarus, including the question of UK participation.

■ Brazil: Indigenous Peoples

Catherine West:

[\[68387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of recent reports of indigenous people in Brazil being poisoned by mercury due to gold mining; and whether she has made representations to her Brazilian counterpart on those reports.

Wendy Morton:

We are aware of reports of indigenous people being poisoned by mercury linked to illegal gold mining in the Amazon. In September this year, the British Ambassador to Brazil discussed illegal gold mining with the local organisation Instituto Escolhas. We are also funding a three-year initiative, the Regional Action to Reduce Environmental Crime in the Amazon, to prevent and reduce environmental crime in the Amazon region, including in Brazil. The British Embassy in Brazil is committed to engaging widely with the Brazilian Government, civil society organisations, and other representatives to discuss issues related to indigenous rights, and will continue to monitor the situation.

Catherine West:

[\[68388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help protect the land rights of indigenous peoples in Brazil, in accordance to the 1988 Constitution that guaranteed land to all Brazil's 305 tribes and stated that indigenous territories should be demarcated.

Wendy Morton:

British diplomats regularly engage with indigenous leaders and civil society organisations in Brazil, who have voiced their concerns about draft legislation affecting land rights. For example, in August this year, our Deputy Ambassador met three indigenous leaders at the time of protests against the proposals. The UK is committed to defending and promoting the human rights of all, and will continue to monitor the developments around indigenous land rights in Brazil.

UK programmes designed to help speed recovery from the pandemic include a focus on vulnerable groups, including in the Amazon region, and support improvements in areas such as solar energy, primary health, and skills development. We have also supported local and indigenous people in the Amazon through our International Climate Finance programmes, with nearly £120 million invested since 2012.

■ Brazil: UN Climate Conference 2021

Catherine West:

[\[68386\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent conversations she has had with her Brazilian counterpart regarding Brazil's participation in COP26 and their commitments to reaching net zero by 2050.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government has engaged extensively with Brazil on COP26 and its climate commitments, including on deforestation. In August this year, COP President Designate, Alok Sharma met Brazil's Foreign, Environment, Agriculture, and Economy Ministers alongside other stakeholders. In September, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary met President Bolsonaro and his Foreign Minister at the UN General Assembly. In October, I met the Brazilian Ambassador to the UK, as did the Foreign Secretary's Climate Envoy, Nick Bridge. UK diplomats in Brazil have been engaging intensively with all levels of the Brazilian Government.

We have also worked to secure important net zero commitments from 11 Brazilian states, covering over 60% of Brazil's emissions. After COP26, our focus will be on working with the Brazilian authorities on the implementation of these national and subnational commitments, supported in part by new funding announced by the Prime Minister.

■ Climate Change: Slavery

Fleur Anderson:

[\[69211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions her Department has had with (a) other national governments and (b) international organisations on links between climate change and modern-slavery.

Vicky Ford:

As hosts of the United Nations (UN) Conference of Parties (COP) 26 climate summit, the UK is leading international efforts on climate change and setting the bar for countries around the world to follow. We continue to advocate for progress to eradicate modern slavery and are proud that under our G7 Presidency we secured the cooperation of G7 leaders to tackle modern slavery in global supply chains.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has engaged leading academic and civil society organisations to better understand the linkages between climate change and modern slavery. The former UK Envoy for Migration and Modern Slavery was a speaker at an event hosted by Anti-Slavery International on Climate Change, Modern Slavery and a Just Transition in April 2021. Through the Human

Rights Council, the UK has also worked to raise standards in relation to environmental protection and human rights. The FCDO funded the UN University Centre for Policy Research to produce the report *Developing Freedom* (2020) which considers how fighting modern slavery, forced labour and human trafficking (Sustainable Development Goal 8.7) can contribute to sustainable development, including tackling climate change. The report can be found at: www.developingfreedom.org.

■ Cyprus: Peace Negotiations

Andrew Percy:

[68200]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made on the prospects of Cypriot reunification.

Wendy Morton:

The UK remains committed to supporting the UN process to reach a Cyprus Settlement in line with UN parameters based on the model of a Bi-zonal, Bi-communal Federation with political equality - a model that we believe to be broad enough to address the concerns of both sides. UK Ministers and Officials continue to engage all sides to urge flexibility and compromise to that end.

■ Developing Countries: Sustainable Development

Chris Law:

[66210]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to engage with (a) devolved governments, (b) civil society, (c) businesses and (d) trade unions and (e) other stakeholders on the commitment in the UK Government's Voluntary National Review of Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Amanda Milling:

We are committed to working collaboratively with partners on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is only through collaborative action that we can achieve the SDGs.

Civil society and the private sector are important policy and delivery partners for FCDO and our continued partnership remains critical in ensuring UK aid reaches those most in need and we leave no one behind. We continue to engage regularly with civil society including through bodies such as Bond. We work closely with a range of businesses both directly and through the UN Global Compact Network UK. FCDO engages with trade unions in a number of fora, including through the Ethical Trading Initiative and the board of the UK National Contact Point on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) guidelines for multinational enterprises. The devolved administrations remain responsible for implementing the SDGs in areas of devolved competence and we continue to engage them on our shared objectives.

Chris Law:

[\[66213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to support civil society around the world to promote SDG implementation and monitoring.

Amanda Milling:

We understand the global importance of the SDGs and are committed to working collaboratively with civil society organisations across the world to deliver change. Civil society organisations are important partners for the FCDO, delivering UK aid to those most in need, supporting policy development and tackling the biggest global challenges of our time. We continue to engage regularly with civil society at senior level including through bodies such as Bond and the organisations it represents, for instance discussing the SDGs at a Bond SDG Group town hall meeting in September. We provide direct support to civil society organisations through our country programmes and through central funds such as UK Aid Match and UK Aid Direct which work towards sustained poverty reduction and the achievement of the SDGs.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Children's Rights**

Tim Loughton:

[\[68099\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that child rights and well-being are embedded across its policies; and if she will make training on child rights, developed and delivered by UK NGOs, mandatory for all staff in her Department, both in the UK and overseas.

Wendy Morton:

The UK Government is fully committed to the promotion, protection, and realisation of children's rights, and to the principles laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are a central part of the FCDO's work, whether through ensuring access to quality education and healthcare, or through protecting them from violence, and working to end child marriage.

The FCDO recently collaborated with the Bond Child Rights Working Group to hold a learning session on child rights, and specifically the international child rights framework. We are considering further capability development sessions on child rights issues in 2022 based on knowledge needs across the department, and will continue to work closely with the BOND Child Rights Working Group as we develop these plans.

■ **Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Stonewall**

Tim Loughton:

[\[67045\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what funding her Department has allocated to Stonewall in each of the last five years; and for what projects.

Wendy Morton:

The UK is committed to the principle of non-discrimination on any grounds, including on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. The FCDO works closely with a range of civil society organisations, including Stonewall, to defend the human rights of LGBT+ people around the world. Stonewall is widely recognised as a world-leading advocate in this space. As co-chair of the Equal Rights Coalition, the UK is working with Stonewall and two other civil society co-chairs to deliver on our collective ambition to ensure that all LGBT+ people can live their lives free from the discrimination and violence that persists today. The following details funding provided to Stonewall as part of our international programming work:

2021/22: £80,000; 2020/21: £140,219; 2019/20: £105,459.55; 2018/19: £101,426

Projects include:

- Funding for Stonewall and Kaleidoscope Trust for their role as Equal Rights Coalition co-chair support.
- Project: Ending LGBT Exclusion in the International Human Rights System.
- Commonwealth Equality Project.
- Defending the rights of LGBT people in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus.
- Reducing LGBT Hate Crime.

■ Greece: Foreign Relations**Ruth Jones:**[\[68449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she last spoke to her Greek counterpart.

Wendy Morton:

The Foreign Secretary last spoke to her Greek counterpart on 25 October.

■ Kosovo: Serbia**Andrew Percy:**[\[68201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the prospects of a settlement in relation to Kosovo and Serbia.

Wendy Morton:

We continue to believe that a settlement between Kosovo and Serbia is both possible and essential. The UK supports the EU-facilitated Dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, with the aim of a comprehensive and sustainable normalisation agreement to the benefit of both countries' people. We welcome the recent interim agreement reached under the Dialogue on the car number plate issue, and encourage both sides to maintain their commitment to the Dialogue process.

■ Nigeria: Buildings**Ruth Jones:** [\[68453\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with authorities in Nigeria on the high-rise building that collapsed while under construction in the city of Lagos.

Vicky Ford:

The UK is saddened by the tragic event that occurred in Lagos with the collapse of a high-rise building and we offer our condolences to the families of those affected. The British Deputy High Commissioner in Lagos has extended his sympathies to the Governor and Deputy Governor of Lagos State.

■ Saudi Arabia: Detainees**Margaret Ferrier:** [\[66201\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the implications for its policies of the continued detention of human rights activists Dr Mohammed Fahad al-Qahtani, Mohamed Al-Otaibi and Mohammed al-Rabea; and what representations her Department has made on those cases to relevant stakeholders in the last year.

James Cleverly:

The UK signed a statement at the UN Human Rights Council on 15 September 2020. It called for the release of all political detainees in Saudi Arabia, and noted concern over reports of torture, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention. On 26 October 2021, Lord Ahmad spoke to the President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission, and raised a number of human rights issues, including specific cases and women's rights defenders.

■ Somalia: Police**Kenny MacAskil:** [\[68471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much financial assistance the Government has provided to the Somali police's Goodir Unit.

Kenny MacAskil: [\[68472\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much public funding the Government has provided for the staffing costs of the Somali police's Goodir Unit.

James Cleverly:

The UK is working with the Somali Police to improve their capability and capacity for investigating and stopping terrorist threats, in line with international human rights standards. Our support builds on the Somali Police Force's capability to combat the threat from Al Shabaab and strengthens compliance with international human rights

standards. It complements other counter-terrorism work the UK conducts in the region in line with the UK's international counter-terrorism priorities.

■ **Sudan: Military Coups**

Tommy Sheppard: [\[68346\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking in response to the coup in Sudan.

Tommy Sheppard: [\[68347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans she has to call for the restoration of civilian government in Sudan.

Vicky Ford:

We strongly condemn the actions of the Sudanese military on 25 October, including to detain Prime Minister Hamdok and members of the civilian government and declare a state of emergency. Over the past two years, the UK has taken a leading role to support Sudan on their delicate path from oppressive autocratic rule to freedom and democracy; the acts of the military represents a betrayal of the Sudanese people and that journey. With our Sudan Quad partners (KSA, UAE and US) we issued a statement on 3 November calling for the release of all those unlawfully detained and restoration of the civilian-led transitional government. We expressed our condemnation at a meeting of the UN Security Council meeting on 26 October, which was followed by a statement from members of the Council. We also secured a Special Session at the UN Human Rights Council on 5 November to discuss the situation.

I personally commended the African Union (AU)'s leadership in their decision to suspend Sudan from all activities at a joint AU-UN Security Council meeting on 28 October and reiterated my concerns over the actions of the Sudanese military in a Westminster Hall debate on 3 November. With our international partners we continue to maintain public international pressure on the military to return to the democratic transition in order to deliver the freedom, peace and justice called for by the Sudanese people.

■ **UN Climate Conference 2021**

Caroline Lucas: [\[66181\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 23 September 2021 to Question 53869 on UN Climate Conference 2021, if she will publish the details of all meetings which (a) she and (b) her predecessor have held since her Department's latest transparency publication of meetings from October 2020 to December 2020, with (i) Heads of States, (ii) Ambassadors, (iii) business leaders, and (iv) civil society, where COP26 was the leading topic of discussion.

Vicky Ford:

Climate diplomacy is a priority for the Foreign Secretary's engagement, as it was for her predecessor, and at the centre of the work of the whole FCDO diplomatic network. In order to help deliver a successful COP26, the Foreign Secretary, and FCDO ministers have regularly raised climate issues in a range of meetings, including bilateral engagements, negotiations and multilateral summits.

In 2021 the Foreign Secretary and her predecessor have discussed climate issues in more than 100 engagements with counterparts across the world.

In line with previous updates, a list of FCDO ministerial meetings with external organisations will be published to the FCDO transparency data page in due course at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fcdo-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings>.

Caroline Lucas:**[66182]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 53869 on UN Climate Conference 2021, for what reason there were no meetings relating to COP26 in the latest transparency publication of her Department's meetings from October 2020 to December 2020.

Vicky Ford:

Climate diplomacy is a priority for the Foreign Secretary's engagement and at the centre of the whole FCDO diplomatic network's work. In order to help deliver a successful COP26, the Foreign Secretary, and FCDO ministers regularly raise climate issues in a range of meetings, including bilateral engagements, negotiations and multilateral summits.

Transparency returns do not include meetings with other governments. The meetings cover a very wide range of topics, including climate change. As a cross-cutting issue, aspects of climate change may also feature in relevant meetings where it is not the only or main topic.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**■ Air Pollution: Health Education****Geraint Davies:****[56744]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the NHS asthma bundle, launched in September 2021, in informing the public about the health risks of air pollution; what discussions he has had with (a) chief executives of NHS England and (b) ministers of health in (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland on the successful implementation of that bundle.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 20 October 2021]: No specific assessment has been made or discussions have taken place. However, NHS England and NHS Improvement have

established a community of practice for children and young people with asthma, to gain feedback on the implementation of the standards outlined in the national bundle of care for children and young people with asthma.

The bundle sets out evidence-based interventions to help children, young people, families and carers, to control and reduce the risk of asthma attacks and sets out three key standards on air pollution. All healthcare professionals working with children and young people with expected or diagnosed asthma should understand the sources and dangers of air pollution and discuss risks and potential mitigation strategies with them. Children and young people, parents and carers should receive information on managing asthma with regards to air pollution. Integrated care systems should also ensure they are linked with schools where education on asthma should be provided.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks and Drugs: Rehabilitation**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[66229\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding for drug and alcohol rehabilitation services; and what level of funding has been allocated to those services in (a) York and (b) England in each of the last 10 years.

Maggie Throup:

Information on funding specifically allocated for drug and alcohol residential rehabilitation services is not collected centrally. Local authorities are responsible for commissioning these services to meet the needs of their population.

■ **Alcoholic Drinks: Death**

Rachael Maskell:

[\[66231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he has taken to help reduce the number of alcohol related deaths.

Maggie Throup:

NHS England and NHS Improvement have invested £27 million in a four year programme to establish alcohol care teams in hospitals to provide specialist alcohol interventions where needed. We have also invested £80 million in substance misuse treatment in 2021/22, with £9.8 million for medically managed inpatient detoxification units treating those most dependent on alcohol. This is in addition to local authorities' funding for substance misuse treatment from the Public Health Grant.

The newly established Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will also focus on tackling alcohol-related health harms.

■ Alcoholic Drinks: Labelling

Dr Rupa Huq: [\[63810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of bringing forward legislative proposals to legally require the listing of ingredients in alcoholic drinks.

Alex Sobel: [\[63865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of making ingredient labelling on alcoholic drinks a legal requirement.

Maggie Throup:

Nutritional information and an ingredients list are mandatory labelling requirement for drinks with 1.2% alcohol by volume (ABV) or below. This requirement is set out in the Retained EU Regulation No 1169/2011. No assessment has been made on the merits of legislating the ingredients list of alcoholic products with more than 1.2% ABV.

However, as part of the Government's 'Tackling Obesity' strategy, published in July 2020, the Government committed to consult on whether mandatory calorie labelling should be introduced on all prepacked alcohol, as well as alcoholic drinks sold in the out of home sector, for alcohol products over 1.2% ABV. The upcoming consultation will seek evidence on the merits of introducing calorie labelling. Respondents to the consultation can suggest additional labelling requirements for consideration.

■ Allergies: Health Services

Catherine West: [\[64702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department will take to ensure equity of NHS healthcare access for allergic communities throughout all regions.

Catherine West: [\[64703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his policy is on improving access to NHS allergy services to ensure early recognition and diagnosis at primary care level.

Gillian Keegan:

The majority of those with allergies can be supported by locally commissioned primary or other non-specialist allergy services. Specialist allergy clinics are available for those with more severe or complex allergic conditions. To support healthcare professionals in the implementation of clear care pathways, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published guidance on the diagnosis and treatment including how to identify allergies and when to refer to specialist care.

The Royal College of General Practitioners have developed an allergy e-learning online resource to support continuing professional development and revalidation,

which aims to educate general practitioners about the various presentations of allergic disease, how to assess an atopic patient and when to investigate in primary care or refer to secondary care.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Allergy's report 'Meeting the challenges of the National Allergy Crisis' outlined some of the challenges in both equity of provision and diagnosis in primary care for people living with allergies. We are working with the APPG and stakeholders alongside NHS England to review the recommendations and ensure those living with allergies are appropriately supported.

■ Ambulance Services: Standards

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[68300\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of ambulance waiting times in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each month of (i) 2020 and (ii) 2021.

Colleen Fletcher:

[\[68301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of patients who have died while waiting for an emergency ambulance in (a) Coventry, (b) the West Midlands and (c) England in each month of (i) 2020 and (ii) 2021.

Edward Argar:

Information on the number of patients who have died while waiting for an emergency ambulance is not held centrally.

Data on ambulance waiting times for Coventry is not held centrally. Ambulance waiting times for Category 1, 2, 3 and 4 incidents in England for January 2020 to September 2021 is shown in the following table.

MEAN WAITING TIME IN HOURS, MINUTES AND SECONDS

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	
January 2020	00:07:06	00:20:55	00:56:41	01:14:52
February 2020	00:07:18	00:22:07	01:07:15	01:38:40
March 2020	00:08:07	00:32:06	01:30:09	01:55:50
April 2020	00:07:03	00:18:29	00:39:45	01:06:59
May 2020	00:06:31	00:13:29	00:28:51	00:51:08
June 2020	00:06:35	00:14:53	00:36:19	00:59:10
July 2020	00:06:46	00:16:41	00:43:24	01:09:19
August 2020	00:07:04	00:20:03	00:56:42	01:24:54
September 2020	00:07:10	00:22:33	01:06:50	01:38:06

MEAN WAITING TIME IN HOURS, MINUTES AND SECONDS

October 2020	00:07:23	00:25:21	01:10:36	01:46:56
November 2020	00:07:09	00:21:16	00:58:29	01:32:40
December 2020	00:07:25	00:27:51	01:21:34	02:06:11
January 2021	00:07:31	00:29:39	01:27:33	02:11:52
February 2021	00:06:46	00:18:19	00:44:54	01:08:48
March 2021	00:06:47	00:18:26	00:49:25	01:20:59
April 2021	00:07:00	00:20:16	00:59:21	01:45:36
May 2021	00:07:25	00:24:35	01:24:22	02:31:44
June 2021	00:07:54	00:30:42	01:54:40	02:30:34
July 2021	00:08:33	00:41:04	02:33:43	02:57:40
August 2021	00:08:28	00:38:39	02:14:24	02:39:44
September 2021	00:09:01	00:45:30	02:35:45	03:07:45

Source: NHS Ambulance Quality Indicators

The following table shows waiting times for Category 1, 2, 3 and 4 incidents for West Midlands Ambulance Trust for January 2020 to September 2021.

MEAN WAITING TIME IN HOURS, MINUTES AND SECONDS

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	
January 2020	00:06:59	00:12:29	00:32:47	00:48:36
February 2020	00:07:09	00:13:06	00:41:16	00:56:45
March 2020	00:07:08	00:14:46	00:50:22	01:01:48
April 2020	00:06:58	00:11:45	00:23:23	00:30:23
May 2020	00:07:00	00:10:57	00:17:13	00:25:14
June 2020	00:06:49	00:10:52	00:18:43	00:27:59
July 2020	00:06:55	00:11:21	00:22:47	00:33:49
August 2020	00:06:56	00:12:09	00:29:15	00:40:33
September 2020	00:07:05	00:13:15	00:39:50	00:54:57

MEAN WAITING TIME IN HOURS, MINUTES AND SECONDS

October 2020	00:07:11	00:13:23	00:40:20	00:58:48
November 2020	00:06:48	00:13:39	00:42:50	00:56:46
December 2020	00:06:57	00:14:46	00:47:41	01:01:10
January 2021	00:06:51	00:14:48	00:51:45	01:03:04
February 2021	00:06:35	00:12:01	00:25:06	00:35:28
March 2021	00:06:37	00:12:14	00:28:24	00:42:30
April 2021	00:06:35	00:12:39	00:32:49	00:49:45
May 2021	00:06:55	00:15:31	01:00:31	01:18:17
June 2021	00:07:10	00:18:38	01:29:42	01:56:59
July 2021	00:07:46	00:30:37	02:46:13	03:06:15
August 2021	00:07:31	00:22:49	01:53:02	02:12:04
September 2021	00:07:43	00:30:59	02:27:18	02:52:06

Source: NHS Ambulance Quality Indicators

■ Association of Directors of Public Health

Rachael Maskell:

[\[60446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he last met with the Association of Directors of Public Health; and what their advice was on the management of covid-19.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 26 October 2021]: The UK Health Security Agency meets regularly with the Association of Directors of Public Health on COVID-19 related issues. This engagement informed the development of the Government's autumn/winter strategy for COVID-19.

■ Batteries: Death and Injuries

Jo Gideon:

[\[58549\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what measures are in place for the NHS to collect clinical data and record injuries and deaths of children resulting from the ingestion of button batteries in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

The NHS England commissioned National Child Mortality Database Programme collects information on all live-born children resident in England who die before their

18th birthday, which includes information on deaths resulting from the ingestion of button batteries.

For injuries caused by ingestion of button batteries, the Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS) includes relevant codes that enable us to identify where children have attended accident and emergency having ingested button batteries. However, the ECDS is a new data set therefore NHS Digital would require an assessment and validation of these codes.

■ Contraceptives

Dame Diana Johnson:

[\[64558\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department's policy on emergency contraception is in line with the World Health Organization's position that emergency contraception is not considered to be an abortifacient and conscientious objection would therefore not apply in this instance.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 1 November 2021]: The Department position is in line with that of the World Health Organization that any substance or device that prevents implantation is not an abortifacient. As emergency contraception is not a method of abortion, the conscientious objection exemption in the Abortion Act 1967 would not apply.

■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

Rachael Maskell:

[\[60445\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the criteria is for triggering Plan B of his Covid-19 Winter Plan.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 26 October 2021]: The 'COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021' stated that 'Plan B' would only be enacted if the data suggests further measures are necessary to protect the National Health Service. We will make a judgement on whether Plan B is necessary based on a number of indicators, informed by advice from the Government's scientific and clinical experts.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[60456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with hon. Members together with the Chief Medical Officer to explain the (a) current rise in covid-19 infection rates and (b) strategy for tackling the rise in covid-19 infection rates from a public health perspective.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 26 October 2021]: The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care regularly updates hon. Members on the Government's public health strategy for tackling COVID-19. Departmental Ministers and senior officials also brief Parliamentarians on the course of the pandemic. We published 'COVID-19

Response: Autumn and Winter 2021' on 14 September, which outlines the Government's strategy in England over the coming months.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[65463\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the rate of covid-19 infection.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 2 November 2021]: 'Covid-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021' sets out the steps we are taking to reduce the rate of infection. This includes pharmaceutical interventions such as vaccines, supporting the National Health Service and social care, identifying and isolating positive cases to limit transmission, advising people on how to protect themselves and others, and pursuing an international approach. We have also set out further steps, such as mandating face coverings and introducing vaccine-only COVID-19 status certification in certain settings, which would be enacted if the data suggests further measures are necessary to protect the NHS.

■ **Coronavirus: Protective Clothing**

Owen Thompson:

[\[67211\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost of publishing the names of companies in the fast-track PPE procurement lane.

Edward Argar:

We have not made this estimate.

Nadia Whittome:

[\[67319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will require the wearing of face coverings on public transport in response to the increasing number of cases of covid-19, hospitalisations and deaths.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 4 November 2021]: The 'COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021' sets out that if the data suggests the National Health Service is likely to come under unsustainable pressure, the Government will implement its prepared 'Plan B' for England. This would introduce measures to control transmission of the virus, such as requiring people to wear face coverings in some settings. The exact settings will be announced if and when Plan B is implemented.

■ **Coronavirus: Vaccination**

Catherine West:

[\[64705\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to (a) help ensure that there is mutual recognition of covid-19 vaccine records from countries outside the EU and (b) ensure that people who have been double-vaccinated abroad with a certified vaccine can obtain a covid-19 vaccine pass in the UK.

Maggie Throup:

Those who are fully vaccinated from over 135 countries and territories will no longer need to quarantine or take a day eight test when arriving in the United Kingdom. Over 80 countries and territories have already accepted UK COVID-19 certificates, including the NHS COVID Pass, to demonstrate an individual's status, including vaccination records and proof of recovery following a positive National Health Service polymerase chain reaction test.

The NHS Covid Pass programme has now linked with the European Union Digital COVID Certificate, ensuring that the UK and EU can digitally verify each other's vaccination status certificates. This also provides access to non-EU countries such as Norway, Switzerland, Israel and Iceland.

A pilot was launched in England on 30 September to enable residents vaccinated abroad to request that their vaccines are uploaded to the national database. Vaccines equivalent to those UK-approved, regulated by the European Medicines Agency, Health Canada, Swissmedic, the Therapeutic Goods Administration and United States Food and Drug Administration be recorded on an NHS COVID Pass.

Theresa Villiers:[\[67095\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the NHS plans to include booster vaccinations in the NHS app.

Theresa Villiers:[\[67098\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ask NHS England to include records of covid-19 booster vaccinations in the NHS App.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 4 November 2021]: There are currently no plans to record booster vaccinations on the NHS COVID Pass, as they are not required for domestic certification in England.

Internationally, no countries currently require boosters of a COVID-19 vaccination as part of their entry requirements. However, we are aware that some countries have begun introducing expiry dates on vaccination for travel. The Government is reviewing the implications of booster doses for international travel and we are currently exploring whether and how boosters could be incorporated into the NHS COVID travel Pass.

Theresa Villiers:[\[67097\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ask NHS England to ensure that people who do not have access to online services are notified of their covid-19 booster vaccination appointment by other non-digital means.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 4 November 2021]: The National Health Service will contact those who are eligible for a COVID-19 booster vaccination by letter, email or text message. For those unable to book their appointment online themselves, it is possible for

bookings to be made on someone's behalf. Appointments can also be booked by calling 119.

The NHS Immunisation Management Service may contact those who have received a letter but not booked an appointment by telephone to offer further help and support if required.

Walk-in centres are also available for COVID-19 booster vaccine appointments, for those who do not have access to online services.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[67117\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps people who are not currently registered with a GP, don't have a NHS number and who have been fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the MHRA should take to obtain a covid pass; and if he will make a statement.

Maggie Throup:

While registration with a general practitioner is not required to obtain the NHS COVID Pass letter or online via NHS.UK, a National Health Service number is required. Where required temporary NHS numbers can be created, by the administering centre for those receiving COVID-19 vaccinations and the site can assist in identifying a temporary NHS number. Individuals can also find their NHS number through the online 'Find Your NHS Number' service.

Vicky Foxcroft:

[\[67213\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of vaccinating children in year 7 who are 11 years old against covid-19 in the context of their 12 year old peers in the same school year being eligible for that vaccination.

Maggie Throup:

There has been no specific assessment as there is currently no COVID-19 vaccine authorised in the United Kingdom for use in those under 12 years old.

Dr Rupa Huq:

[\[67214\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of publishing details of plans to offer second doses of a covid-19 vaccine to young people aged 12 to 17 years who are not (a) at increased risk from infection or (b) living with someone who is immunosuppressed.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 4 November 2021]: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the independent body which advises the Government on vaccination use and prioritisation, will be reviewing data on second doses for 16 to 17 year olds this autumn. A review of second doses for young people aged 12 to 15 years old will follow, once more data on second doses in this age group is available internationally.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Ivory**Luke Pollard:** [\[69184\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of ivory items owned by or collated by his Department.

Edward Argar:

The Department does not own, nor has it collated, any ivory items.

■ Drugs: Rehabilitation**Rachael Maskell:** [\[64672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he will take to consult on his Department's drugs strategy prior to its publication.

Maggie Throup:

The development of Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs involved extensive consultation with stakeholders, including a call for evidence. The Government published a response to parts one and two of Dame Carol Black's independent review on 27 July 2021. This announced our commitment to publishing a new long-term drug strategy later this year informed by the latest evidence, including from Dame Carol Black's review.

■ Endometriosis: Diagnosis**Dame Margaret Hodge:** [\[68102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to tackle the delay in diagnosis of women suffering from endometriosis.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute of Health Research hosted research into the experience of women presenting with endometriosis-like symptoms in primary care. The results, published earlier this year, will help our understanding of delays in diagnosis and inform ongoing work on the Women's Health Strategy.

A call for evidence was launched to inform the priorities, content and actions of the Women's Health Strategy and included questions on gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis. Following analysis of the responses to the call for evidence, we will set out our commitments on endometriosis within the Strategy.

■ General Practitioners**Rachael Maskell:** [\[69129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the ratio is of patients to GPs in (a) England, (b) Yorkshire and (c) York.

Rachael Maskell:

[69130]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the ratio has been for patients to GPs in each of the last 10 years or the closest period for which data is held, in England.

Maria Caulfield:

The data requested for Yorkshire and York is not collected centrally, as general practice workforce data at city or country level is not available. The following table shows the ratio of patients to full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors in general practice in England from September 2015 to September 2021, the latest available comparable data.

SEPTEMBER 2015	1,721
September 2016	1,675
September 2017	1,709
September 2018	1,756
September 2019	1,742
September 2020	1,718
September 2021	1,685

Source: NHS Digital

Notes:

1. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. One would indicate they work a full set of hours (37.5), 0.5 that they worked half time. In GPs in Training Grade contracts 1 FTE = 40 hours and these FTEs have been converted to the standard measure of 1 FTE = 37.5 hours for consistency.
2. Figures shown do not include staff working in prisons, army bases, educational establishments, specialist care centres including drug rehabilitation centres, walk-in centres and other alternative settings outside of traditional general practice such as urgent treatment centres and minor injury units.
3. Figures from September 2015 and September 2016 should be treated with caution as the data submission rates from practices were appreciably lower than for subsequent reporting periods. The reported figures for the early years of the collection may be lower than the true picture. In September 2015, which was the first extract from the new Workforce Minimum Data Set, only three of four Health Education England regions submitted data. Consequently, September 2015 figures should be treated with additional caution.

4. Data from September 2021 is the third release to be based on the monthly collection of general practice workforce information. Following stakeholder feedback and the move to monthly publications NHS Digital are reviewing the implementation of methodological changes introduced in the June 2021 publication. Until this review is complete, all published figures remain provisional and is not presented in a time series. The time series will be reinstated once the review has been concluded and a methodology agreed. Data as at the last day of the applicable month.

■ Health Services: Children

Kim Leadbeater:

[\[66266\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding has been allocated from the NHS Covid Recovery Fund for (a) additional capacity for children with disability and care needs, (b) children and adolescent mental health services and (c) SEND provision.

Gillian Keegan:

[Holding answer 4 November 2021]: On 6 September 2021, the Government announced an additional £5.4 billion for the National Health Service to support the COVID-19 response over the next six months, bringing the total to over £34 billion in 2021/22. This includes £2 billion to tackle the elective backlog to reduce waiting times for patients, including disabled children.

On 5 March 2021, we announced that £79 million of the additional £500 million for mental health and NHS workforce will be used to significantly expand mental health services for children.

This year, councils have access to £51.3 billion to deliver their core services, including a £1.7 billion grant for social care. To support local areas, the Government has given over £6 billion in un-ringfenced funding directly to councils to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 spending pressures, including for children's social care. On 27 October, the Government announced £1.8 billion to recover children and young people's lost learning as a result of the pandemic. This brings total investment specifically to support education recovery to £4.9 billion since the 2020/21 academic year.

■ Health: Recreation Spaces

Peter Dowd:

[\[60440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the (a) implications for his policies of the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group's action plan, *Unlocking Green Growth: A plan for the ornamental horticulture and landscaping industry*, published on 7 September 2021 and (b) the benefits of gardens and green spaces to the UK's physical and mental wellbeing.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 26 October 2021]: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is working with the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group and the sector to explore where the Government can support the opportunities outlined in the report and its associated action plan.

The Department of Health and Social Care is working with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, NHS England and NHS Improvement, Natural England and other partners on the 'Preventing and tackling mental ill health through green social prescribing' project, a £5.77 million cross-Government project to increase the use of and connectivity to green social prescribing services and activities in England. This aims to improve mental health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, reduce demand on the health and social care system and develop best practice in making local systems more resilient and accessible.

Heroin: Rehabilitation**Rachael Maskell:**[\[64674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will provide pilots for heroine assisted treatment programmes as part of his drugs strategy.

Maggie Throup:

The drug strategy is currently under development. Heroin assisted treatment (HAT) is an option open to local areas under the existing legal framework. The Government allows areas to provide HAT where the need is demonstrated and where the relevant licences are obtained from the Home Office.

Hospitals: Coronavirus**Daisy Cooper:**[\[68465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish an assessment of the effect of covid-19 hospitalisations on (a) the availability of hospital (i) beds and (ii) staff and (b) elective procedures.

Edward Argar:

NHS England and NHS Improvement will publish a delivery plan for reducing waiting lists caused by COVID-19 later this year.

Influenza: Vaccination**Mark Pritchard:**[\[68160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the availability of the winter flu vaccine in (a) The Wrekin constituency, (b) Telford and Wrekin and (c) Shropshire.

Maggie Throup:

No specific assessment has been made. General practitioners and community pharmacists are responsible for ordering flu vaccines from suppliers to deliver the

national flu vaccination programme to adults. Vaccination providers determine the number of vaccines to purchase each year, based on their local populations, and eligible cohorts.

However, the Department works with flu vaccine manufacturers to ensure there are sufficient doses available. We have also secured a central stock of vaccines to meet additional demand which providers can access once they have utilised their own locally procured stock.

■ NHS: Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Rachael Maskell:

[\[68359\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what funding he will make available to support NHS premises and operations to help the UK meet its net zero target.

Edward Argar:

The Government is investing over £280 million in decarbonisation projects across the National Health Service through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has confirmed a further £1.425 billion will be made available across the public sector for net zero estates investment, including the NHS.

The recent Spending Review included significant capital investment to allow trusts to refurbish and maintain their estate, including those which support the net zero target.

We will be publishing a net zero building standard later this year to accompany our commitment to build 48 new hospitals by 2030.

■ Obesity: Fast Food

Peter Gibson:

[\[65514\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative assessment he has made of the correlation between obesity rates and availability of fast-food outlets.

Maggie Throup:

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities has not completed an analysis to assess the correlation between obesity rates and availability of fast-food outlets.

In 2018, Public Health England published 'Fast food outlets: density by local authority in England'. This used Food Standards Agency data from 2017 to calculate the density of fast-food outlets by local authority. The analysis did not assess the correlation between obesity rates and availability of fast-food outlets but showed that there are higher concentrations of fast-food outlets in England's most deprived communities. Evidence from health survey data shows that the prevalence of overweight and obesity also rises with deprivation and fruit and vegetable consumption falls with deprivation.

■ Organs: Donors

Alex Sobel:

[\[68415\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to improve public awareness of organ donation.

Maria Caulfield:

NHS Blood and Transplant promotes organ donation through a range of campaigns such as Organ Donation Week in September 2021 and 'Leave them certain'. A comprehensive campaign to raise awareness of organ donation took place preceding the change to deemed consent in England in May 2020. In December 2020, research indicated that 75% of the population were aware of the change.

NHS Blood and Transplant's Community Investment Scheme has a specific focus on engaging with black and south Asian communities. The programme supports 35 grassroots, community and faith-based organisations with £100,000 committed to raising awareness of living donation. From September 2021, organ donation and transplantation is being taught as part of the secondary school curriculum in England, aimed at promoting awareness in young people.

■ Parents: Advisory Services

Seema Malhotra:

[\[66196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, which areas will benefit from the transformation of Start for Life and family help services in half of the local authority areas across England; and whether the Government plans for that commitment to be rolled out across all local authorities.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 3 November 2021]: The autumn Budget announced £300 million to transform Start for Life and family help services by creating a network of 'family hubs', in addition to investing in tailored breastfeeding services and infant and parent mental health.

Half of all upper tier local authorities in England will benefit from this investment, ensuring that thousands of families will see an improvement in the quality and accessibility of the services they receive. Whilst this funding will benefit 75 authorities, the evidence and learning from this investment will improve services across England where they are most needed.

The Department for Health and Social Care and the Department for Education will work together to determine the best approach for selecting which local authorities will receive this funding. We will set out further details in due course.

■ Pregnancy: Sodium Valproate

Cat Smith:

[\[68345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will ensure that the Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme be given a SNOMED code.

Maria Caulfield:

In October 2021 NHS Digital received requests to add additional codes to specify 'valproate' in the term. NHS Digital, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and NHS England and NHS Improvement's sodium valproate programme are working together to support the SNOMED CT coding requirements of the programme.

NHS Digital are currently developing the Valproate Annual Risk Acknowledgement Form and Referral for Valproate Annual Risk Acknowledgement Form and intend to publish them in the SNOMED CT UK Clinical Edition release on 1 December.

■ Pre-school Education**Seema Malhotra:**[\[66195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has for who will deliver early years services, including perinatal mental health support, breastfeeding services and parenting programmes.

Maggie Throup:

[Holding answer 3 November 2021]: The responsibility for the Start for Life period from conception until the age of two rests with a number of delivery partners including local authorities, the National Health Service, and the third sector.

The majority of the £300 million funding announced at the autumn Budget is expected to go to local authorities. However, the Government expects local areas to build on existing best practice in joint commissioning. This will ensure clear accountability as well as more integrated services that benefit families and their babies.

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education will work together to determine the best approach to allocating this funding and we will set out further details in due course.

■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges**Lee Anderson:**[\[69192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of classifying rheumatoid arthritis as a medical condition which provides exemption from the prescription charge.

Edward Argar:

We currently have no plans to review or extend the prescription charge medical exemptions list to include rheumatoid arthritis. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are already dispensed free of charge and extensive arrangements are in place to help those most in need. To support those who do not qualify for an exemption, the cost of prescriptions can be spread by purchasing a prescription pre-payment certificate. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

■ Rare Diseases: Medical Treatments

Alex Sobel: [\[68420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the NICE review of its methods and processes enables patients with rare and very rare conditions to access innovative treatments through the NHS.

Alex Sobel: [\[68421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of proposals for change to NICE methods and processes on the Government's policy for rare disease patients to have improved access to specialist care, treatments and drugs as set out in the UK Rare Diseases Framework published in January 2021.

Alex Sobel: [\[68423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps NICE will take to ensure that responses from stakeholders to the review of its methods and processes are considered as part of that review.

Edward Argar:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is an independent body responsible for the methods and processes used in the development of its recommendations.

NICE assesses the clinical and cost effectiveness of all new medicines and recommends the majority of the medicines it appraises for use in the National Health Service, including medicines for patients with rare diseases. As part of the ongoing review, NICE has given particular consideration to the suitability of its methods and processes for treatments for rare diseases. A number of the changes proposed by NICE are expected to ensure that its methods continue to support patient access to innovative medicines for patients with rare diseases.

NICE has listened to stakeholders throughout the review through a series of consultations on the case for change and proposed changes and is now carefully considering stakeholders' responses to its latest consultation. In addition to the changes proposed in its methods review to support rare disease patients, NICE is working with the Department to contribute to development of an action plan detailing how the 'UK Rare Diseases Framework' can be implemented in England.

■ Skin Cancer

Jim Shannon: [\[69077\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have fully recovered from skin cancer in the last three years, by (a) age and (b) gender.

Maria Caulfield:

The data is not held in the format requested.

■ Suicide: Males**Colleen Fletcher:**[\[69101\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of suicide rates among men; what steps he is taking on male suicide prevention; and what funding his Department has invested in male suicide prevention in each of the last five years.

Gillian Keegan:

The Office for National Statistics publishes annual and quarterly data on suicide registration in England and Wales. The latest release was on 7 September 2021, looking at suicide registrations in 2020. The male suicide rate for England of 15.3 deaths per 100,000 people is significantly lower than in 2019 but consistent with rates in earlier years.

We are investing £57 million in suicide prevention through the NHS Long Term Plan by 2023/24 to assist local prevention plans and establish suicide bereavement support services. Funding for local areas is used to test different approaches to reaching and engaging men and we have issued guidance to local authorities highlighting the importance of working across all local services, including the voluntary sector, to target high risk groups such as men. Through the 'COVID-19 mental health and wellbeing recovery action plan', we are making an additional £5 million available in 2021/22 for voluntary sector organisations who work to prevent suicide and a further £1 million for NHS England and NHS Improvement's suicide prevention programme.

In March we published the latest progress report of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy and a refreshed cross-Government suicide prevention workplan, setting out a programme to reduce suicides in England.

HOME OFFICE**■ Afghanistan: Refugees****Dr Rupa Huq:**[\[66246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of increasing the number of people allowed to resettle in the UK through the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme.

Victoria Atkins:

The Government has committed to welcoming around 5,000 people in the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, and up to 20,000 in total. This is one of the most ambitious resettlement schemes in our country's history. Dedicated officials have worked day and night to support this unprecedented response.

The Government is also supporting thousands of Afghan people through the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

It is important that we resettle people safely and provide appropriate support including with healthcare, education, jobs and housing. When considering the number of people we resettle, it is right that we take into account the capacity of local communities to provide this support, and that we do not take more people than we can accommodate.

I would like to thank all local authorities who have already pledged help and encourage others to come forward and support the efforts to resettle Afghans.

Kim Johnson:

[67298]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when the details of the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme will be finalised and the scheme opened.

Victoria Atkins:

The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) is not yet open. However, the first to be resettled through this scheme will be some of 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. Officials are working urgently to stand up the remaining elements of the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture.

The Government will continue to work closely with other government departments, non-governmental organisations, charities, local authorities and other partners and relevant organisations in the development and implementation of the ACRS.

Kate Hollern:

[68292]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plan her Department has for the delivery of 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.

The scheme is not yet open. However, we are working urgently to open the scheme, amid the complex and changing picture.

The Home Office will continue to work closely with other Government departments, non-governmental organisations, charities, local authorities and other partners and relevant organisations in the development and implementation of the ACRS.

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.

■ Arrest Warrants: Cross Border Cooperation

Conor McGinn: [68350]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 57132 on Arrest Warrants: Cross Border Cooperation, for what reason her Department does not record that information.

Damian Hinds:

The National Crime Agency (NCA) acts as the National Central Bureau for INTERPOL (NCB) for the UK. INTERPOL data is made available both at the UK border and to front-line policing in order to inform operational decision making. The appropriate and lawful action to take will be case specific.

■ Asylum: Glasgow

Ian Murray: [67123]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Scottish Government on the settlement of and provision for asylum seekers within the Glasgow City Council area.

Tom Pursglove:

There is no direct routing of asylum seekers to Glasgow. Currently the only asylum intake source for Glasgow is from in-region presentations within Glasgow. The Home Office has established a weekly Regional Delivery Group at which the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Government are represented, regarding the planning of support for asylum seekers in Glasgow.

■ Catalytic Converters: Theft

Seema Malhotra: [69085]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate she has made of the number of thefts of catalytic converters in each (a) local authority and (b) constituency in England in the last three years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Crime Survey for England and Wales provides estimates of the number of incidents of theft from vehicles, including details of the items stolen, such as car parts. The latest published data – which cannot be broken down below national level - can be found here:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/adhocs/12496catalyticconvertersstoleninincidentsoftheftfromvehiclesyearendingmarch2015toyearendingmarch2020crimesurveyforenglandandwales>.

■ Crime: Coronavirus

Colleen Fletcher:

[69100]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in the level of crime during the covid-19 outbreak in (a) Coventry North East constituency, (b) Coventry, (c) the West Midlands and (d) England.

Kit Malthouse:

The ONS report on trends in crime and a description of national trends can be found in their latest release [here](#).

[Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Data is published at police force level including 'West Midlands Police' and can be found [here](#)

[Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Data is also published at Community Safety Partnership level including 'Coventry' and can be found [here](#)

[Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

However, data at Parliamentary Constituency level is not routinely published by ONS.

■ Criminal Investigation: Standards

Grahame Morris:

[69066]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what statistics her Department holds on the length of time it takes individual police forces to investigate specific crimes from initial contact to referral to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Kit Malthouse:

From the data held by the Home Office it is not possible to identify the length of time from initial contact to referral to the Crown Prosecution Service.

■ Drugs: Organised Crime

Rachael Maskell:

[66224]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps is she taking to ensure that vulnerable people affected by county lines drug trafficking are adequately (a) housed and (b) supported.

Rachael Maskell:

[66225]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance she has issued to local government on supporting communities affected by drug dealing.

Rachael Maskell: [66226]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will issue guidance to local authorities on what support should be available for vulnerable people in the community.

Rachael Maskell: [66227]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the adequacy of funding available to support vulnerable people in the community.

Kit Malthouse:

The Government is committed to tackling county lines exploitation and to supporting children, young people and the most vulnerable in our communities.

On 20 January this year, we announced £40m of dedicated investment for 2021/22 to tackle drugs supply and county lines, doubling our investment from the previous year.

The Social Housing White Paper set out measures to ensure housing staff are properly equipped to support people with mental health needs or problems with drug and alcohol abuse.

We are committed to increasing awareness of 'cuckooing' and drug related exploitation and have published guidance for frontline professionals on how to identify potential victims of county lines and appropriate referral routes. [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

On 27 July, the Government also published its initial response to Dame Carol Black's independent review of drugs which sets out a clear cross-government commitment to this agenda, including plans to publish a long-term drug strategy by the end of this year. The Government has already begun to tackle the problem of substance misuse, by investing an additional £80 million in drug treatment services across England this year, the largest increase in 15 years.

■ Drugs: Portugal

Sarah Olney: [68394]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Portugal's illicit drug decriminalisation policy.

Kit Malthouse:

No recent assessment has been made.

■ Females: Safety

Steve McCabe: [66165]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to address women's concerns about their safety.

Rachel Maclean:

The Government takes women's safety very seriously and is determined to tackle crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls.

We have published a new Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and will be publishing a complementary Domestic Abuse Strategy this year. The new strategies will help transform the response to these crimes, from prevention and raising awareness, support to victims and survivors, to ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice.

As well as this, we are funding a new National Policing Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls – Maggie Blyth, to transform the way policing responds to these crimes.

We are determined to ensure that women feel safe everywhere - at home, at work, at school, online, or on the streets. That is why we are delivering a £5 million 'Safety of Women at Night' fund and an additional £25 million Safer Streets Fund focused on improving public safety, with an emphasis on women and girls' safety in public spaces.

■ **Joint Fraud Taskforce**

Conor McGinn: [\[68348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times and on what dates the Joint Fraud Taskforce has met since its initial inception in February 2016.

Conor McGinn: [\[68349\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will publish the Fraud Action Plan.

Damian Hinds:

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many times and on what dates the Joint Fraud Taskforce has met since its initial inception in February 2016.

From its inception in February 2016, the Joint Fraud Taskforce (JFT) has held a total of 27 meetings, including the recent relaunch on 21 October 2021.

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she will publish the Fraud Action Plan.

Work on the Fraud Action Plan has continued at pace since it's inception in February 2021 and the government intend to publish the final plan in early 2022.

■ **Members: Correspondence**

John Healey: [\[69002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the letters from the hon. Member for Wentworth and Dearne of 15 September 2021 and 18 October 2021 on support for Afghan personnel in the UK as part of Operation War Welcome.

Victoria Atkins:

The Minister of State for Justice and Minister for Afghan Resettlement will respond shortly.

Metropolitan Police: Community Development**Catherine West:**[\[68385\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what discussions she has had with the Metropolitan Police on their community engagement strategy.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Secretary and I hold regular meetings with representatives of the Metropolitan Police Service, covering a wide range of subject areas important to the public including stamping out violence against women and girls, tackling serious crime and promoting a diverse workforce.

The Government will always encourage forces to continue to respond to their local communities needs. This is because the police's ability to fulfil their duties is dependent on their capacity to secure and maintain public trust and support for their actions, as part of the model of policing by consent.

North Yorkshire Police: Staff**Rachael Maskell:**[\[68371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what estimate her Department has made of the number of police officers in North Yorkshire Police in each of the (a) last and (b) next five years.

Kit Malthouse:

The Home Office collects and publishes data on the size of the police workforce in England and Wales, broken down by Police Force Area (PFA), on a biannual basis in the '[Police workforce, England and Wales](#)' statistical bulletin.

Data broken down by PFA, and going back to 2007, and can be found in the accompanying Open Data Tables here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005761/open-data-table-police-workforce-280721.ods

While the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletin remains the key measure of the size of the police workforce, as part of the Police Officer Uplift Programme, the Home Office also publishes a quarterly update on the number of officers (headcount terms only) in England and Wales, also broken down by PFA. Data are available here: [Police Officer uplift statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The latest data from the 'Police officer uplift' statistics show that as at 30 September 2021 there were 1,564 officers in North Yorkshire Police. North Yorkshire Police has recruited 114 additional officers out of an allocated total of 116 additional officers for years one and two of the uplift combined.

On 27th October, the Chancellor announced a three-year spending review settlement, including an additional £540m for the Police Uplift Programme by 2024/25. This will enable forces to recruit and maintain the full 20,000 officer uplift and delivering on this Government's commitment to recruit additional officers and keep the public safe.

Officer allocations for 2022/23 will be announced at the Provisional Police Funding Settlement.

■ **Police: Motor Vehicles**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[68482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 58536 on Police: Motor Vehicles, whether her Department has funding available for territorial police forces to spend on vehicles.

Kit Malthouse:

On 4 February 2021, the Government published a total police funding settlement of up to £15.8 billion in 2021/22, an increase of up to £600 million compared to the 2020/21 settlement.

Overall police funding available to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will increase by up to £668 million (5.1% in cash terms) this year. This breaks down as:

- o An additional £415 million to deliver 6,000 additional officers.
- o An additional £253 million from council tax precept.
- o In addition, PCCs will also benefit from additional grant funding to help local authorities support the more than 4 million households that are least able to afford council tax payments

Decisions on how to use funding and resources are an operational matter for Chief Constables. Police and Crime Commissioners are best placed to make resourcing decisions within their communities based on their local knowledge and experience, including the management of the police estate.

■ **Police: Sexual Offences**

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[68401\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that correct procedure is followed when members of the police force raise sexual misconduct allegations against their colleagues.

Kit Malthouse:

Serious sexual offences, must by law, be referred to the IOPC under the mandatory referral criteria.

The Home Secretary has commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS) to carry out an urgent thematic inspection of vetting and counter-corruption procedures in policing across England and Wales –

including forces' ability to detect and deal with misogynistic and predatory behaviour. Initial findings are due by the end of the year.

The Home Secretary has also announced a two-part inquiry to ensure that policing learns the lessons from the Sarah Everard murder. Part one will look specifically at Wayne Couzens' tenure in the Metropolitan Police Service and part two can look at wider issues across policing including, but not limited to, vetting practices, professional standards and discipline and workplace behaviour.'

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

John Healey:

[68115]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of people resettled under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy have been provided with permanent housing.

Victoria Atkins:

We are working at pace with local authorities to source appropriate accommodation for Afghan families who were evacuated to the UK.

Over 300 local authorities have made offers of accommodation. The process of matching homes to families requires careful attention to detail but we are working to move people as quickly as possible when properties become available.

■ Schools: Demonstrations

Peter Kyle:

[68383]

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what resources she plans to make available to schools to prevent anti-vaccine protestors disrupting pupils and staff.

Kit Malthouse:

The right to peaceful protest is a vital part of a democratic society. However, this does not extend to unlawful behaviour and it is never acceptable for anyone to intimidate pupils and teachers. Should a protest contravene the law, the police have comprehensive powers to deal with activities that spread hate or deliberately raise tensions through violence or public disorder. The use of these powers and the management of demonstrations are an operational matter for the police.

Through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the Government is introducing new measures which will allow the police to take a more proactive approach in managing highly disruptive protests.

Separately, the Department for Education and the UK Health Security Agency have provided information in guidance for schools on how to handle any misinformation or disruption. In the event of a protest or disruptive activity outside a school, or if schools know a protest is planned, they should alert the School Age Immunisation Service provider, local authority and local police contacts to discuss the best way to manage the situation.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

■ House of Commons Commission

Julian Knight: [\[68313\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the quorum of the House of Commons Commission is.

Sir Charles Walker:

Schedule 1 (Paragraph 6(2)) of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 empowers the House of Commons Commission to determine its own procedure. The current quorum of the Commission is four parliamentary members. Any decision by the Commission requires the approval of at least four of the six parliamentary members.

Julian Knight: [\[68314\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the House of Commons Commission has the power to make decisions outside of its formal meetings.

Mr William Wragg: [\[68333\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the House of Commons Commission has the power to make decisions outside of its formal meetings.

Sir Charles Walker:

Schedule 1 (Paragraph 6(2)) of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 empowers the House of Commons Commission to determine its own procedure. The Commission has an established practice of making decisions by correspondence outside of its formal meetings. Such decisions usually relate to matters that are considered either uncontroversial or time-critical.

■ House of Commons Commission: Meetings

Julian Knight: [\[68316\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether meetings of the House of Commons Commission are held in public.

Gary Sambrook: [\[68461\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether meetings of the House of Commons Commission are held in public.

Sir Charles Walker:

The established practice of the Commission is to meet in private. This is to enable free and open discussion between commissioners, and to enable officials to provide impartial and frank advice.

■ House of Commons Commission: Voting Behaviour

Julian Knight: [\[68312\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the votes of the members of the House of Commons Commission on items requiring decision are recorded.

Gary Sambrook: [\[68463\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether the votes of the members of the House of Commons Commission on items requiring decision are recorded.

Sir Charles Walker:

Schedule 1 (Paragraph 6(2)) of the House of Commons (Administration) Act 1978 empowers the House of Commons Commission to determine its own procedure. Its established practice is to operate by consensus, and formal votes on items requiring decision are rare. Where votes do take place, they are recorded in the Commission's record of deliberations.

■ House of Commons Commission: Voting Rights

Julian Knight: [\[68315\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether House of Commons employees and lay members of the House of Commons Commission have the same voting rights as Members of Parliament on the House of Commons Commission.

Mr William Wragg: [\[68332\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, whether House of Commons employees and lay members of the House of Commons Commission have the same voting rights as Members of Parliament on the House of Commons Commission.

Sir Charles Walker:

The House of Commons officials and external members who sit on the Commission do not have voting rights. However, their views are sought in respect of any Commission decision. This is in line with the recommendations of the Report of the House of Commons Governance Committee, House of Commons Governance, Session 2014–15, HC 692, paragraph 141, which was endorsed by the House on 22 January 2015.

■ House of Commons: Coronavirus

Julian Knight: [\[68321\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, with reference to guidance issued to Members on covid-19 by the Commission on 2 November 2021, whether (a) all members of the House of Commons

Commission were consulted on the measures that guidance contained and (b) all Members of the Commission were in agreement with the guidance's recommendations.

Mr William Wragg:

[\[68330\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, with reference to the Covid-19 Member Bulletin of 2 November 2021, whether all members of the Commission were consulted on the measures it contained; and whether all those members were in agreement.

Sir Charles Walker:

The urgent request for approval for the revised guidance on covid-19 was sent to all members of the Commission on 1 November, following advice from the UK Health Security Agency earlier that day. The revised guidance was agreed by a majority of the parliamentary members of the Commission before it was issued.

■ **House of Commons: Income**

Sir Desmond Swayne:

[\[68095\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the impact on revenue of the decision to temporarily close banqueting and other facilities due to covid-19 transmission on the estate.

Sir Charles Walker:

On Monday 1 November the House of Commons Commission agreed that all events on the estate that do not relate to parliamentary business will be cancelled for the next two weeks, including banqueting events (Member-sponsored and third party), tours and other meetings.

It is not possible to calculate the impact that these short-term closures will have on income because while some bookings may be cancelled completely, others will be rescheduled for future dates. In the latter case, this means that income has simply been deferred rather than lost completely. A short parliamentary recess is scheduled for 10–12 November which will also serve to reduce numbers on the estate and therefore footfall in catering outlets. Any estimates made at this point in time would therefore inevitably be speculative.

Income and expenditure in these areas continue to be closely monitored, as with all House of Commons budgets.

■ **House of Commons: Redundancy**

Julian Knight:

[\[68317\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many members of House of Commons staff have been made redundant because of Parliament's reduced income during the covid-19 outbreak.

Nicola Richards: [\[68484\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, how many members of House of Commons staff have been made redundant because of Parliament's reduced income during the covid-19 outbreak.

Sir Charles Walker:

No staff have been made redundant. Staff have been redeployed to alternative roles as required.

■ **House of Commons: Remote Working**

Julian Knight: [\[68320\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the House of Commons Commission has made of the mental health implications of requiring MPs' and House staff to work from home.

Mr William Wragg: [\[68331\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the Commission has made of the mental health implications of requiring Members' and House staff to work from home.

Gary Sambrook: [\[68459\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the House of Commons Commission has made of the mental health implications of requiring MPs' and House staff to work from home.

Nicola Richards: [\[68487\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what assessment the House of Commons Commission has made of the mental health implications of requiring MPs' and House staff to work from home.

Sir Charles Walker:

The House of Commons Commission has implemented relevant Government guidance which at times required individuals to work from home. Since legal restrictions were lifted no member of House staff has been required to work from home where this would have an impact on their health.

Arrangements for their staff are a matter for the Member as the employer, who likewise have been able to allow their staff to work on the estate once legal restrictions were lifted where there was a health need.

The health and wellbeing of all on the estate remains the highest priority for the Commission. A range of services are offered by the House to support the wellbeing of Members and staff, including:

- Mental Health Guidance, including Mental Health: A Guide for Managers
- Wellness Action Plans

- In partnership with Mind – a number of additional resources recognising the impact of Coronavirus on individuals
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Occupational Health, Wellbeing & Medical Services

Through the use of these tools suitable arrangements for an individual can be put in place based on their specific circumstances.

■ **Parliament: Redundancy**

Julian Knight:

[\[68319\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the House Service has made of the number of potential redundancies among parliamentary staff which are consequential to (a) the closure of catering and hospitality venues and (b) restrictions placed on the number of visitors to the parliamentary estate.

Mr William Wragg:

[\[68329\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the House Service has made of the number of potential redundancies among parliamentary staff which are consequential to (a) the closure of catering and hospitality venues and (b) restrictions placed on the number of visitors to the parliamentary estate.

Gary Sambrook:

[\[68460\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the House Service has made of the number of potential redundancies among parliamentary staff which are consequential to (a) the closure of catering and hospitality venues and (b) restrictions placed on the number of visitors to the parliamentary estate.

Nicola Richards:

[\[68486\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, what estimate the House Service has made of the number of potential redundancies among parliamentary staff which are consequential to (a) the closure of catering and hospitality venues and (b) restrictions placed on the number of visitors to the parliamentary estate.

Sir Charles Walker:

No redundancies have been made, or are expected, consequential to (a) the closure of catering and hospitality venues and (b) restrictions placed on the number of visitors to the parliamentary estate.

■ Parliamentary Estate: Coronavirus**Anne Marie Morris:**[\[68278\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for Broxbourne, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will set out (a) the number of daily positive covid-19 cases on the Parliamentary Estate from 18 October 2021 to date and (b) the case threshold at which the Commission considered it necessary to reintroduce enhanced measures.

Sir Charles Walker:

114 cases with links to the Parliamentary estate have been reported between the 4th October – 5th November.

The Parliamentary test and trace team, in partnership with the UKHSA, including the North West London Health protection team highlighted an increase in cases from the week commencing 18th October and recommended that there was a need for additional measures on Tuesday 26th October and Monday 1st November. These were agreed by the Commission on the same day.

Advice will be provided to the Commission by the UKHSA on the need for measures in response to cases being identified, in line with other workplaces.

Previously the Commission has agreed a range of trigger points which prompt a review of the current situation.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE**■ Department for International Trade: Coronavirus****Emily Thornberry:**[\[68150\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, for what reason a courier service from Revisecatch Ltd was required by her Department for the collection and delivery of test kits between 12 and 20 October 2021; and how many kits the Revisecatch Ltd courier service handled on behalf of her Department over the duration of that contract.

Penny Mordaunt:

On 19 October 2021 the Department for International Trade (DIT) hosted a Global Investment Summit (GIS) bringing together global capital and UK investment opportunities. The GIS saw the announcement of 18 deals by companies from 10 countries worth £9.7bn (£9,654,000,000), creating over 30,000 jobs. This was on top of the £5.8bn already committed for sustainable projects since the launch of the Ten Point Plan.

To ensure the smooth and safe running of the event DIT contracted a courier service from Revisecatch Ltd (trading as eCourier) to deliver 261 Covid-19 test kits to delegates around London and the South East, as well as to collect them and deliver them for laboratory processing, between 13 and 17 October 2021.

■ Dolphins and Whales: Faroe Islands

Virginia Crosbie:

[\[69216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what discussions she has had with her counterpart in the Faroe Islands on the practice of whale and dolphin slaughter; and what steps she will take through the UK's trade relationship with the Faroe Islands to discourage that practice.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

We are dismayed that the needless slaughter of cetaceans continues around the world. My noble friend, Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, has written to the Fisheries Minister of the Faroe Islands to express Britain's opposition to the continued killing of cetaceans in their waters. The United Kingdom will continue to advocate for the cessation of cetacean hunts around the world, at every appropriate opportunity, including those provided by our trade relationships.

■ Gold: Brazil

Catherine West:

[\[68389\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what checks and safeguards are in place to ensure that UK gold imports from Brazil are (a) environmental sustainable and (b) free from human exploitation of indigenous people and their communities.

Mr Ranil Jayawardena:

London is the global hub for the gold trade through the London Bullion Market Association (LBMA). The LBMA has 146 members in twenty countries, including in Brazil.

All refineries on the LBMA's 'Good Delivery List' are required to submit annual reports; they must demonstrate their efforts to combat violations of rights and responsibilities, and to respect the environment, in line with OECD guidance.

■ Overseas Trade: Research

Emily Thornberry:

[\[67106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to her Department's letter of appointment to LSE Enterprise, dated 1 October 2021, regarding research on the theme of Trade and Investment Measurement, what recent external research she has commissioned covering the theme of export and investment.

Emily Thornberry:

[\[67107\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, pursuant to her Department's letter of appointment to LSE Enterprise, dated 1 October 2021, regarding research on the theme of Trade and Investment Measurement, what recent external research she has commissioned covering the theme of business attitudes and public perceptions.

Mike Freer:

I refer the hon. Member for Islington South and Finsbury to the answer I gave on 4 November, UIN: 67108.

■ Shipping: Exports

Bob Blackman: [\[68231\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 on the proposed establishment of a Maritime Capability Campaign Office.

Bob Blackman: [\[69613\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what assessment she has made of the implications of the Autumn Budget 2021 for the establishment of the proposed Maritime Capability Campaign Office.

Mike Freer:

Maritime featured prominently in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review while maritime exports are important both for a thriving UK sector and delivery of the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy. The Government will provide more detail on its plans for the maritime sector under the National Shipbuilding Strategy later this year.

Emma Hardy: [\[68409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 will affect the proposed establishment of a Maritime Capability Campaign Office.

Mike Freer:

I refer the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend for Harrow East today, UIN: 68231.

JUSTICE

■ Animal Welfare

Alex Cunningham: [\[68252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what discussions he has had with the Sentencing Council on updating the Sentencing Guidelines for animal cruelty offences following the enactment of the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021.

James Cartlidge:

The Secretary of State meets with the Chairman of the Sentencing Council periodically to discuss a wide range of relevant issues.

The Council is independent of Parliament and Government and decides on its own priorities and work plan for developing and revising guidelines. To reflect the higher maximum penalties introduced by the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021, the

Council is currently developing a revised guideline for animal cruelty offences, and plans to consult on that revision in due course. The Council has also published interim guidance for offences committed on or after 29 June 2021 to take account of the increase in maximum penalties. This can be found at:

<https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/offences/crown-court/item/animal-cruelty-interim-guidance/>.

■ Child Rearing

Anneliese Dodds:

[68414]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the impact of delays in family courts on cases of parental alienation.

James Cartlidge:

The Government recognises the additional pressures that the family justice system has faced since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the impact this has had on children and families who use the family courts. Cases with the most significant safeguarding issues remain our priority.

The child's welfare is the paramount consideration when considering child arrangement issues and in dealing with allegations of parental alienation. In assessing the child's best interests, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) assesses and reports any concerns about alienating behaviours to the court, focusing on the impact on the child's safety and welfare and in the context of wider family dynamics. Parents are also able to inform the court of any concerns they may have about the other parent.

■ Criminal Proceedings: Training

Alex Cunningham:

[68255]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what training prosecuting authorities who use the Single Justice Procedure, and who are not the CPS, receive on disability and neurodivergent conditions.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice is not responsible for training prosecuting authorities and thus cannot speak to whether they receive training on disability or neurodivergent conditions.

In response to the Neurodiversity in the Criminal Justice System: A review of the evidence report, the Ministry of Justice is taking a whole system approach and are working with HM Courts and Tribunal Service, HM Prison and Probation Service, Home Office, Department for Health and Social Care and the Welsh Government to consider neurodiversity training for all frontline staff within the Criminal Justice System.

Further, as part of the Cabinet Office-led National Disability Strategy, we are working across government to develop policies in support of people with disabilities.

■ Evictions

Wera Hobhouse: [63835]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what estimate he has made of the number of illegal evictions, by (a) ethnicity and (b) gender of the evictee, in the last 12 months.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice has published information on prosecutions and convictions for illegal eviction offences in England and Wales, up to December 2020, in the 'Principal offence proceedings and outcomes by Home Office offence code' data tool, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987731/HO-code-tool-principal-offence-2020.xlsx

In the data tool linked above, use the 'offence code' filter to isolate the following offence under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977:

- 08701 – Unlawful eviction of occupier

Information on the ethnicity and gender of the alleged victim or victims of illegal eviction is not held centrally by the MoJ and a further search of HMCTS court records has shown this information was not recorded on any accessible court record.

Centrally held courts data is recorded under a series of offence definitions, which align with legislation, and only includes characteristics related to the victim where it is central to the statutory offence (e.g. age of victim in some sexual offences). We do not otherwise routinely collect details about the victim, such as ethnicity or gender.

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: Telephone Services

Alex Cunningham: [68253]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether his Department plans to change Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service telephone advice line to a freephone line.

James Cartlidge:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) does not operate a single telephone advice line. It operates multiple telephone services across several hundred courts and tribunals to provide information and procedural advice to users for different jurisdictions. Not all of these services are centralised.

Calls to HMCTS telephone numbers are already included in the vast majority of home and mobile phone plans. Once someone has got through to an adviser, we also offer a call-back service for those who would otherwise have difficulty paying for the call.

■ Legal Opinion: Remote Working

Alex Cunningham: [68254]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, if he will commission independent research on the impact of the remote provision of legal advice on police custody suspects' effective participation in the justice process.

James Cartlidge:

The Government has not commissioned independent research on the impact of the remote provision of legal advice on police custody suspects' effective participation in the justice process.

Since 4 October 2021 the Joint Interim Interview Protocol allows for remote advice in very limited specified circumstances to provide flexibility where it is needed, for example, in a scenario where the detainee is confirmed or believed to be Covid positive. Final decisions about allowing remote advice will be made by an officer not below the rank of Superintendent.

■ **Ministry of Justice: CGI UK**

Mr David Lammy: [\[66159\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his Department's total spending was on services provided under contract by CGI in each of the last five years.

Mr David Lammy: [\[66160\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what his Department's total spending was on services in addition to those provided under contract rendered by CGI in each of the last 10 years.

Mr David Lammy: [\[66161\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what proportion of the data held by his Department is on databases provided or managed by CGI.

Mr David Lammy: [\[66162\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the contract with CGI signed by his Department in November 2020, what his timetable is for retiring or replacing the heritage applications outlined in the tender documents.

Mr David Lammy: [\[66163\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the contract with CGI signed by his Department in November 2020, if he will publish details of the 50 business-critical applications and their length of use.

James Cartlidge:

The total spending of the Ministry of Justice on services provided under contracts with CGI IT UK Limited in each of the last five years is as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND WITH CGI
2020/21	£53,941,639
2019/20	£42,991,345
2018/19	£41,368,770
2017/18	£52,336,553

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND WITH CGI
2016/17	£56,921,238

The total spending of the Ministry of Justice on services provided under contracts with CGI IT UK Limited in each of the last ten years is as follows:

FINANCIAL YEAR	SPEND WITH CGI
2020/21	£53,941,639
2019/20	£42,991,345
2018/19	£41,368,770
2017/18	£52,336,553
2016/17	£56,921,238
2015/16	£60,101,771
2014/15	£57,645,651
2013/14	£51,535,504
2012/13	£52,007,695
2011/12	£52,072,665

MOJ does not hold information regarding what proportion of the data held by MOJ is on databases provided or managed by CGI IT UK Limited.

With reference to the Application Maintenance and Support Contract with CGI IT UK Limited awarded by the Ministry of Justice in November 2020, the expected timetable is for retiring or replacing the 54 applications in scope of the contract at award is as follows:

- 5 applications have been retired or replaced since award; and
- 43 further applications will be retired or replaced as follows
- 7 by the end of financial year 2021/22
- 16 by the end of financial year 2024/25
- 20 following the 2021 spend review period.
- It is expected that the remaining 6 applications will be retained for longer term use

With reference to the Application Maintenance and Support Contract with CGI IT UK Limited awarded by the Ministry of Justice in November 2020, the Ministry of Justice does not intend to publish details of the 54 applications in scope of the contract and their length of use on security advice.

■ Police Custody: Legal Opinion

Alex Cunningham: [\[68256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 61151, on Police Custody: Legal Opinion, what the full list of circumstances is in which the Joint Interim Interview Protocol allows legal advice to be given remotely.

Alex Cunningham: [\[68257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 27 October 2021 to Question 61151, on Police Custody: Legal Opinion, whether his Department sought legal advice on whether remote legal advice could be provided without a change in primary legislation.

James Cartlidge:

The Joint Interim Interview Protocol allows for remote advice in very limited specified circumstances to provide flexibility where it is needed, for example, in a scenario where the detainee is confirmed or believed to be Covid positive. Final decisions about allowing remote advice will be made by an officer not below the rank of Superintendent.

The full list of circumstances in which the Joint Interim Interview Protocol allows legal advice to be given remotely can be found on gov.uk

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/National-Interview-Protocol-COVID19-Version-4-4-Oct-2021.pdf>

Provisions for police station advice for suspects are set out in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, for which the Home Office has overall responsibility.

Lastly, the MoJ has not sought legal advice on the process.

■ Prisons: Finance

Ed Davey: [\[68106\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how much public funding his Department has allocated to prisons in (a) each of the last five financial years, (b) the current financial year and (c) each of the next three financial years.

Victoria Atkins:

The below table states the public funding allocated to prisons in the last five and current financial years.

£M	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Prisons	2,010	2,174	2,309	2,482	2,685	2,630

In relation to future years, the Deputy Prime Minister is developing his plans for allocating this funding and will announce more details in due course.

■ Prosecutions: Disability

Mr David Lammy: [\[66156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the disability profile of Single Justice Procedure defendants.

James Cartlidge:

The Single Justice Procedure written notice and on-line process has been designed with input from users and a wide range of organisations at public user events. We are not aware of any specific impacts on particular groups. Defendants who choose to opt into the Single Justice Procedure will be carefully guided through the process and will have access to both telephone and face to face support. For those who decide to proceed with a hearing, the necessary adjustments will be made at court in the usual way.

■ Prosecutions: Maladministration

Mr David Lammy: [\[66157\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department has taken to contact defendants using the Single Justice Procedure whose prosecutions were subject to errors and to rectify errant outcomes.

James Cartlidge:

As with all other types of cases dealt with by magistrates courts, if an error is made by the court, whether upon conviction or sentencing, whilst using the Single Justice Procedure we would always notify the defendant and correct any error following the case being re-opened.

Mr David Lammy: [\[66158\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he has taken to establish the error rate on non-covid-19 related single justice procedure cases.

James Cartlidge:

In any system, errors can occur and there are processes in place to correct them, including the right to appeal against a decision that is believed to be wrong, but we do not maintain a separate system to monitor such corrections in the case of the Single Justice Procedure.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES**■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Local Government Finance****Mr Clive Betts:****[56781]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many funds are allocated to local authorities by his Department through a process of competitive bidding; and if he will publish the names of those funds.

Kemi Badenoch:

There are times when dedicated competitive biddable or targeted funding streams are the best way to make sure local government receives the support, they need to deliver the Government's objectives, including specific funding initiatives, trials or pilots. In such circumstances, the Government will look to maximise value for money by considering the timing, value and conditions attached to any funding.

DLUHC has responsibility for overseeing the funds in the below table.

FUND NAME

Community Housing Fund

Waking Watch Relief Fund

Social Sector ACM Cladding Remediation Fund

Local Growth Fund

Levelling Up Fund

Community Ownership Fund

Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme

Rough Sleeping Initiative

Substance Misuse Programme

Cold Weather Fund

Brownfield Housing Fund

Local Authority Accelerated Construction Fund

Small Sites Fund

Housing Deals - Oxfordshire

Housing Deals - West Midlands

Affordable Homes Programme (2021-2026)

FUND NAME

Affordable Homes Programme (2016-2023)

Changing Places Toilet Fund

Local Data Accelerator Fund for children and families

Changing Futures programme

Partnerships for People and Place

First Homes early delivery programme

Estate Regeneration pilot 2021

Respite Rooms

Welcome Back Fund

Brownfield Land Release Fund

New Development Corporations Competition

Move On Fund

Coastal Communities Fund

Getting Building Fund

Towns Fund

Future High Streets Fund

Land Assembly Fund

Housing Infrastructure Fund

Freeports

European Structural and Investment Funds

National Home Building Fund

UK Community Renewal Fund

Devolution and City Deals

■ **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Public Expenditure**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[64644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what criteria his Department will use in allocating the £1.5 billion announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 for (a) underused land, (b) Transport Links (c) community facilities.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answer to Question UIN 64643 on 1 November 2021.

■ **Derelict Land: Regeneration**

Ruth Cadbury:

[\[69103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answers of 1 November 2021 to Question 64643 and of 2 November 2021 to Question 65447 on Derelict Land: Regeneration, if he will set out the specific methodology his Department used to forecast that the £1.8 billion funding for brownfield regeneration would create 160,000 homes.

Christopher Pincher:

I refer the Hon Member to the answers given to question UIN 65447 on 2 November 2021 and question UIN 64643 on 1 November 2021 regarding the details of the funding.

■ **Enterprise Zones: Harlow**

Robert Halfon:

[\[68210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how much the Government has invested into the Harlow Enterprise Zones and Science Park since that project was announced.

Neil O'Brien:

A total of £27.5 million has been invested into the Harlow Enterprise Zones. This has come from various central government funding streams including £3.53 million from the Getting Building Fund, £5 million from the Department for Transport Local Pinchpoint funding and £1.245 million of revenue funding granted to Harlow Enterprise Zone to cover set up and early operational costs.

■ **Freeports**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[68129\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he plans to announce the location of freeports across the UK; and whether the decision on those locations is linked to the Government's levelling up agenda.

Neil O'Brien:

Freeports will level up and regenerate communities across the UK by attracting new businesses, spreading jobs, investment and opportunity to towns and cities up and

down the country. At the Autumn Budget the first Freeport tax sites were announced in Tees, Thames and Humber. The UK Government remains committed to establishing its Freeport programme across the whole of the UK including in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as soon as possible and are confident our model embraces the highest employment and environmental standards. Any future process for allocating a Freeport in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will follow a fair, open and transparent assessment process.

■ Health and Social Care Levy

Steve Reed:

[69093]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 13 September 2021 to Question 45132, on Health and Social Care Levy, whether the Government's plans to compensate Departments and other public sector employers in England for the increased cost of the health and social care levy includes providing that support to local authorities in England.

Kemi Badenoch:

The Government has committed to compensating departments and other public sector employers for the increased cost of the Health and Social Care Levy. This applies to employees who are directly employed by the public sector, but not, for example, where services are contracted out.

The local government Spending Review settlement takes account of the additional pressure on local government from the Health and Social Care Levy accordingly. More detail on how the funding announced at the Spending Review will be distributed will be given as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

■ Help to Buy Scheme

Lucy Powell:

[69092]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the value of the loan book was for Help to Buy for each of the last 12 months.

Christopher Pincher:

Information on the number of properties bought with a Help to Buy Equity Loan and the total value of these loans is published regularly through the Help to Buy Quarterly statistical release, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-march-2021/help-to-buy-equity-loan-scheme-data-to-31-march-2021>

Help to Buy repayment statistics can be found on page 52 of Homes England's annual report and financial statements, available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004648/Homes_England_Annual_Report_and_Financial_Statements_2020_21_web-optimised.pdf.

■ Housing: Insulation

Lucy Powell:

[69091]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the number of homes with outstanding help to buy loans that are affected by cladding.

Christopher Pincher:

Information on the number of Help to Buy equity loan properties with ACM cladding can be found in the NAO's report entitled Investigation into remediating dangerous cladding on high-rise buildings, which is available at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Investigation-into-remediating-dangerous-cladding-on-high-rise-buildings.pdf>

■ Leasehold: Loans

Mike Amesbury:

[68433]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when details of the proposed loan scheme for resident leaseholders in buildings that are 11 to 18 metres high will be published.

Christopher Pincher:

Building owners and industry should make buildings safe without passing on costs to leaseholders and we are introducing new measures that will legally require building owners to prove they have tried all routes to cover costs. The fire risk is lower in buildings under 18 metres and costly remediation work is usually not needed. Where fire risks are identified, they should always be managed proportionately. The Secretary of State is looking closely at this issue to make sure everything is being done to support leaseholders. Further detail on the support offer for leaseholders in residential buildings of 11-18 metres will be released when all options have been fully considered.

■ Regional Planning and Development

Andrew Gwynne:

[68146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether bids to the Levelling Up Fund not announced in the Budget schemes are formally rejected or are held in abeyance for consideration in a further round.

Neil O'Brien:

On Wednesday 27 October, the Chancellor announced the outcome of the first round of the Levelling Up Fund, which will see £1.7 billion invested in 105 local infrastructure projects across the UK. Citizens across the UK can expect to see projects getting underway from early 2022.

Those applicants that were unsuccessful in the first round have been contacted. Unsuccessful applicants, who passed the gateway assessment stage, will be offered feedback on their applications.

We will open round 2 in spring 2022 and will share further details in due course.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[68147\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when he expects to open a second round of applications for Levelling Up funding.

Neil O'Brien:

On Wednesday 27 October, the Chancellor announced the outcome of the first round of the Levelling Up Fund, which will see £1.7 billion invested in 105 local infrastructure projects across the UK. Citizens across the UK can expect to see projects getting underway from early 2022.

Those applicants that were unsuccessful in the first round have been contacted. Unsuccessful applicants, who passed the gateway assessment stage, will be offered feedback on their applications.

We will open round 2 in spring 2022 and will share further details in due course.

Andrew Gwynne: [\[68148\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what feedback local authorities and sponsoring hon. Members will receive on unsuccessful bids to the Levelling Up Fund.

Neil O'Brien:

On Wednesday 27 October, the Chancellor announced the outcome of the first round of the Levelling Up Fund, which will see £1.7 billion invested in 105 local infrastructure projects across the UK. Citizens across the UK can expect to see projects getting underway from early 2022.

Those applicants that were unsuccessful in the first round have been contacted. Unsuccessful applicants, who passed the gateway assessment stage, will be offered feedback on their applications.

We will open round 2 in spring 2022 and will share further details in due course.

■ Rented Housing: Finance

Lucy Powell: [\[69088\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether local authorities will be able to support both social tenants and private renters with the £65 million support package for vulnerable renters announced in October 2021.

Lucy Powell: [\[69089\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what proportion of the £65 million support package for vulnerable renters announced in October 2021 will be available for private renters.

Lucy Powell:

[69090]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether the £65 million support package for vulnerable renters announced in October 2021 will be made available for renters with no recourse to public funds.

Eddie Hughes:

The Government announced a £65 million top up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant in October to help vulnerable renters hit hardest by the pandemic from becoming homeless. The primary purpose of this exceptional one-off payment is to support low-income private renters with COVID-19 related rent arrears either by preventing eviction or by helping them to find a new home.

As with the existing Homelessness Prevention Grant, local authorities have flexibility to use this funding to meet this objective in the most appropriate way to meet local pressures. We are encouraging local authorities to use this money to support renters in the private rented sector; however Homelessness Prevention Grant funding can also be used to prevent homelessness from the social rented sector.

This funding is available for those eligible for statutory homelessness assistance and is not available for renters with no recourse to public funds. Whilst we recognise that supporting individuals with restricted eligibility can be challenging, local authorities must continue to use their judgement in assessing what support they may lawfully give to each person on an individual basis, considering that person's specific circumstances and support needs.

■ Social Rented Housing

Seema Malhotra:

[69086]

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what estimate he has made of the proportion of people seeking social housing who are (a) single mothers and (b) families who have children with special educational needs.

Christopher Pincher:

The proportion of single mothers who acquired a new social housing letting in 2019/2020 was 20.1% of all new lettings. In 2018/19 single mothers made up 19% of all new lettings.

We do not collect information on whether families with children who are seeking social housing have children with special educational needs. The proportion of families who acquired a new social housing letting in 2019/2020 was 10.4% of all new lettings.

This information is published on CORE social housing lettings at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/social-housing-lettings-in-england-april-2019-to-march-2020>

PRIME MINISTER■ **Department for Energy and Climate Change**

Rachael Maskell: [\[68354\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, whether he is planning to re-establish the Department for Energy and Climate Change in response to the climate crisis.

Boris Johnson:

By embedding climate change in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, we are ensuring that supporting clean growth and taking global action to tackle climate change is joined up with our support for business to invest, innovate and grow. We were the first major economy in the world to set net zero by 2050 in law. And as hosts of COP26 we are working with countries and partners from around the world to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change so that we can recover cleaner, rebuild greener and restore our planet.

SCOTLAND■ **Lord Advocate**

Kenny MacAskill: [\[69202\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what recent representations he has received from the Scottish Government on making changes to the Scotland Act 1998 on the role of the Lord Advocate.

Mr Alister Jack:

I have not received any representations from the Scottish Government to amend the Scotland Act 1998 in this way.

■ **Scotland Office: Ivory**

Luke Pollard: [\[69190\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what estimate he has made of the number of ivory items in the possession of his Department.

Mr Alister Jack:

We have not made any estimates of the number of ivory items owned by or collated in this Department or institutions owned or managed by the Government.

TRANSPORT**■ Aviation: Carbon Emissions**

Kerry McCarthy: [69022]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support research and development of zero emission flight technology in the UK.

Kerry McCarthy: [69023]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to support the development of airport infrastructure for zero emission technology.

Kerry McCarthy: [69024]

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the role of airports in acting as hydrogen hubs to increase production and distribution capability.

Robert Courts:

My Department works closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on decarbonising aviation and technology, including through the Jet Zero Council.

The Government is supporting the development of new low and zero-carbon emission aircraft - co-investing £3.9 billion with industry in aerospace research and technology from 2013 to 2026 through the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) Programme. The recent Spending Review has extended our commitment to co-invest in aerospace by guaranteeing funding for the ATI Programme to 2031. Government is also funding the £15 million ATI-led FlyZero project. This in-depth research study has brought together experts from across industry and academia to explore the potential for zero-carbon emission aircraft.

As part of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, the Government is supporting research into Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure through £3 million of funding this financial year. This includes research activity on the integration of hydrogen into airports. In September, we announced the award of fifteen grants to organisations as part of this project, the details of which may be found on www.gov.uk here:

[Winners of £3 million zero emission flight aviation competition announced - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/winners-of-£3-million-zero-emission-flight-aviation-competition-announced)

We are also investing up to £125 million, matched by £175 million from industry, in the Future Flight Challenge, to enable the use of new forms of electric and autonomous aircraft.

To deliver on the opportunities presented by hydrogen across the economy, including in aviation, the Government published the first ever UK Hydrogen Strategy, alongside policy detail on its support for low carbon hydrogen production across the UK.

This package details the key steps needed this decade to deliver our ambition for 5 giga watts of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 and sets the context for a further scale up on the way to net zero.

■ Bus Services

Sam Tarry: [\[67303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the findings of the Common Wealth think tank's report, All Aboard: Transforming Bus Services, on the effect of bus privatisation, deregulation and austerity on (a) fares, (b) reliability of services and (c) pay and conditions of bus workers.

Sam Tarry: [\[67304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the finding of Common Wealth's report, All Aboard: Transforming Bus Services, that high levels of deregulation and privatisation in the bus network disproportionately impacts people that are marginalised by the current economic system.

Trudy Harrison:

We have noted the publication of the Common Wealth report. The Government's National Bus Strategy supports the delivery of more socially and economically necessary services and during this Parliament we will invest £1.2 billion of new funding to deliver improvements in services, fares and infrastructure.

■ Commuters: Costs

Robert Halfon: [\[68218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to reduce (a) the cost of commuting and (b) train fares.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Passengers deserve punctual and reliable journeys at a fair price, which is why we are investing billions into modernising the network. The new Great British Railways structure also aims to tackle the previous overspecification, gold-plating and disconnected decision making that inhibited improvements for passengers and pushed up costs across the sector, which were ultimately reflected in rising fares.

There are a number of railcards available that offer discounts against most rail fares. We have saved a generation of passengers at least a third off their fares through the 16-17 and 26-30 railcards and went even further in November 2020 by extending these savings to former servicemen and women through a new Veterans Railcard.

We also recognised the need to accommodate more flexible work and travel patterns due to the impact of COVID-19 on commuters. This is why we have introduced flexible season tickets across England this year, tickets launched on 21 June and became available for use on 28 June.

Buses are at the centre of our public transport network, helping to connect people to places of employment. Our Bus Back Better strategy set out that we want to see

more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere. At the Budget we announced £1.2 billion of new dedicated bus funding to deliver improvements in fares, services and infrastructure over this Parliament.

■ **Cycling and Walking: Finance**

Mr Gregory Campbell:

[\[68127\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what his Department's targets are for the outcomes of the £2 billion in funding announced in July 2020 for cycling and walking active travel schemes.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

This and other matters will be set out in the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy which will be published early next year. This will also reflect the policies outlined in the Prime Minister's long-term cycling and walking plan, Gear Change, including the vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030.

■ **Driving Licences: Disability**

Navendu Mishra:

[\[68479\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the impact of three-yearly driving licence renewals on disabled people.

Navendu Mishra:

[\[68480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the delays at the DVLA on disabled people who are required to renew licences every three years.

Trudy Harrison:

A short period driving licence is issued when a driver has a health condition that is progressive in nature or needs to be monitored. The duration of the licence depends on the medical condition and can be between one and ten years.

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) recognises the impact on drivers who have to renew their licence more regularly and is working hard to improve their experience. Drivers with diabetes, epilepsy, Parkinson's disease, a visual impairment, a sleep condition or a heart condition can now renew online. Simplified renewal processes have been introduced for drivers with epilepsy and multiple sclerosis and this is also being piloted for some mental health conditions. The DVLA is working on adding to the number of medical conditions that can safely be assessed in this way.

The DVLA is working as quickly as possible to process paper applications. To improve the length of time taken to process medical licensing applications, the DVLA has recruited more staff and has secured extra office space in Swansea and Birmingham to help reduce waiting times while providing future resilience and business continuity.

■ Driving Licences: Foreign Nationals

Paul Blomfield: [\[69073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the timeframe is for returning passports to foreign nationals applying for provisional driving licences; and what steps he is taking to help ensure those timeframes are met.

Trudy Harrison:

The latest information on turnaround times for paper driving licence applications the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is currently processing can be found [here](#). The DVLA is changing its procedures to return identity documents to customers earlier in the process, given the importance of these documents to applicants.

■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points

Liz Saville Roberts: [\[69156\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the development of electric vehicle smart charging regulations.

Trudy Harrison:

Officials from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) have worked closely with counterparts in Welsh Government throughout the development of The Electric Vehicles (Smart Charge Points) Regulations 2021. The Secretary of State for Transport wrote to all Devolved Administrations, including the Welsh Government ahead of announcing our commitment to legislate. We will continue to work with the Welsh Government as we develop further smart charging policy in the future.

■ Leamside Railway Line

Bridget Phillipson: [\[67136\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if (a) he or (b) another Minister will visit the Leamside Line to discuss the case for its proposed reopening.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Having already been asked by the Hon Member for Sedgefield to come and visit I have asked my Officials to find a mutually convenient time to do so. I would be delighted to meet the Hon Lady and other promoters of the line on the visit.

■ Motor Vehicles: Child Seats

Sarah Olney: [\[68392\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the proposal to increase the legal requirement to keep a child in a rear facing car seat to age 3.

Trudy Harrison:

The technical standards for child restraint systems used in the United Kingdom are developed by a group of experts within the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), of which the Department for Transport is an active member.

The requirements are kept under constant review. The latest standard introduced enhanced safety provisions, including extending the requirement for child restraint systems to be only rearward facing for children up to 15 months of age.

The UNECE expert group considered extending this requirement to children of 4 years of age but decided against this having assessed a range of evidence, including biomechanical data and injury thresholds, together with consideration of ease of use and vehicle geometry.

■ **Parking: Pedestrian Areas**

Naz Shah:

[\[68309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to tackle illegal pavement parking.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department carried out a public consultation on possible solutions to the complex pavement parking problem, which ran from 31 August 2020 to 22 November 2020. The consultation received over 15,000 responses. The Department has been carefully analysing the consultation responses and the consultation results will inform our policy decision. We will publish the outcomes as soon as possible.

■ **Pedestrian Crossings**

Jeff Smith:

[\[66215\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to legalise side road zebra crossings.

Trudy Harrison:

The Department is aware of research carried out by Transport for Greater Manchester into the idea of simplified zebra crossings and their request for these to be legalised. The Department awaits the publication of the research report and its findings, and will consider these carefully before making any decisions on changing legislation.

■ **Railway Stations: Harlow**

Robert Halfon:

[\[68217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding the Government is providing to improve railway stations in the Harlow constituency.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Greater Anglia has budget allocation to maintain and renew its portfolio of stations. Decisions on how to allocate that funding is made by Greater Anglia. The Department is aware of recent works to renew wooden fascias and the refurbishment of the waiting room at Harlow Town.

■ Railway Stations: Pedestrian Areas

Sarah Olney: [\[69164\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 19 May 2021 to Question 1353 on Railway Stations: Pedestrian Areas, if he will provide the latest timeframe and funding plan for the rollout of tactile paving across the rail network.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Network Rail has received an initial £10 million to install tactile paving at priority stations not already funded. I will make further announcements on future rounds of funding in due course.

■ Railways

Lee Anderson: [\[69193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what progress his Department has made on the Integrated Rail Plan.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department will soon publish its Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) which will look at how best to deliver major rail investments in the North and Midlands including HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other major Network Rail schemes, so that the benefits of these investments are delivered to passengers and communities more quickly.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi: [\[69674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason his Department has postponed the publication of the Integrated Rail Plan; and what his timeframe is for publishing that plan.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department intends to publish the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) very soon. Given the scale and long-term significance of the plans that the IRP will set out, it is important that Government fully considers the evidence from the National Infrastructure Commission, representatives from the North and Midlands, and its own analysis, before finalising these plans.

■ Railways: Ashfield

Lee Anderson: [\[69194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility study undertaken on the potential re-opening of the Maid Marian Line in Nottinghamshire.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In January 2020 the Government pledged £500 million for the Restoring Your Railway programme to deliver on our manifesto commitment to start reopening lines and stations. The Secretary of State for Transport and I will be considering next steps

for projects, including the Maid Marian Line, with a decision on the next tranche to progress anticipated in the coming months.

■ Railways: Electrification

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[68405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the proportion of the UK rail network that will be electrified by 2040.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

To help deliver the government's net zero commitment we will electrify most of the network and deploy battery and hydrogen trains on some lines, where it makes economic and operational sense. This is set out in our Traction Decarbonisation Plan.

We will continue to develop electrification schemes through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process in the usual way, to ensure that they are affordable, deliverable, and represent value for money.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[69675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will provide details of the rail electrification projects that his Department plans to start in each of the next three years.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In Decarbonising Transport: a Better, Cleaner Britain, we've committed to delivering an 'ambitious, sustainable, and cost-effective programme of electrification, guided by the Network Rail-led Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy', to help us deliver a net zero railway by 2050. To ensure this programme is deliverable, affordable, and achieves value for money, we will continue to develop new schemes individually and carefully through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process in the usual way, such as the recently announced £78m to electrify the route between Wigan North Western and Bolton, which is on track and targeted for completion in 2024.

■ Railways: Finance

Rachael Maskell:

[\[68363\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to subsidise rail travel to ensure that it is competitive with air travel.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

Passengers deserve punctual and reliable journeys at a fair price, which is why we are investing billions into modernising the network.

Like the airline industry, the rail industry encourages passengers to book early to access low-priced fares, these are known as Advance fares, and are competitive with flight prices to similar destinations.

There are also a number of railcards available that offer discounts against most rail fares. We have saved a generation of passengers at least a third off their fares through the 16-17 and 26-30 railcards and went even further in November 2020 by

extending these savings to former servicemen and women through a new Veterans Railcard.

■ **Railways: North East**

Mary Kelly Foy: [\[69195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution on 3 November 2021 in response to the Hon. Member for Jarrow and published in the Official Report, how the additional £96 billion investment in rail services in the North East of England will be spent.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Department will very soon publish its Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) which will look at how best to deliver major rail investments in the North and Midlands including HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other major Network Rail schemes, so that the benefits of these investments are delivered to passengers and communities more quickly.

■ **Road Traffic Offences**

Sarah Olney: [\[68393\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he will carry out the review of road traffic offences.

Trudy Harrison:

The Government takes road safety seriously and keeps the law under regular review.

■ **Road Traffic: Greater London**

Dr Matthew Offord: [\[66185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of trends in the level of vehicle congestion in central London (a) after 6:30pm until 10pm and (b) at weekends.

Trudy Harrison:

Transport in London is devolved and is the responsibility of the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL), and London Boroughs are responsible for most roads in London. The monitoring of vehicle congestion levels in central London is entirely a matter for them.

■ **Roads: Lincolnshire**

Karl McCartney: [\[67130\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, for what reason the Government reduced the road maintenance grant for Lincolnshire in 2021-22; and if he will increase the grant to 2019-20 levels for 2022-23.

Trudy Harrison:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible for deciding funding levels for departmental spending, including local highway maintenance. Spending Review 2020 (SR20) prioritised funding in 2021-22 to support the government's response to Covid-19, invest in the UK's recovery, and deliver on promises to the British people.

As announced in the Spending Review on 28 October 2021, the Department is providing local highway authorities with a three year funding settlement for highway maintenance and is investing over £5 billion over this Parliament (2020/21-2024/25). This is enough to fill in millions of potholes a year, repair dozens of bridges, and help resurface roads throughout the country, and provide funding certainty until 2024/25.

Funding for local roads maintenance is subsequently allocated based on a fair and proportionate funding formula agreed by the sector.

■ Roads: Repairs and Maintenance**Sir Greg Knight:****[69011]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will bring forward proposals to strengthen the legislative framework governing statutory authorities' ability to obstruct the highway for the purposes of repair and maintenance; what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of (a) that framework in reducing avoidable traffic delays and (b) lane rental schemes; and if he will make a statement.

Trudy Harrison:

Utility companies need to access the highway to repair, maintain and install the infrastructure on which we all rely. But that does not mean works should take any longer than is necessary.

This Government has been reforming and modernising the legislative framework in recent years to reduce the congestion caused by works and to provide up-to-date information to road users. We have set up and delivered Street Manager - our digital service that is used by all local authorities and utility companies for planning and managing works and which now streams open data on live and planned works. We recently consulted on further reform www.gov.uk/government/consultations/street-manager-and-permit-scheme-changes

We published two evaluations on the effectiveness of permit schemes that almost every authority now operates (in 2018) and the pioneer lane rental schemes in Kent and in London (in 2016): www.gov.uk/government/publications/street-works-permit-schemes-evaluation-of-effectiveness ; www.gov.uk/government/publications/street-works-lane-rental-evaluation Both of these informed further policy development including our decision to allow new lane rental schemes to be set up. Surrey County Council operate the latest scheme that began in April 2021.

■ Transport: Carbon Emissions

Alex Sobel:

[\[68416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate his Department has made of the amount of carbon emitted per passenger traveling on a single journey from London to (a) Glasgow, (b) Edinburgh, (c) Manchester by (i) air, (ii) train and (iii) car.

Robert Courts:

The estimated average carbon dioxide equivalent (kgCO₂e) emissions per passenger, including direct or tailpipe emissions, indirect emissions resulting from fuel refinery and transportation and indirect effects (for air travel) for London to Glasgow are as follows:

	KG CO ₂ E
Air (including travel to/from airports)	151
Train (including travel to and from mainline stations)	27
Car, average petrol	90
Car, average diesel	84
Car, average battery electric	28

Estimates for London to Edinburgh and London to Manchester not currently available via a comparable method.

Alex Sobel:

[\[68418\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will make it his policy to ensure the price paid by the user of transport reflects the carbon impact of that mode of transport chosen.

Trudy Harrison:

As set out in our Transport Decarbonisation Plan, through delivery of our National Bus Strategy and the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail we will make low carbon travel options better value and more competitively priced to help deliver our strategic decarbonisation priority of accelerating modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking.

■ Travel: Coronavirus

Naz Shah:

[\[68310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps the Government plans to take to reduce the costs of Day 2 and Day 8 covid-19 tests for people entering the UK.

Robert Courts:

The government continues to work with the travel industry and private testing providers to further reduce testing costs, while ensuring travel is as safe as possible.

The cost of PCR tests has fallen since the introduction of post-arrival lateral flow testing for eligible vaccinated passengers. Testing requirements for unvaccinated passengers are also regularly reviewed.

Testing costs are minimal for fully vaccinated passengers and under 18s. Eligible fully vaccinated passengers and under 18s arriving into the UK now just need to take a lateral flow test post arrival, with a free confirmatory PCR test if they receive a positive result. The rule changes make testing on arrival simpler and cheaper for people across the country.

TREASURY

■ Alcoholic Drinks: VAT

Ian Mearns: [\[68226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the proposed VAT cut on the sale beer and cider on (a) small businesses and (b) breweries which do not supply their products in containers over 40 litres in capacity.

Ian Mearns: [\[68227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he plans to remove the 40 litre and over threshold from the proposed cut to VAT on the sale beer and cider.

Helen Whately:

The Treasury welcomes views from industry on the qualifying criteria for the duty relief on draught beer and cider. We will discuss this further with industry groups as part of our alcohol duty review consultation process.

■ Bank Cards

Emma Hardy: [\[66258\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing customers to opt-out of contactless payments.

John Glen:

The Government believes that contactless payment cards bring benefits to consumers and businesses across the UK by facilitating easy and secure payments.

The legal contactless payment limits are set by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) through the Strong Customer Authentication rules, and the FCA has the power to amend these limits subject to public consultation and Treasury approval. In March, the FCA raised the legal single contactless payment limit increased from £45 to £100, and the cumulative transaction limit increased from £130 to £300.

In making this decision, the FCA considered the risks to customers, including the impacts on fraud, alongside the benefits. Within these limits, some card providers offer the opportunity for their customers to vary their individual contactless limits, or to

request cards without contactless functionality. These are commercial and operational considerations for individual card providers.

■ Boats: Non-domestic Rates

Emma Hardy: [\[67242\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to para 2.47 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, whether the business rate relief for the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors includes the leisure marine industry.

Scott Benton: [\[67286\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the amusement machine industry will be eligible for the 50 per cent business rates relief discount available to the retail, leisure, and hospitality industry.

Lucy Frazer:

Guidance setting out eligibility for the 2022-23 retail, hospitality and leisure relief will be published by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in due course.

■ Child Care Vouchers

Mr Virendra Sharma: [\[69041\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of allowing the use of unused childcare vouchers issued during the covid-19 outbreak for school trips and other activities that take place during school hours.

Mr Simon Clarke:

To protect and safeguard children, Childcare Vouchers may only be used for regulated supervised childcare activities (e.g. wraparound childcare). Childcare Vouchers cannot be used to cover the costs of activities during school hours as they fall outside of the definition of childcare.

We are aware that some parents have excess vouchers as a result of the pandemic, and it may be possible to use these for other forms of childcare. Some childcare providers do accept them, for example, towards the cost of holiday clubs and a range of after-school activities.

Additionally, parents may consider temporarily reducing their contributions to the Childcare Voucher scheme, to avoid creating an excess. They may also seek to get a refund from their employer or voucher provider. Whether the refund to parents is possible depends on the contract between the voucher provider, employee and employer.

■ Civil Servants

Fleur Anderson:

[\[68475\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what his Department's definition is of a non-frontline civil servant; and how the existing level of non-frontline civil servants compares to the pre-covid outbreak level of non-frontline civil servants in 2019-20.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Department's definition is consistent with the Civil Service Statistics publication. We define non-frontline to include, for example, policy, tax, project delivery, finance, HR, communications and analysis.

We think it is right that we continue to invest in frontline services growth, such as prison staff, which improves public service delivery. There has also been reasonable growth in policy and corporate staff in response to EU Exit and Covid pressures. However, as demand starts to abate, we must ensure resourcing does not exceed requirements to deliver value for money and make sure the Civil Service is in line with our overall approach to efficiency.

Departments publish their planned Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) figures in their Outcome Delivery Plans (ODPs). To support greater transparency for how public money is spent, departments also provide a breakdown of these FTEs by priority outcome or department. ODPs will be revised in Spring 2022 and include FTE figures for the SR21 settlement period.

Civil Service Statistics presents detailed information on the UK Civil Service workforce, including on pay, diversity and location. It is led by the Cabinet Office and will next report over the financial year concluding 31st March 2022. Civil Service Statistics: 2022 will be available on the GOV.UK website in the Summer of 2022.

■ Corporation Tax

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:

[\[68402\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the level of UK corporation tax paid by companies seeking to drill for oil in the Shetlands including (a) Siccar Point and (b) Shell.

Lucy Frazer:

The administration of the tax system is a matter for HMRC. It would not be appropriate for Treasury Ministers to become involved in the administration of the tax system in specific cases.

■ Defibrillators: VAT

Andrew Gwynne:

[\[68145\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 60363, what the cost to the public purse would be of removing VAT on automated external defibrillators.

Lucy Frazer:

HMRC does not hold information on VAT revenue from specific products or services. Businesses are not required to provide figures at a product level on their VAT returns, as this would impose an excessive administrative burden.

■ Employment: Parents**Seema Malhotra:**[\[68281\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Budget on families where parents are unable to work in long-term employment.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government is committed to helping low-income families with the cost of living. Support provided includes the new £500m Household Support Fund to help vulnerable households with costs for essentials such as food, clothing and utilities over this Winter. The fund is ringfenced so at least 50% will be spent on households with children.

Within the welfare system, the government is maintaining the increase to Local Housing Allowance rates for private renters on Universal Credit and Housing Benefit in cash terms in 2021-22. This increase was worth over an extra £600 on average in 2020-21 for more than 1.5 million households.

The government is also providing over £200 million per year through the Spending Review to continue the holiday activities and food programme, providing healthy food and enriching activities for disadvantaged children in England.

Further support has been put in place through the twelfth consecutive year of freezing fuel duty in 2022-23, with the average car driver paying around £15 less fuel duty per tank and saving a cumulative £1900 since 2011, compared to the pre-2010 escalator.

■ Exports: Customs**Emily Thornberry:**[\[68152\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 62668 on Exports: Customs, what estimate he has made of the annual number of exit and entry summary declarations required for UK exports to the EU under the current EU import rules.

Lucy Frazer:

Export requirements for goods leaving the UK are covered by UK rules, not EU rules. Current EU import rules therefore do not require exit summary declarations on UK exports to the EU, although they may require an entry summary declaration to be made on EU systems pre-arrival.

Since 1 January 2021, UK requirements to submit Safety and Security Exit Summary declarations have been in place. There was a temporary waiver that ended on 30 September 2021 which applied to two categories of exports only (empty pallets,

containers and vehicles moved under a transport contract to the EU, and certain Roll on Roll Off movements). Annual outturn figures are therefore not yet available.

We do not hold figures for the number of entry summary declarations required for UK exports to the EU as the management of EU import procedures is the responsibility of the customs authorities of the relevant EU Member States.

■ Financial Services: Herefordshire

Jesse Norman:

[\[68223\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to support residents in Herefordshire in accessing financial services following the recent closures of high street banks.

John Glen:

The decision to close branches is a commercial issue for banks and building societies and the Government does not intervene in these decisions.

Nevertheless, the Government firmly believes that the impact of branch closures should be understood, considered and mitigated where possible so that all customers and businesses continue to have access to banking services.

In September 2020, the Financial Conduct Authority published guidance setting out its expectation of firms when they are deciding to reduce their physical branches or the number of free-to-use ATMs. Firms are expected to carefully consider the impact of a planned closure on their personal and small business customers' everyday banking and cash access needs and consider possible alternative access arrangements. This will ensure the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly. Alternative options for access include the Post Office, which allows 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers to carry out their everyday banking at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.

The Government also remains committed to legislating to protect access to cash and ensuring that the UK's cash infrastructure is sustainable for the long term. On 23 September 2021, the Government closed the Access to Cash Consultation, which included proposals for new laws to make sure people only need to travel a reasonable distance to pay in or take out cash. The Government's proposals support the continued use of cash in people's daily lives and help to enable local businesses to continue accepting cash by ensuring they can access deposit facilities. This follows legislative changes to support the widespread offering of cashback without a purchase by shops and other businesses as part of the Financial Services Act 2021.

■ Fuels: Excise Duties

Kerry McCarthy:

[\[68143\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what projection he has made of future fuel duty revenues for each financial year from 2022 to 2030, based on the current rate of fuel duty.

Helen Whately:

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) published its fuel duties forecast up to and including 2026-27, as part of its Economic and fiscal outlook in October 2021. This set out that fuel duties are estimated to reach £26.8bn in 2021-22, £28.8bn in 2022-23, £29.9bn in 2023-24, £30.4bn in 2024-25, £30.7bn in 2025-26 and £31.1bn in 2026-27. There is no forecast available beyond 2026-27.

■ **Google: Fines****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[68126\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the UK is entitled to a share of the fine issued by the European Commission to Google in 2017 for favouring its own price-comparison shopping service and giving it an unfair advantage against smaller European rivals.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Under Article 141 of the Withdrawal Agreement the UK is entitled to its share of fines revenue related to its period of membership of the European Union. The UK has started to receive its share of fines revenue under the Withdrawal Agreement which become definitive and are entered into the EU Budget. This takes place once all potential avenues of appeal have been exhausted.

The Government understands that this specific case remains an Ongoing Administrative Procedure that was commenced by the European Commission before the UK left the EU but which has not yet become definitive and been recorded as budget revenue.

■ **Public Sector: Carbon Emissions****Rachael Maskell:**[\[68357\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what funding he is making available to help the public sector estate become carbon neutral.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The recent spending review allocated more than £1.4 billion to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to help reduce emissions from the public sector estate over the next 3 years.

This funding builds on the £1 billion already invested in the PSDS since March 2020. It also does not account for additional investments government department's will be making to decarbonise their respective estates independently of the PSDS as part of ongoing maintenance.

■ **Treasury: Stonewall****Tim Loughton:**[\[68994\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 62564, on Treasury: Stonewall, and with reference to his Department's FOI

request response dated 31 March 2021, reference FOI2021/04423, which stated that his Department's annual subscriptions were £3000 (2019/20) and £3000 (2020/21), for what reason that Answer states that his Department has not allocated any project funding to Stonewall over the past five years.

Helen Whately:

Subscription fees are not project funding. As noted in the PQ above, information on the Treasury's annual subscription fees to Stonewall is available publicly.

■ **Universal Credit**

Robert Halfon:

[\[68211\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of how much better off claimants of universal credit will be as a result of the reduction in the taper rate and increase in the work allowance announced in the Autumn Budget 2021.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The government announced at Budget that it is now taking further action to make work pay for low income working households on Universal Credit by allowing them to keep more of what they earn. The changes to Universal Credit will mean that nearly 2 million households will keep, on average, around an extra £1,000 on an annual basis by 1 December. This is effectively a tax cut of around £2.2 billion next year for some of the lowest paid in society.

■ **Working Tax Credit**

Ian Mearns:

[\[67127\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether his Department plans to amend the existing work taper for Working Tax Credits in line with the changes to the earnings taper on universal credit.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The changes to the Universal Credit (UC) taper rate and work allowances announced at Autumn Budget 2021 apply to UC only, and the withdrawal rate in tax credits will remain at 41 per cent.

It is possible for tax credits claimants to make a new UC claim to benefit from the changes to the taper rate and work allowances, if they wish, although the government would strongly encourage making use of an independent benefit calculator before applying, to check UC entitlement.

WALES

■ **LGBT People: Wales**

Ruth Jones:

[\[68446\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on its LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales.

Simon Hart:

The Equality Hub has held discussions with the Welsh Government about its LGBTQ+ action plan for Wales as well as wider LGBT policy, including most recently the proposals to ban conversion therapy in England and Wales.

WOMEN AND EQUALITIES**Members: Correspondence****Rosie Cooper:** [\[56893\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, when she plans to respond to the letter dated 30 July 2021 from the hon. member for West Lancashire on LGBT conversion therapy, reference ZA57247.

Rosie Cooper: [\[68153\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, pursuant to Question 56893 tabled on 28 September 2021, when she plans to respond to the letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 30 July 2021 on LGBT conversion therapy, reference ZA57247.

Mike Freer:

I apologise for the delay in responding to the hon. Member's correspondence. The response was sent on 8 November 2021.

WORK AND PENSIONS**Children: Disadvantaged****Robert Halfon:** [\[904073\]](#)

What recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Education on support for vulnerable children.

David Rutley:

DWP supports DfE's Family Hubs work, backed by £82m of £300m announced in the Spending Review to transform services for parents and babies, carers and children.

At least 50% of the new Household Support Fund will be spent on support for vulnerable households with children this winter.

Children: Food Poverty**Colleen Fletcher:** [\[68299\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment he has made of trends in the level of food insecurity amongst (a) primary and (b) secondary school children in (i) Coventry North East constituency, (ii) Coventry, (iii) the West Midlands and (iv) England (A) in each of the last five years and (B) during the covid-19 outbreak.

David Rutley:

We have not made an assessment of this kind. Issues of food insecurity amongst school children fall within the remit of the Department for Education so assessments such as this would be their responsibility.

We take the issue of food security seriously, which is why we added internationally used food security questions to the Family Resources Survey in 19/20 and published the data in March this year. These questions remain in the survey and will allow us to track food security over time. Statistics on Household Food Security from the Family Resources Survey for financial year 20/21 have a provisional release date of March 2022, subject to the usual quality assurance.

National and regional statistics on the number of food insecure households are published annually in the "Family Resources Survey" publication. Statistics on levels of food insecure households in the UK, covering 2019/20, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020>

■ Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Universal Credit**Dame Diana Johnson:****[68149]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact the end of the furlough scheme on the number of people claiming Universal Credit in (a) the UK, (b) Yorkshire and Humber and (c) Kingston upon Hull North.

David Rutley:

No such assessment has been made. The Covid-19 Job Retention Scheme ended on 30 September 2021.

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

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures, including by spending over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22. This government is continuing to take action to support living standards by increasing the National Living Wage to £9.50 effective from April 1st 2022, as well as reducing the taper rate in

Universal Credit from 63% to 55% and increasing the value of work allowances by £500 per year, meaning Universal Credit claimants will be able to keep more of their benefit payments when they increase their earnings.

The latest Universal Credit statistics are available to 9 September 2021 and the next release on 16 November 2021 will provide the statistics to 14 October 2021.

The number of people who are on Universal Credit in Great Britain each month, broken down by Region and Westminster Parliamentary Constituency, are published monthly, and can be found on Stat-Xplore: <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>

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Telephone Services

John McDonnell:

[904070]

What recent assessment she has made of the contractual performance of Serco plc in delivering call-handling services for her Department.

Guy Opperman:

DWP regularly reviews performance with Serco to ensure they are meeting contractual responsibilities. During the term of the contract Serco have largely met their Key Performance Indicators, though more recently, competitive labour market conditions and subsequent challenges recruiting agents have led to some short-term performance impacts.

■ Department for Work and Pensions: Written Questions

Alison Thewliss:

[68339]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she plans to answer Questions 57102, 57103 and 57104 tabled by the hon. Member for Glasgow Central.

Mims Davies:

I apologise to the honourable member for the delay in answering these questions. This was due to extensive Quality Assurance to ensure the figures are accurate. Please find the responses to these questions [here](#).

■ Disability

Dr Matthew Offord:

[65416]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on cross-departmental work to implement effectively the National Disability Strategy.

Chloe Smith:

The Secretary of State has regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a wide range of issues, including the National Disability Strategy which was published in July.

At the request of the Prime Minister, a set of Ministerial Disability Champions were appointed in summer 2020, to drive the development and delivery of the National Disability Strategy.

Their role, as set out on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), includes championing disabled people and driving the delivery of the National Disability Strategy in their respective departments.

As detailed in the strategy itself, the government will publish an annual report in summer 2022, detailing the progress made against commitments. An updated list of Departmental Ministerial Disability Champions will be published on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) in due course.

■ Employment Schemes

Alison Thewliss: [\[57102\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many work coaches by (a) full time equivalent and (b) headcount were employed by her Department in each year since 2010.

Alison Thewliss: [\[57103\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many Disability Employment Advisors by (a) full time equivalent and (b) headcount have been employed by her Department in each year since that role was introduced.

Alison Thewliss: [\[57104\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) work coaches and (b) Disability Employment Advisors by (i) full time equivalent and (ii) headcount her Department has employed in Glasgow in each year since 2010.

Mims Davies:

[Holding answer 20 October 2021]: The staffing resource assigned to Work Coach and Disability Employment Adviser activities is given below, measured as Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) based on activity-based management (ABM) activities and Staff in Post (SiP).

Disability Employment Adviser is one of several activities that are counted as Work Coach activities. As such, Disability Employment Advisers are shown as a subset of Work Coaches.

It is shown as at the end of each financial year since 2018-19, when Work Coach activity was first recorded as a discrete role within our data.

NATIONAL	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
Staff in Post			
Work Coaches	16,315	16,191	27,286
of which			

NATIONAL	MAR-19	MAR-20	MAR-21
Disability Employment Advisers ¹	555	657	585
Full Time Equivalent (ABM activities) ²			
Work Coaches	13,287	12,938	23,833
<i>of which</i>			
Disability Employment Advisers	441	546	478

■ Employment: Disability

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[65413\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what support her Department provides to disabled people in (a) Hendon constituency and (b) the UK to transition from education into employment.

Chloe Smith:

DWP Schools Advisers in Hendon and across the London Borough of Barnet, work with the local Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) schools to help their young people transition into work. They work with the schools to deliver sessions on building employability skills and providing help with CVs, identifying suitable employment options that align their skills with available jobs and delivering sessions on interview skills.

Across the UK, including Hendon, there are a range of DWP initiatives that are supporting disabled people and people with health conditions to live independent lives and start, stay and succeed in employment. These include the Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme, Access to Work, Supported Internships, Disability Confident and support in partnership with the health system, including Employment Advice in NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapy services.

As part of the Government's Plan for Jobs, the Kickstart scheme is aimed specifically at young people. Disabled people or people with long-term health conditions can access the Kickstart scheme, supported through Access to Work if required.

We have also increased the number of Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) to 1000 nationally. DEAs work alongside Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches, including Youth Employability Coaches, specialising in finding the right support to help all customers that have a disability or health condition.

■ Personal Independence Payment

Dan Carden:

[67243]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the (a) time it takes to clear a personal independence payment claim and (b) number of people waiting for a decision as of 1 November 2021.

Chloe Smith:

[Holding answer 4 November 2021]: In response to part (a) of this question, data on processing times for all Personal Independence Payment (PIP) New Claims to July 2021 (the latest available data) is published in Table 2A of the PIP Statistics tables which can be found here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1016795/tables-pip-statistics-to-july-2021.xlsx

Data relating to all PIP New Claims up until 31st October will be released on 14th December 2021.

In response to part (b) on this question, the information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

■ Refugees: Afghanistan

Dr Ben Spencer:

[67282]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has been taking to support Operation Warm Welcome.

Mims Davies:

The Department has played a key role in Operation Warm Welcome including legislating to exempt those arriving from Afghanistan from the usual residency tests which restrict access to certain benefits for new arrivals to the UK, including Universal Credit.

We recognise those arriving may require immediate help. Therefore, DWP work coaches are now working in bridging hotels to take claims for Universal Credit and other support, with over 2,900 claims already taken which covers 4,500 claimants (couples are treated as a single claim). The Department has also provided other assistance including help to set up bank accounts, access medical prescriptions, distribute essential items, arranging events to support wellbeing and providing reassurance and a contact point for individuals.

Moreover, employment is an important part of integration. That is why those arriving under the relocation and resettlement schemes have the right to work from day one. We are providing tailored support to those who are ready to start looking for work. Employment fairs are being run to highlight employment and training opportunities and online courses are available in bridging hotels. DWP are using our National Employment and Partnership Team to identify employment opportunities for those who are ready to work, and are working with the Refugee Employment Network to ensure we provide tailored support to this cohort.

DWP are also working with individuals to prepare them for work, looking at work experience opportunities, help with CV and practice interviews. As well as supporting the setup of English language classes either at hotels or the Department has arranged transport to locations so people can attend.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Peter Aldous:

[\[904069\]](#)

When her Department will bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a 12 month eligibility definition for the Special Rules for Terminal Illness.

Chloe Smith:

The Department plans to implement the 12-month end-of-life approach across five DWP benefits, beginning in Universal Credit alongside Employment and Support Allowance next year. This will be followed by Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment subject to Parliamentary processes.

■ Universal Credit

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[63723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claimants have had deductions made from their universal credit entitlement as a result of an advance or other Government debt in each of the last 12 months for which data is available.

David Rutley:

[Holding answer 29 October 2021]: The information requested is provided in the attached spreadsheet.

We reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 40% to 30% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance enabling them to retain more of the award. These changes were implemented from October 2019 to April 2021. These positive measures were put in place to support claimants to manage financial difficulties. Processes are in place to ensure deductions are manageable and customers can contact DWP Debt Management if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, or a temporary suspension, depending on financial circumstances.

From 3rd April 2020, deductions from Universal Credit for some government debt, such as Tax Credits, benefit overpayments and Social Fund Loans were suspended for 3 months, which resulted in many claimants seeing an increase in the amount they received, while allowing staff to prioritise processing the unprecedented number of new benefits claims. They restarted in a phased approach from July 2020.

Attachments:

1. PQ 63723 [Table.xlsx]

Jonathan Reynolds:

[\[68249\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 60405, on Universal Credit, what proportion of Government

debt resulting in deductions taken from universal credit entitlements is as a result of advances.

David Rutley:

To clarify, Advances are not Government debt. They are a claimant's benefit entitlement paid early, allowing claimants to access 100% of their estimated Universal Credit payment upfront. They ensure nobody has to wait for a payment in Universal Credit and those who need it are able to receive financial support as soon as possible. Claimants can receive up to 100% of their estimated Universal Credit award if required, resulting in 25 payments over a 24-month period.

For Universal Credit claims with a payment due during May 2021:

- £71.6m was deducted for repayment of Advances
- £67.8m was deducted for Government debt.
 - 1) Government debt includes: DWP Benefit Overpayment (fraud and non-fraud), Tax Credit Overpayment (fraud and non-fraud), Housing Benefit Overpayment (fraud and non-fraud), Social Fund Loan, Recoverable Hardship Payment, Administrative Penalty, Civil Penalty, Eligible Loan Deductions, Integration Loan.
 - 2) Claims may have a deduction for both a Government debt and a repayment of an advance.
 - 3) The above figures exclude deductions for Third Party debt; they also exclude sanctions and fraud penalties which are reductions of benefit rather than deductions.
 - 4) Data for May 2021 has been provided in line with the latest available Universal Credit Household Statistics.
 - 5) Figures are provisional and are subject to retrospective change as later data becomes available.

As noted in PQ 60405, on average, claimants with these deductions paid 15% of their Standard Allowance towards them. We have reduced the normal maximum rate of deductions in Universal Credit from 30% to 25% of a claimant's Standard Allowance, enabling claimants to take home more of the award.

Customers can contact the Department if they are experiencing financial hardship to discuss a reduction in their rate of repayment, depending on their financial circumstances, whilst work coaches can also signpost claimants to other financial support.

Kirsten Oswald:

[904068]

What recent assessment she has made of the adequacy of the level of universal credit payments.

David Rutley:

The Secretary of State is legally required to conduct an annual review of working age benefits rates to determine whether they have retained their value in relation to the general level of prices.

The up-rating process for working age benefits has traditionally relied on the September CPI figure and in April 2021 Universal Credit was increased by CPI of 0.5%.

Rushanara Ali:

[904071]

What assessment her Department has made of the potential effect of ending the universal credit uplift on levels of in-work relative poverty.

David Rutley:

The uplift to Universal Credit was a temporary measure, that is why an assessment has not been completed on its withdrawal.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures. We expect to spend over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

Universal Credit recipients in work will soon benefit from a reduction in the Universal Credit taper rate from 63% to 55%, and increasing the work allowance by £500 per year means that 1.9m working households will be able to keep substantially more of what they earn. These changes represent an effective tax cut for low income working households in receipt of UC worth £2.2 billion a year in 2022-23, for the lowest paid in society, and are combined with a rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour.

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 with the cost of food, utilities and wider essentials. 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.

Dame Diana Johnson:

[904072]

What assessment she has made of the potential effect of ending the uplift to universal credit on (a) household budgets and (b) levels of poverty.

David Rutley:

The uplift to Universal Credit was a temporary measure, that is why an assessment has not been completed on its withdrawal.

This Government is wholly committed to supporting those on low incomes, and continues to do so through many measures. We expect to spend over £111 billion on welfare support for people of working age in 2021/22.

Universal Credit recipients in work will soon benefit from a reduction in the Universal Credit taper rate from 63% to 55%, and increasing the work allowance by £500 per year means that 1.9m working households will be able to keep substantially more of what they earn. These changes represent an effective tax cut for low income working

households in receipt of UC worth £2.2 billion a year in 2022-23, for the lowest paid in society, and are combined with a rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour.

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 with the cost of food, utilities and wider essentials. 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.

■ Vacancies

Henry Smith:

[\[65397\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what she is taking with the Chancellor of the Exchequer through the Plan for Jobs to fill vacancies in the labour market.

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[65420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to promote and fill employment vacancies in the UK.

Mims Davies:

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has provided historic levels of support to the economy. DWP's Plan for Jobs programmes, including Kickstart, are delivering tailored support for claimants in receipt of Universal Credit to support them into work.

Alongside Plan for Jobs measures, DWP is working across government to support people into sectors with immediate or growing demand for jobs but with barriers to entry. We are also working with industry to provide our work coaches with the knowledge they need to identify suitable candidates and to develop relationships with key employers and stakeholders in their local areas. As a result, local jobcentres continue to connect directly with employers in their area, to discuss their recruitment needs and to offer advice on the support available, including work trials, work experience and Sector-based Work Academies Programmes (SWAPs).

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

DEFENCE

■ Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020

Minister for the Armed Forces (James Heappey):

[\[HCWS377\]](#)

Today I am placing the Council of Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (CRFCA) Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020 in the Library of the House, in accordance with the RFCA Regulations 2014.

I am also replacing the RFCA Review 2019 report in the Library of the House with an appropriately security marked copy. The content of the report itself is unchanged.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ Early Adopters Programme for Licensed Standing in Seated Areas

Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society (Nigel Huddleston):

[\[HCWS376\]](#)

On 22 September, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) announced an 'Early Adopters Programme' for [licensed standing in seated areas](#) at football stadia. The 'Early Adopter Programme' will be implemented in the second half of this (2021/22) football season, between 1 January 2022 and 31 July 2022. I can confirm today that the football clubs which will act as 'Early Adopters' are: Cardiff City, Chelsea, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur.

The 'Early Adopters Programme' represents a significant step towards fulfilling the Government's manifesto commitment to work with fans and clubs towards introducing licensed standing in seated areas at football grounds. It will enable the Government to evaluate how successful licensed standing areas could be as a strategy to manage persistent standing across five different football grounds with varying challenges, before it considers making any substantive policy changes or wider implementation. It will be subject to a formal independent evaluation.

I have today laid a Statutory Instrument which directs the SGSA to amend the "all-seater condition", which requires stadia to provide all-seated accommodation, in any licence to admit spectators issued to these five football clubs under the Football Spectators Act 1989 by the SGSA. This will allow the five specified clubs to admit spectators to their home grounds to watch designated football matches from a standing position, provided certain conditions are satisfied. This means doing so in areas of the ground where the seating accommodation has been adapted so there are seats incorporating a barrier or seats with an independent barrier. The SGSA has produced Supplementary Guidance (SG01) providing further information about the standards/requirements which must be

met. This guidance is available [online](#). These modern (non-terraced) stands or areas with seats therefore still allocate one person to one seat.

The selection of these clubs followed an 'Expression of Interest' process which was conducted by the SGSA between 22 September and 6 October 2021. The SGSA invited applications from football clubs in the top two tiers of professional football in England and Wales currently subject to the "all-seater" policy to become 'Early Adopters' of licensed standing in seated areas. The SGSA analysed the applications against the published 'Early Adopter' criteria, which are available [online](#), before providing written recommendations to DCMS. This advice was carefully considered before receiving final ministerial approval.

In addition, prior to their publication, the 'Early Adopter' criteria and licence conditions for standing in seated areas were subject to a six-week consultation (28 July - 6 September 2021) with key stakeholders. This included safety committee members (the Premier League, English Football League, Football Association, UK Football Policing Unit, Football Supporters' Association, Football Safety Officers' Association, Safety Advisory Group Regional Chairs Lead and the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office), local authorities, football governing bodies and licensed football clubs. DCMS worked closely with the SGSA to ensure that consultation responses were used to inform the final criteria clubs were required to meet to become 'Early Adopters', which are available [online](#).

The Government's approach is driven by safety considerations. Given the wider context and background to the current "all-seater policy" it is right that we carefully consider any wider change in policy, looking at all of the evidence and assessing the potential safety impacts of any change. The Government is not complacent about spectator safety, nor are we complacent about the safety policies that have served spectators well for many years. We will continue to work closely with the SGSA, football clubs, the football governing bodies and local authorities to ensure that spectator safety remains paramount.

■ Sport Broadcasting Legislation Update

Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society (Nigel Huddleston):
[\[HCWS378\]](#)

Following my Written Ministerial Statement of 8 September, I would like to further update the House on the making of an Exclusion Order under the Competition Act 1998 regarding the Premier League's domestic broadcasting agreements.

In that statement I confirmed that the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) had concluded that there were exceptional and compelling reasons of public policy to make the proposed Exclusion Order.

The statutory instrument was laid on 14 October 2021 and came into force yesterday, 7 November 2021. This will allow the Premier League to renew its current UK broadcast agreements with relevant broadcast rights holders for a three-year period, on substantially the same terms, without carrying out the normal tender process. This is a temporary measure undertaken in response to the financial strain placed on the sector by

the pandemic, and will secure the release of over £1.6 billion of funding for the entire football pyramid, including grassroots, women's and lower league football.

As part of the agreement to make an Exclusion Order, the Premier League has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise their financial commitments to the football pyramid with the Government. The MoU has been published on gov.uk alongside this statement. The Premier League has also passed a shareholder resolution confirming the funding as below, and is contractually obliged to deliver many of these agreements. The MoU gives the Government further assurances on the agreed financial commitments as set out below:

- guarantee existing levels of financial support for the football pyramid for four years from 2021/22 to the end of the 2024/25 season. This includes solidarity payments, parachute payments, youth development funding and funding for grassroots football at existing levels, worth over £1.5 billion over the three-year rights cycle;
- maintain at least this level of funding even if its international broadcast rights decrease in value when they are re-tendered individually over the next year into 2022, and to increase the level of funding if its international broadcast rights exceed their current value; and
- provide a further minimum £100 million in solidarity and good causes funding to the end of the 2024/25 season. This will include: additional solidarity payments to National League and English Football League (League One and League Two) clubs; investment into the professional and grassroots women's game; funding for grassroots community facilities; investment into youth players' pathways; and funding for projects to improve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and combat discrimination within the game. This investment will make a significant difference to the whole football pyramid and community.

The Premier League will update the Government and the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee annually on progress against these financial agreements and the impact this funding has had on the pyramid.

This Exclusion Order is an exceptional and temporary measure in response to the pandemic. The normal tendering process is expected to be followed for subsequent broadcast rights agreements. The Exclusion Order will expire, at the latest, after the end of the 2024/25 Premier League football season or on 31 July 2025 (whichever is earlier). It does not apply to broadcasting rights beyond that season and the normal tendering process is expected to be followed for subsequent broadcast rights agreements.

TRANSPORT

■ Lorry Parking

Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):

[[HCWS379](#)]

I wish to update the House on the joint initiative between the Department for Transport and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on planning reforms for lorry

parking, and to emphasise the critical importance of the freight and logistics sector to shops, households, assembly lines, hospitals and other public services across the country.

The infrastructure that supports our hauliers is essential to the effective and resilient supply chains we need. This Government is committed to addressing the strategic national need for more lorry parking and better services in lorry parks in England and we must act now.

To support our hauliers' access to parking and services in the near term we are working with our partners to identify and deliver a number of temporary sites where short-term modular facilities can be installed to address some of our immediate need. We are encouraging National Highways to consider how their land holdings can be used to provide additional parking spaces nationwide, to give priority to the provision of lorry parking across the Strategic Road Network and assist local authorities in identifying areas of lorry parking need.

This Government is also determined that the planning system should play its part in meeting the needs of hauliers and addressing current deficiencies. Planning plays a critical part in the allocation of land for lorry parking.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that local planning policies and decisions should recognise the importance of providing adequate overnight lorry parking facilities, taking into account any local shortages, to reduce the risk of parking in locations that lack proper facilities or could cause a nuisance. Proposals for new or expanded distribution centres should make provision for sufficient lorry parking to cater for their anticipated use.

In addition, the Government's policy is clear that development proposals for new or expanded goods distribution centres should make provision for sufficient lorry parking to cater for their anticipated use. In preparing local plans and deciding planning applications, the specific locational requirements of different industrial sectors should be recognised and addressed. This should include making provision for storage and distribution operations at a variety of scales, and in suitably accessible locations.

We have also published Planning Practice Guidance setting out how local planning authorities can assess the need for and allocate land to logistics site uses and are accelerating work recommended by the National Infrastructure Commission to consider the appropriateness of current planning practice guidance. This includes taking forward a review of how the freight sector is currently represented in guidance.

To ensure future decision-making supports the needs of the sector, we are updating Highways Circular 02/2013 'The Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development' fully to reflect the importance of providing logistics and freight, and are updating the National Lorry Parking Survey to ensure strong evidence is available on the national picture in future. A programme of longer-term measures is under development supported by the £32.5M in roadside facilities for hauliers announced in last week's budget and we will publish a Future of Freight plan, a long-term strategic plan for the sector, in coming months.

The need for a reliable and efficient supply chain has recently come into sharp focus. It is therefore essential that we put in place mechanisms that deliver a supply chain network that is secure, reliable, efficient, and resilient, with no link in the chain overlooked.

Taken together our planning policies and wider measures will support our logistics and freight sectors and the people that work in them. Working with industry and local authorities we will continue to monitor the situation closely and take further action when it is needed.