



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 15 November 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:40 P.M., 15 November 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

**CONTENTS**

<b>ANSWERS</b>	<b>7</b>	■ Cabinet Office: Heating	13
ATTORNEY GENERAL	7	■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries	14
■ Serious Fraud Office: Standards	7	■ Government Departments	14
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	7	■ Northern Ireland Protocol	14
■ Bryn Bach Coal: Fossil Fuels	7	■ Procurement: Ministerial Responsibility	15
■ Companies House: Disclosure of Information	8	■ UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement	15
■ Copyright	8	COP26	15
■ Energy Supply	8	■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Disclosure of Information	15
■ Heat Pumps	9	DEFENCE	16
■ Horizon Europe	9	■ Armed Forces	16
■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions	10	■ Armed Forces: Aviation	16
■ Mathematics: Graduates	10	■ Armed Forces: Carbon Emissions	16
■ New Age Exploration: Fossil Fuels	10	■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles	17
■ Tamboran Resources UK: Fossil Fuels	11	■ Aviation: Contracts	17
■ Visas: Schools	11	■ Defence: Employment	17
■ West Cumbria Mining: Fossil Fuels	12	■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations	18
CABINET OFFICE	12	■ Navy: Deployment	18
■ British Constitution: Ministerial Responsibility	12	■ Type 23 Frigates: Repairs and Maintenance	18
		■ Veterans: Education and Training	19

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	19	■ Special Educational Needs: Suffolk	33
■ 4G	19	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	34
■ Advertising: Internet	19	■ Carbon Emissions	34
■ Charities: Coronavirus	20	■ Dogs: Sales	35
■ Cricket: Racial Discrimination	20	■ Dogs: Smuggling	36
■ National Lottery	21	■ Export Health Certificates	37
■ Ofcom: Recruitment	21	■ Food: Northern Ireland	37
■ Self-harm: Internet	22	■ Ivory	37
■ Social Media: Advertising	23	■ Ivory Act 2018	38
■ Sports: Racial Discrimination	23	■ Meat: Australia	38
■ Youth Centres: Finance	24	■ Members: Correspondence	39
■ Youth Services	24	■ Sewage: Waste Disposal	39
■ Youth Services: Finance	25	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	40
■ Youth Services: Special Educational Needs	25	■ Afghanistan: Football	40
■ Youth Services: Training	25	■ Armed Conflict: Children	41
■ Youth Services: Voluntary Work	26	■ Arnobis Zapata	41
EDUCATION	27	■ Bahrain: Human Rights	42
■ Children: Day Care	27	■ Belarus: Politics and Government	42
■ Covid-19 Education Catch-up Fund	27	■ Belarus: Russia	42
■ Disability: Children	28	■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Carbon Emissions	43
■ Disability: Social Services	29	■ Canada: Military Alliances	43
■ Family Hubs: Luton	30	■ Colombia: Farmers	43
■ Mathematics: Higher Education	30	■ Colombia: Homicide	44
■ Pre-school Education: Finance	31	■ Colombia: Mining and Smuggling	44
■ Pupil Exclusions	31	■ Crimes against Humanity	45
■ Secure Accommodation: Young Offenders	32	■ Developing Countries: Nutrition	45
■ Special Educational Needs: Per Capita Costs	32	■ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions	46

■ Gaza: Reconstruction	46	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	59
■ Iran: Islamic Centre of England	46	■ Coronavirus: York	65
■ Israel: Oman	47	■ Disability: Children	66
■ Overseas Aid	47	■ Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards	66
■ Palestinian Authority	47	■ Epilepsy: Cannabis	67
■ Palestinians: Third Sector	48	■ EU Countries: British Nationals Abroad	67
■ Somalia: Police	48	■ Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva: Screening	68
■ Sudan: Internet	49	■ Gambling: Health Services	68
■ Tigray: Armed Conflict	49	■ Gastroschisis	69
■ Turkey: Kurds	50	■ General Practitioners	69
■ UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	50	■ Hormone Replacement Therapy	72
■ Western Sahara: Natural Resources	51	■ Hospitals: Children's Play	73
■ Western Sahara: Unmanned Air Vehicles	51	■ Hospitals: Coronavirus	73
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	51	■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination	73
■ Abortion	51	■ Immensa Health Clinic	74
■ Abortion and Miscarriage: Health Services	52	■ Immensa Health Clinic: South West	74
■ Abortion: Disinformation	52	■ Influenza: Disease Control	75
■ Anaesthetics: Vacancies	52	■ Influenza: Vaccination	75
■ Analgesics: Prescriptions	53	■ Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups	75
■ Breastfeeding	53	■ Medical Treatments	76
■ Cancer: Mental Health Services	53	■ Members: Correspondence	77
■ Cancer: Nurses	54	■ Miscarriage: Health Services	77
■ Cardiovascular Diseases: Drugs	54	■ Neurology: Staff	78
■ Catheters: Urinary Tract Infections	55	■ NHS 111	78
■ Chronic Illnesses	55	■ NHS and Social Services: Migrant Workers	79
■ Coronavirus: Disease Control	55	■ NHS Test and Trace: Leamington Spa	79
■ Coronavirus: Drugs	57	■ NHS: Complaints	79

■ Nurses: Training	80	■ Trade Agreements: Australia	92
■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges	80	■ Trade Agreements: Palestinians	93
■ Protective Clothing: Contracts	81	■ Whisky: USA	93
■ Research: Finance	81	JUSTICE	93
■ Smoking: Children	81	■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness	93
■ Sotorasib	82	■ Prisoners: Mothers	95
■ Surgery	82	■ Prisons: Construction	95
■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus	82	■ Swinfen Hall Young Offender Institution: Repairs and Maintenance	95
■ Vaccination	83	■ Telecommunications: Crime	96
■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: UK Delegations	83	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	96
HOME OFFICE	84	■ British National (Overseas): Hong Kong	96
■ Alcoholic drinks: Drugs	84	■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Staff	97
■ Asylum: Death	84	■ Evictions	97
■ British Nationality: Applications	85	■ Housing Associations: Safety	98
■ Drugs: Misuse	85	■ Housing Associations: Service Charges	98
■ Emergency Services: County Durham	86	■ Housing: Planning	99
■ General Practitioners: Easington	86	■ Local Government: Ethics	100
■ Members: Correspondence	86	■ Local Plans	100
■ Migrant Workers: Hospitality Industry and Tourism	87	■ Members: Correspondence	101
■ Motorcycles: Antisocial Behaviour and Crime	88	■ Non-domestic Rates: Tax Allowances	101
■ Police: Poverty	88	NORTHERN IRELAND	102
■ Refugees: Afghanistan	89	■ Irish Language: Education	102
■ Schools: EU Countries	90	TRANSPORT	102
■ Visas: Hong Kong	90	■ Aviation: Fuels	102
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	91	■ Bus Services: Finance	104
■ Import Duties: USA	91		
■ Trade Agreements: Animal Welfare	92		

■ Driving Instruction: Recruitment	104	■ Employment and Support Allowance: Telephone Services	117
■ Driving Licences	105	■ Housing Benefit	117
■ Electric Vehicles: Charging Points	106	■ Housing Benefit: Service Charges	118
■ Electric Vehicles: Vans	106	■ Kickstart Programme	118
■ Heathrow Airport: Transport	107	■ Kickstart Scheme	120
■ Motor Vehicles: Ownership	107	■ Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations	121
■ Motorways	108	■ Social Security Benefits	121
■ Railways: Fares	109	■ Social Security Benefits: Disability	121
■ Railways: North East	109	■ State Retirement Pensions	122
■ Roads: Kirklees	109	■ State Retirement Pensions: Females	123
■ Roads: Snow and Ice	109	■ State Retirement Pensions: Payments	124
■ Transport: Carbon Emissions	110	■ Steve Moir	124
<b>TREASURY</b>	110	■ Winter Fuel Payments	125
■ Banks: Closures	110	■ Women against State Pension Inequality	125
■ Debts: Advisory Services	111	<b>WRITTEN STATEMENTS</b>	<b>126</b>
■ Equitable Life Assurance Society	112	<b>BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY</b>	<b>126</b>
■ Foreign Exchange: Fees and Charges	113	■ Publication of Acas Guidance	126
■ Hospitality Industry: VAT	113	■ Use of the Industrial Development Act 1982 for Coronavirus related assistance	126
■ International Monetary System	114	<b>DEFENCE</b>	<b>127</b>
■ Mortgages: Private Rented Housing	114	■ Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy Data Breach Investigation - Update	127
■ Overseas Aid	115		
■ Retail Trade: Non-domestic Rates	115		
<b>WORK AND PENSIONS</b>	<b>116</b>		
■ ASW: Pensions	116		
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Remote Working	116		
■ Department for Work and Pensions: Telephone Services	117		

EDUCATION	130	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	131
■ Contingency arrangements for GCSEs and A/AS levels in 2022	130	■ Covid-19 update	131
		WORK AND PENSIONS	133
		■ International Labour Organization Convention 190	133

**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### ATTORNEY GENERAL

#### ■ **Serious Fraud Office: Standards**

**Dan Carden:**

[\[71439\]](#)

To ask the Attorney General, what steps she is taking to ensure the effectiveness of the Serious Fraud Office.

**Alex Chalk:**

The Law Officers' sponsorship and statutory superintendence of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is undertaken in accordance with the Framework Agreement between the Law Officers and the Director of the SFO, which was published in January 2019.

As set out in the Framework Agreement, The Law Officers regularly meet the Director and her senior leadership team to discuss the SFO's work in tackling the top level of serious and complex fraud, bribery, and corruption. This includes regular Ministerial Strategic Boards, chaired by the Attorney General or Solicitor General, which oversee the strategic direction of the SFO and hold the SFO to account for the delivery of its strategic objectives.

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ **Bryn Bach Coal: Fossil Fuels**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[69602\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Glan Lash fossil fuel development proposed by Bryn Bach Coal on the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

Our Net Zero Strategy makes it clear that coal has no part to play in our future power generation which is why we're phasing it out of our electricity generation by 2024 – a year earlier than planned. Coal's share of our electricity supply has already declined significantly in recent years – from almost 40% in 2012 to less than 2% in 2020.

Coal mining in the UK has been in long term decline reflecting falling domestic demand and there are only a handful of operational mines remaining in the UK. We expect further closures in the next couple of years as these mines naturally complete coaling.

Potential Coal Mining projects in Wales would require the explicit approval of Welsh Ministers before progressing.

## ■ Companies House: Disclosure of Information

**Sarah Olney:** [\[71423\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of allowing (a) judges and (b) public officials to remove or hide their home address from Companies House in the event that they have a company registered at that address.

**Paul Scully:**

As set out in the 2020 Government response to the corporate transparency and register reform consultation, the Department will proceed with the proposal to allow applications to suppress a historic registered office address when it is a director's residential address. The Department will also proceed with proposals to allow applications to suppress a residential address when it is the registered office address of a live company, if a valid, alternative address is provided, or when in use at the point at which a company was dissolved. These proposals require primary legislation and we will legislate when Parliamentary time allows.

## ■ Copyright

**Neale Hanvey:** [\[70325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent representations he has received on the potential impact of an international exhaustion regime on the publishing industry in the UK.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government recently held a consultation on the UK's future exhaustion of intellectual property rights regime. During the consultation period, the Intellectual Property Office held constructive discussions with stakeholders from multiple business sectors, including representatives of the publishing industry. The Government is currently assessing consultation responses and will provide an update in due course.

## ■ Energy Supply

**Mark Menzies:** [\[67126\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to reduce the UK's energy dependency on foreign states.

**Greg Hands:**

Great Britain has one of the most reliable electricity systems in the world. It benefits from a diverse electricity mix, which contributes to security of supply by ensuring no dependence on any single market participant for the power consumed.

Interconnection with overseas markets forms an important part of Great Britain's electricity mix. However, the majority of power consumed in this country is still domestically produced.



Around half of Great Britain's annual gas demand is met through domestic production and most imports come from close proximity suppliers such as Norway.

## ■ Heat Pumps

**Mike Amesbury:**

[\[69690\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent estimate his Department has made of the average cost of (a) a heat pump, (b) installing a heat pump and (c) adding internal renovations, such as changing radiators or pipework, to accompany a new heat pump.

**Greg Hands:**

In 2020 BEIS published analysis by Delta-EE on the cost of installing heating measures in domestic properties, including heat pumps.

Since then, the Government has published the Heat and Buildings Strategy which sets out a plan to drive down the cost of low carbon heating technologies like heat pumps, working with industry to ensure that in future they are no more expensive to buy and run for consumers as fossil fuel boilers. As part of this strategy:

- Households can benefit from £5,000 government grants through £450 million Boiler Upgrade Scheme to help install low-carbon heating systems, part of more than £3.9 billion of new funding to decarbonise heat and buildings;
- A £60 million innovation fund was launched to make clean heat systems smaller and easier to install and cheaper to run.

## ■ Horizon Europe

**Dr Alan Whitehead:**

[\[71260\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to paragraph 2.38 of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, what his timeframe is for association with Horizon Europe.

**George Freeman:**

The UK and the EU agreed the terms for our association to Horizon Europe under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The UK stands ready to formalise our association to EU programmes at the earliest opportunity, but disappointingly there have been persistent delays from the EU.

We see no legal or practical reason why we should not be able to formalise our participation swiftly, and urge the EU to do so.

Our priority is to support our UK's R&D sector and we will continue to do this in all future scenarios. We have been allocated funding for full association to Horizon Europe, as stated in the Spending Review. In the event that the UK is unable to associate, the funding put aside for Horizon association will go to UK government R&D programmes.

## ■ Iron and Steel: Carbon Emissions

**Stephen Kinnock:**

[\[71350\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department is taking to ensure the steel industry achieves the Climate Change Committee's recommendation for ore-based steelmaking to reach net zero by 2035, as set out in the Net Zero Strategy, published 19 October 2021.

**Lee Rowley:**

In collaboration with the Steel Council, we are considering the implications of the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee to 'set targets for ore-based steelmaking to reach near-zero emissions by 2035' and the business environment necessary to support the transition.

The Net Zero Strategy sets out how we intend to meet our Carbon Budget 6 ambition of reducing industrial emissions by 63-76% by 2035, compared to the 2019 level. Hydrogen-based steelmaking, Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage, and electrification are some of the technological approaches being examined as part of this process.

We will continue to work with the steel industry regarding its decarbonisation.

## ■ Mathematics: Graduates

**Caroline Dinéage:**

[\[70257\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what estimate he has made of the number of mathematics graduates required to meet the Government's ambition to achieve an investment in research and development of 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027.

**George Freeman:**

In order to sustain the UK's target of 2.4% research intensity of GDP by 2027, it is estimated the R&D sector will need a minimum of 150,000 additional researchers and technicians between 2021 and 2030. The R&D People & Culture Strategy set out our plan to tackle skills gaps, anticipate future needs in both business and academia, and build the workforce the UK needs. BEIS is working with partners to better understand the skills and workforce needed for research and innovation.

The UK continues to be a world leader in mathematics, and to support mathematics R&D, UKRI has awarded £104 million of additional funding into Mathematical Sciences, over and above EPSRC's core Mathematical Sciences Theme budget. The additional investment has funded institutes, small and large research grants, fellowships, doctoral studentships, and postdoctoral awards.

## ■ New Age Exploration: Fossil Fuels

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[69603\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Lochinvar fossil fuel

development proposed by New Age Exploration on the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

Our Net Zero Strategy makes it clear that coal has no part to play in our future power generation which is why we're phasing it out of our electricity generation by 2024 – a year earlier than planned. Coal's share of our electricity supply has already declined significantly in recent years – from almost 40% in 2012 to less than 2% in 2020.

Coal mining in the UK has been in long term decline reflecting falling domestic demand and there are only a handful of operational mines remaining in the UK. We expect further closures in the next couple of years as these mines naturally complete coaling.

The potential fossil fuel development at Lochinvar would require planning permission and other relevant permissions from all the relevant territories before it could progress.

■ **Tamboran Resources UK: Fossil Fuels**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[69599\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his department has made of the potential effect of the Fermanagh fossil fuel development proposed by Tamboran Resources UK on the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[69600\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Lough Neagh fossil fuel development proposed by EHA Exploration on the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

The licensing and regulation of onshore oil and gas development is fully devolved to the Northern Ireland Executive.

■ **Visas: Schools**

**Wera Hobhouse:**

[\[70294\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department on the potential impact of visa requirements for overseas staff on English Language Teaching schools.

**Paul Scully:**

My Rt. Hon. Friends the Secretary of State and the Home Secretary have regular discussions covering a variety of issues.

Our new relationship with the EU means that there are new rules in place for UK nationals travelling to the EU. For short-stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period, UK nationals will not need a visa when travelling to and within the Schengen Area, where they are undertaking a limited range of activities such as attending meetings, tourism, cultural or sporting events. Under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, business travellers do not require a work permit to carry out certain short-term business travel activities, such as attending meetings and conferences, providing after sale-services, or translation and market research services, unless otherwise stated in the agreement. Some Member States allow additional activities without the need for a visa or work permit. The types of additional activities allowed differ by Member State, and UK nationals should check relevant rules before travelling.

For those undertaking longer-term stays or stays involving work or providing a service under a contract, a visa and/or work permit may be required. How individual Member States regulate cross-border travel is a sovereign decision for them, including visa policy.

#### ■ **West Cumbria Mining: Fossil Fuels**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[69601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment his Department has made of the potential effect of the Woodhouse Colliery fossil fuel development proposed by West Cumbria Mining on the UK's target to achieve net zero by 2050.

**Greg Hands:**

Our Net Zero Strategy makes it clear that coal has no part to play in our future power generation which is why we're phasing it out of our electricity generation by 2024 – a year earlier than planned. Coal's share of our electricity supply has already declined significantly in recent years – from almost 40% in 2012 to less than 2% in 2020.

The public inquiry into the proposed Woodhouse Colliery fossil fuel development began on 7th September 2021. The formal part of the inquiry has now concluded. It is an independent process conducted by the Planning Inspectorate, so it would not be appropriate to comment further on this particular case. However, I am aware they heard evidence on a range of issues including around net zero ambitions.

### CABINET OFFICE

#### ■ **British Constitution: Ministerial Responsibility**

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[71346\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which units in his Department are responsible for constitutional policy.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Constitution Settlement Division is responsible for constitutional policy in the Cabinet Office.

**■ Cabinet Office: Heating****Jake Berry:****[58823]**

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what type of heating system is the primary source of heating at (a) Chequers, (b) Dorneywood, (c) Chevening House, (d) 10 Downing Street, (e) 11 Downing Street and (f) 1 Carlton Gardens; and what fuel is used by those heating systems.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Cabinet Office does not manage or occupy 1 Carlton Gardens or the Chequers, Dorneywood and Chevening Estates.

The buildings at 10 to 12 Downing Street were originally built in the 1680s, with extensive works undertaken in the Georgian era. They are Grade 1 listed. Maintaining and updating these historic buildings, whilst protecting the integrity of that heritage, presents distinct challenges.

Its primary source of heating is from the Whitehall Campus District Heating System which distributes heating to premises in the Whitehall estate.

The Downing Street estate has already taken a number of eco-friendly measures such as a full rainwater harvesting system for the gardens, and low-energy and motion detecting lighting throughout, whilst preserving the heritage of the listed buildings. It has three electric vehicle charging points.

In 2013, No.10 won an award for sustainability improvements to the building. BRE Environmental Assessment Method named it as the best for year-over-year improvements out of 800 other candidates.

The property also has a Display Energy Certificate, which is for the whole building (not just the residences). The current rating is "E", up from "F" the previous year.

In line with the Prime Minister's ambition for the UK to be a global leader in clean, green technology and sustainable living, the Cabinet Office is looking to build on these measures in the future. This includes exploring the scope for heat pumps when the boilers reach the end of their working life and making greater use of renewable energy sources.

As noted in the recent Heating and Building Strategy, the Government has made strong progress on reducing emissions in the Government estate by 50 per cent over 10 years through energy efficiency and green measures. The Strategy sets out a gradual fourteen-year transition to low carbon heating systems and we are investing a further £1.4 billion over the next 3 years in reducing emissions from public sector buildings.

## ■ Coronavirus: Public Inquiries

**Alex Norris:** [\[72574\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress his Department has made on holding a public inquiry into the Government's handling of the covid-19 outbreak; and when will that inquiry's commencement date will be announced.

**Alex Norris:** [\[72578\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he has taken to progress a public inquiry into the Government's handling of the covid-19 outbreak; and when the commencement date will be announced.

**Michael Ellis:**

On 12 May, the Prime Minister confirmed that a public inquiry into COVID-19 will be established on a statutory basis, with full formal powers, and that it will begin its work in spring 2022. The independent chair of the inquiry will be appointed by the end of this year. Further details will be set out in due course.

## ■ Government Departments

**Angela Rayner:** [\[71344\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what changes have been made to the machinery of Government since 15 September 2021.

**Michael Ellis:**

Following the Machinery of Government changes announced by the Prime Minister on the 15th September, responsibility for United Kingdom governance and elections has moved to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to embed levelling up priorities and to meet the changing needs of people across the country.

In addition, responsibility for the operation of the Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Department of Health and Social Care. This change was announced on 21 September and the administrative aspects took effect on 1 November 2021.

All Machinery of Government changes are a matter for the Prime Minister.

## ■ Northern Ireland Protocol

**Ruth Jones:** [\[71462\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent discussions he has had with Maroš Šefčovič on the Northern Ireland protocol.

**Michael Ellis:**

As of 1 March this year, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster no longer leads on the Northern Ireland Protocol. Lord Frost is the Minister responsible for oversight of the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and Withdrawal Agreement, including the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Lord Frost last met EU Commission VP Maroš Šefčovič in London, on Friday 12 November, as part of the ongoing discussions on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

■ **Procurement: Ministerial Responsibility**

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[71347\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what ministerial responsibility he holds for cross-government procurement policy.

**Michael Ellis:**

A full list of ministerial responsibilities is published on GOV.UK. Individual departments are responsible for their own procurements.

■ **UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement**

**Emily Thornberry:**

[\[71293\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, which of his Ministers is responsible for implementing any policies relating to (a) the suspension of tariff preferences for EU goods, (b) retaliatory or rebalancing tariffs on EU goods, (c) the restriction of access to UK fishing waters for European vessels and (d) the suspension of obligations under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement in the event of dispute settlement procedures being activated under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

**Michael Ellis:**

The Cabinet Office regularly publishes a list of ministerial responsibilities. The most recent update was published in November 2021 and can be found on [GOV.UK](#).

## COP26

■ **UN Climate Conference 2021: Disclosure of Information**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[66179\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to the Answer of 18 October 2021 to Question 53867, on UN Climate Conference 2021, if he will publish the details of all meetings the Prime Minister has had with (a) heads of states, (b) ambassadors, (c) business leaders and (d) representatives of civil society where COP26 was the leading topic of discussion since the most recent transparency publication of meetings from January to March 2021.

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[66180\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, with reference to the Answer of 18 October 2021 to Question 53867, on UN Climate Conference 2021, for what reason there was only one meeting in respect of COP26 in the latest transparency publication of his meetings from January to March 2021.

**Michael Ellis:**

The quarterly lists of Ministerial meetings with external organisations do not include engagement with representatives of foreign governments. It is in the national interest that some diplomacy takes place privately, to allow open and candid discussions with other nations.

Notwithstanding this fact, Downing Street regularly publishes on GOV.UK summaries of diplomatic meetings and telephone calls, including those discussing climate change and COP26.

More broadly, I refer the Hon. Member to my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister's oral statement today on the COP26 Summit.

**DEFENCE****■ Armed Forces****Mr Toby Perkins:**[\[904145\]](#)

What recent assessment he has made of the strength of the armed forces.

**James Heapey:**

The total strength of the Armed Forces is 168,880.

**■ Armed Forces: Aviation****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[71281\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any current UK deployments involve the chartering of transport aircraft from other nations.

**Jeremy Quin:**

All Ministry of Defence charter air transport requirements are arranged and purchased through UK brokers; as a result of this process some foreign civilian operators are utilised to meet demand. At three current UK deployments have utilised charter support provided by commercial operators.

**■ Armed Forces: Carbon Emissions****Patrick Grady:**[\[904143\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to (a) monitor and (b) reduce carbon emissions from UK military activities.

**Jeremy Quin:**

We monitor our carbon emissions from UK military activities and publish them in our Annual Report.

The Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach we published in March 2021 sets out our route to making Defence more sustainable and reducing emissions.



## ■ Armoured Fighting Vehicles

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[70233\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many track kilometres were (a) forecast and (b) recorded against the UK's Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) in each of the last three years.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The information requested is provided below.

FINANCIAL YEAR (FY)	FY 2018/19		FY 2019/20		FY 2020/21	
	Forecast	Actuals	Forecast	Actuals	Forecast (Revised Oct 20)	Actuals
Platform (Kms)						
CVR(T)	260,174	84,627	150,040	132,592	112,591	54,641

Notes

1. Financial years run 01 April – 31 March
2. The Forecast is a total forecast and includes more than just the Army forecast for training activity. It captures other activity including, trials and experimentation and other Front Line Command forecasts.
3. COVID-19 had a significant impact on the way that the Army trained, this is reflected in the Actuals details in FY 2020/21.

## ■ Aviation: Contracts

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[71280\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how much the Government has paid to other nations to charter transport aircraft since August 2021.

**Jeremy Quin:**

No money has been paid by the Ministry of Defence to other National Governments for the receipt of charter air transport since August 2021.

## ■ Defence: Employment

**David Duguid:**

[\[904144\]](#)

What steps his Department is taking to support defence jobs throughout the UK.

**Jeremy Quin:**

Last year the Ministry of Defence invested over £20 billion in industry and commerce across the UK directly and indirectly supporting many thousands of jobs.

## ■ Mali: Peacekeeping Operations

**Kenny MacAskill:** [\[71476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the name is of the terrorist armed group of the two men killed in Mali by British peacekeepers on 20 October 2021.

**James Heappey:**

UK Armed Forces, deployed on peacekeeping operations, were engaged by two armed individuals while conducting routine assurance patrols. They returned fire, killing those two individuals, who are most likely to have been members of one of the terrorist armed groups operating in Mali and across the region. Our forces acted lawfully, pursuant to the inherent right of self-defence and in accordance with MINUSMA's mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

## ■ Navy: Deployment

**Jerome Mayhew:** [\[904139\]](#)

What assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Carrier Strike Group's ongoing deployment.

**Giles Watling:** [\[904140\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of Carrier Strike Group's ongoing deployment.

**Mr Ben Wallace:**

The carrier strike group has not only visited and worked with over 44 nations on its tour, but has had visits from 63 Ministers. It is great convenor and a great presence that, made in Britain, definitely does go around the world showing that Britain can do both soft and hard power, and do it with quality.

## ■ Type 23 Frigates: Repairs and Maintenance

**John Healey:** [\[71268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, with reference to paragraph 2.11 of the National Audit Office report, Improving the performance of major equipment contracts, published June 2021, what costs his Department has incurred as a result of plans to upgrade the Type 23 frigates due to delays in procurement of the Type 26 and Type 31e frigates.

**Jeremy Quin:**

The Type 23 frigate class is continually being updated and upgraded to meet new threats or to replace obsolete technology.

The work has provided greater resilience in the transition of Type 26 and Type 31 into service. Furthermore, options are continually being developed to consider extending some ships that have already had significant investment while removing those that require extensive investment such as HMS MONMOUTH and HMS MONTROSE.

## ■ Veterans: Education and Training

**Tonia Antoniazzi:**

[\[904141\]](#)

What progress his Department has made on supporting education and reskilling opportunities for former service personnel.

**Leo Docherty:**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) promotes lifelong learning.

Eligible Service personnel and veterans can access three schemes which can help individuals pursue their personal and professional development through education, both during their Service and, for two of the schemes, up to ten years after discharge.

In 2019, the MOD introduced Holistic Transition support, building on the highly successful Career Transition Partnership, which has provided employment support and job finding services for the last 20 years.

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ 4G

**David Duguid:**

[\[71438\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, pursuant to the Answer of 26 October 2021 to Question 58990, on Broadband: Banff and Buchan, what estimate her Department has made of the geographical coverage of 4G mobile data across (a) Scotland and (b) the UK; and what estimate her Department has made of the average 4G coverage in each parliamentary constituency.

**Julia Lopez:**

Ofcom is responsible for measuring 4G coverage and provides data at constituency level. Ofcom's Connected Nations summer update report, shows that 44% of the Scottish landmass had 4G geographic coverage from all four mobile network operators (MNOs), with 81% from at least one operator. Comparatively, the UK has 69% coverage from all four MNOs, and 92% from at least one operator.

Scotland will benefit significantly from the £1 billion Shared Rural Network which will see 4G geographic coverage from all four operators rise to a minimum of 74% and coverage from at least one operator increase to 91%. On 29 June we [released](#) further details of how this world leading programme will benefit both the people who live and work in Scotland, and at a regional level across the UK.

### ■ Advertising: Internet

**Mr Kevan Jones:**

[\[70232\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether she plans to include provisions to protect internet users from illegal advertisements in the Online Safety Bill.

**Chris Philp:**

Under the Online Safety Bill, companies will have duties with regard to user-generated content advertising, such as posts by influencers and posts by companies on their social media feeds. Companies will need to minimise the risk of illegal user-generated content appearing on their services, and take swift action to remove it once alerted to it.

The legislation will not cover adverts which are placed directly or indirectly through a contract between an advertiser and an advertising service. It is important to keep the scope of the Bill manageable, to ensure its success in regulating the most harmful forms of user-generated content. We are however awaiting the report from the Joint Committee scrutinising the Draft Bill and will carefully examine any recommendations in this area.

Harms associated with paid-for advertising will be addressed holistically via the Online Advertising Programme. In February 2019, we announced that we will consider how online advertising is regulated. In 2020 we launched a [call for evidence](#) and we will be launching a public consultation on the Online Advertising Programme in the coming months.

**■ Charities: Coronavirus****Kim Leadbeater:**[\[71525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she is taking to help charities to recover from the effects of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Charities play a vital role in supporting people and communities in need, and have been central in the response to the pandemic. This is why the government made available a £750 million dedicated funding package to help charities adapt and maintain essential services. This package was in addition to cross-economy measures, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

The impact of COVID-19 on charities has varied greatly, depending on delivery models and income streams. However - with the government support - overall the charity sector has shown significant resilience over the last two years.

My department is actively working with partners in the sector to shape a forward-looking agenda to enable charities to thrive in the future. Further details will be made available in due course.

**■ Cricket: Racial Discrimination****Catherine West:**[\[71419\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of the prevalence of racism in professional cricket; and what steps she plans to take to tackle that matter.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

For a full answer please refer to the [Urgent Question](#) debated on Tuesday 9 November 2021.

**Claudia Webbe:**[\[72626\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will (a) make anti-racism, equality and diversity targets in cricket a ministerial priority and (b) report annually on the progress being made on achieving those targets.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The forthcoming update of UK Sport and Sport England's "Code for Sports Governance" will place an increased focus on diversity in decision making and ensuring that sports organisations reflect the community they serve.

Sports receiving the most public funding will be required to agree a diversity and inclusion action plan with Sport England and UK Sport, which will be published and updated annually.

**■ National Lottery****Simon Fell:**[\[71465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of the National Lottery's 44,000 retail partners sell (a) both draw based tickets and instant win tickets, (b) only instant win tickets and (c) only draw based game tickets.

**Simon Fell:**[\[71466\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many of the National Lottery's 44,000 retail partners are required under their retailer agreement to sell (a) both draw based tickets and instant win tickets, (b) only instant win tickets and (c) only draw based game tickets.

**Chris Philp:**

The vast majority of National Lottery retailers sell both draw based games and scratchcards. Currently, 1,931 sell only draw based games and 222 sell only scratchcards.

The Retailer Agreement which is entered into between individual retailers and the current operator of the National Lottery does not stipulate that particular categories of National Lottery products must be sold.

**■ Ofcom: Recruitment****Chi Onwurah:**[\[71329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many staff Ofcom has recruited on an FTE basis to support its duties under the proposed Online Safety Bill, and how many FTE staff Ofcom plans to recruit for those duties in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

**Chris Philp:**

Ofcom has established a strong team to enable it to prepare for its forthcoming responsibilities to regulate online safety, and is building capability across the organisation. At the end of October 2021 around 100 full time equivalents (FTE) were working on online safety. HM Treasury has confirmed that, following the recent Spending Review, over £110m will be provided for online harms work to be carried out by DCMS and Ofcom over the period 2022/23 - 2024/25. This outcome will ensure that Ofcom has the resources it needs to establish its online safety functions for the successful implementation of the online safety legislation which DCMS will shortly introduce. Ofcom estimates that by the end of 2024/25, based on the scope of the regime as set out in the draft bill, they will have around 340 FTE working on online safety.

**Chi Onwurah:**[\[71330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how many FTE staff Ofcom has recruited to support its duties under the Telecommunications (Security) Bill; and how many FTE staff it plans to recruit for those duties in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

**Julia Lopez:**

The Ofcom security budget for this financial year has been increased by £4.6 million. This funding will allow Ofcom to more than double the number of staff working on telecoms security by the end of this financial year. This includes hiring a multi-skilled team including technical, enforcement and legal experts.

We are committed to ensuring that Ofcom will have adequate resources to take forward its work under the Telecommunications (Security) Bill. Longer term security funding for Ofcom was agreed as part of the recent Spending Review and the government will be able to provide more details on this funding following the conclusion of the Government's business planning process.

**■ Self-harm: Internet****Chris Elmore:**[\[71420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Online Safety Bill will include specific guidance on what constitutes (a) content that is harmful to body image and (b) other harmful content.

**Chris Philp:**

The Online Safety Bill defines harmful content that is in scope of regulation. For content that is legal-but-harmful to children or adults, this is defined as content that the service provider has reasonable grounds to believe may have a significant adverse physical or psychological impact on children or adults. Further categories of priority content will be set out in secondary legislation. Where content that harms body image falls within these definitions, it will be in scope of the Bill.

Ofcom will issue guidance to companies on how they should conduct a proper risk assessment for this type of content. It will also publish codes of practice that will set

out the recommended steps that companies can take to fulfil their duties to protect users.

## ■ **Social Media: Advertising**

**Chris Elmore:**

[\[71421\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether the Online Safety Bill will include provisions to help ensure that social media platforms provide advertisers with appropriate controls to determine who can (a) view and (b) engage with their content.

**Chris Philp:**

The draft Online Safety Bill has been designed to tackle harm facilitated through user-generated content. The Bill must be targeted and proportionate for businesses and Ofcom.

Harms associated with paid-for advertising will be addressed through the Online Advertising Programme. In 2020, DCMS launched a call for evidence and we will be launching a public consultation on the Online Advertising Programme in the coming months. The draft Bill is currently in pre-legislative scrutiny and the Department will carefully consider all recommendations made by the Joint Committee.

## ■ **Sports: Racial Discrimination**

**Kim Leadbeater:**

[\[71526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps the Government is taking to tackle racism in sport (a) in the UK and (b) abroad.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Racism has no place in sport, or in wider society. I am committed to ensuring sport does all it can to tackle racism and all forms of discrimination both domestically and internationally.

In June 2021 Sport England, UK Sport and the other home nations' sports councils published the results of a detailed, independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport.

The findings make clear that racism and racial inequalities still exist within sport in the UK and that there are long standing issues, which have resulted in ethnically diverse communities being consistently disadvantaged.

Each council is now working at pace to develop their own specific action plans to further deliver on these commitments and address the recommendations from the review.

In addition, the forthcoming update of UK Sport and Sport England's Code for Sports Governance will place an increased focus on diversity in decision making and ensuring that sports organisations reflect the community they serve. Sports receiving the most funding will be required to agree a diversity and inclusion action plan with Sport England and UK Sport, which will be published and updated annually.

The Prime Minister has also set out action to tackle online racist abuse in football following the abhorrent social media attacks on black England players after the Euro 2020 final. For the first time, the government will amend legislation to extend the use of Football Banning Orders so online abusers can be banned from stadiums for up to 10 years, in the same way violent thugs are barred from grounds. The Government, Premier League and football authorities will also work together to help tackle all aspects of online abuse footballers are experiencing, ahead of the Online Safety Bill coming into force. We also welcomed the Premier League's "No Room for Racism" Action plan, and the announcement of new enhanced anti-discrimination measures such as league-wide bans for offenders.

There is still more to do though, and we will continue to work with sports to combat racism both in person and online.

## ■ Youth Centres: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[71378\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, whether funding for capital spending for new youth centres will also be available to youth centres that are planning capital spend project to upgrade facilities.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Following the 2021 Spending Review, we are investing £560 million in youth services in England over the next three years, including the Youth Investment Fund and ongoing support for the National Citizen Service.

Access to youth facilities is not felt equally, with young people in many parts of the country struggling to gain access to them. The Youth Investment Fund will seek to remedy this, creating up to 300 youth facilities to level up opportunity in left behind places, giving young people access to support from youth workers and enabling them to engage in beneficial activities.

Full details of the YIF's eligibility criteria will be announced in due course.

## ■ Youth Services

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[71383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will take steps to encourage a partnership approach between statutory services and the voluntary sector to provide local youth services.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

The government recognises that local youth provision relies on a mix of statutory and voluntary sector provision. The Youth Investment Fund will seek to build on locally available provision and will encourage bids that show all partners working together to maximise the impact of investment. In addition, the National Citizen Service (NCS) delivery model supports partnership working between the NCS Trust and voluntary sector to deliver the NCS programme. In 2021, 36% of NCS contracts were delivered by partners in the charity sector.



## ■ Youth Services: Finance

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[71388\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, how much and what proportion of her departmental budget is allocated to supporting local authority provided youth services.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Local Authorities have a statutory duty to allocate funding to youth services in line with local need. This is funded from the Local Government settlement, which was over £12 billion this year. The 2021 Spending Review announced an additional £560 million investment in youth services in England, including via the Youth Investment Fund and National Citizen Service, with a firm focus on levelling up.

## ■ Youth Services: Special Educational Needs

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[71381\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what additional support she will make available for youth services for young people with SEND requirements.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

DCMS' youth policies focus on providing a universal offer, ensuring local youth provision is accessible for all young people including those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) requirements. DCMS will be investing £560 million in youth services in England over the next three years, including ongoing support for the National Citizen Service (NCS).

Programmes such as the NCS offer additional support by extending their age range for young people with SEND requirements up to 25. The NCS programme also attracts a greater proportion of young people with SEND requirements (10.4% of 2021 participants had SEND compared to 1.8% of the population in the same age group) and shows a stronger positive impact on their confidence\*.

\* In The Mix with NCS: A sub-group analysis of the NCS Survey 2016 & 2017 data, Jump Projects Limited and MIME Consulting Limited, 2019

## ■ Youth Services: Training

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[71379\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment she has made of demand for spending on youth services.

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[71380\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will devise a national youth services workforce plan to help ensure that there is a trained workforce to meet the needs of young people in the community.

**Rachael Maskell:** [71382]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps he will take to help local authorities determine their priorities for youth services provision.

**Rachael Maskell:** [71384]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent assessment she has made of the potential merits of a statutory youth service.

**Rachael Maskell:** [71386]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what on-going training she will make available for staff and volunteers working in youth work.

**Rachael Maskell:** [71387]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what steps she will take to encourage adults to retrain to work in youth work.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Earlier this year, DCMS conducted a Youth Review to ensure that our spending, policy and programmes meet the needs of young people. The review heard from over 6,000 young people and 120 youth organisations. The findings will be published shortly. DCMS is also committed to completing the review of the Local Authority Statutory Duty for Youth Services, previously paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, the results will give a clear direction for our out-of-school youth agenda for all partners providing youth services, including Local Authorities.

To support the youth workforce, DCMS funds the National Youth Agency to set professional standards, qualifications and a curriculum for youth work, including a new youth work apprenticeship and free-to-access training. DCMS bursaries have fully-funded hundreds of individuals to gain youth work qualifications who otherwise may have been excluded due to cost.

## ■ Youth Services: Voluntary Work

**Rachael Maskell:** [71385]

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing a form of accreditation for people who volunteer with youth services to recognise the skills they gain and provide through their work.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Accreditation, skills acquisition and facilitating routes into employment are among many factors that may motivate an individual to volunteer. An [evaluation of the Coronavirus Community Support Fund](#) found almost all of those who volunteered for an organisation that received funding reported at least one positive benefit to themselves, including 39% reporting skills development.

[DCMS research](#) has found that existing schemes to record volunteer training and skills, alongside wider functions such as ID verification, have emerged in response to the particular needs of a sector and there is little uniformity.

This suggests that any accreditation scheme would be best considered at a local level rather than national, and should account for the considerable diversity of volunteers, their activities and motivations, and the organisations they engage with.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Children: Day Care

**Steve McCabe:**

[\[70223\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of childcare support available to full-time students who undertake paid work.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government recognises the value of parents continuing in or returning to education and provides support to those enrolled in recognised higher education courses.

Eligible student parents may be able to claim a Childcare Grant, which offers parents support with up to 85% of their childcare costs depending on their household income.

The maximum Childcare Grant for the 2021/22 academic year is:

- up to £179.62 a week for one child
- up to £307.95 a week for two or more children.

In further education, the Care to Learn scheme contributes towards childcare and related travel costs while young parents are in education.

All parents aged under 20 who meet Care to Learn residency criteria and engage in directly publicly funded education or training (except higher education) can apply if they are the main carer and in receipt of child benefit for their child.

The maximum amount that can be claimed is £175 per child per week in London and £160 per child per week elsewhere.

### ■ Covid-19 Education Catch-up Fund

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[70259\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how his Department plans to monitor and evaluate the sufficiency of the additional £1.8 billion allocated to school catch-up in the Autumn Budget 2021.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department is undertaking a range of monitoring and evaluation activities to assess COVID-19 catch-up activity, including for the additional £1.8 billion allocated in the autumn Budget 2021.

The department has commissioned Renaissance Learning, and their subcontractor, the Education Policy Institute, to collect data from a sample of schools. This will provide a baseline assessment of lost education and catch-up needs for pupils in schools in England, and to monitor progress over the course of the academic year 2020/21 and Autumn term 2021. We are seeking commercial agreements for further academic years which will help the department understand the impact of the additional £1.8 billion.

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 study design (including surveys of school leaders, interviews, and case studies) to examine how schools are tackling the issue of lost education. Results from the study will be used to understand how the catch-up premium funds have been spent and how best to support schools to tackle lost education.

The department is also undertaking evaluations of specific education recovery programmes to understand their effectiveness.

**■ Disability: Children****Wera Hobhouse:**[\[71434\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Autumn Spending Review 2021, what steps his Department is taking to measure how effective (a) education recovery and (b) other funding streams are in improving the mental and physical wellbeing of disabled children and parent carers.

**Will Quince:**

As highlighted in the Disabled Children's Partnership 'Then There Was Silence' report earlier this year, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Through the autumn Spending Review 2021, schools will receive an additional £4.7 billion in core funding in the 2024/25 financial year, including £1.6 billion for schools and high needs in 2022/23 on top of already planned increases from the 2019 Spending Review. This is equivalent to a total cash increase of £1,500 per pupil between 2019/20 and 2024/25; taking the total core schools budget to £56.8 billion in 2024/25.

This core funding sits alongside a further £1.8 billion dedicated to supporting young people to catch up on missed learning, following on from the existing investment in catch up for early years, schools and colleges, including for tutoring and teacher training opportunities. This includes a one-off £1 billion recovery premium for the next

two academic years - 2022/23 and 2023/24 - to support disadvantaged pupils in all state-funded primary and secondary schools.

Outside of the Spending Review, specifically on mental health and wellbeing, the government announced on 5 March 2021 that as part of the £500 million for mental health recovery, £79 million will be used to significantly expand mental health services for children, including disabled children. £31 million will also be used to address particular challenges faced by individuals with a learning disability and autistic people, including £3 million for community respite services. For the 2021/22 academic year, the department is also providing more than £17 million to build on existing mental health support available in schools and colleges. This includes £9.5 million to enable up to a third of schools and colleges to train a senior mental health lead, as part of our commitment to fund training for leads in all schools and colleges by 2025, and £7 million into our Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme, enabling local authorities to continue supporting schools and colleges to meet ongoing mental wellbeing.

The government also announced on 6 September 2021 an additional £5.4 billion for the NHS to support the COVID-19 response over the next six months, bringing the total government support for health services in response to COVID-19 to over £34 billion this year. This includes £2 billion to tackle the elective backlog, reducing waiting times for patients, including disabled children. We are providing over £42 million in 2021/22 to continue funding projects to support children with SEND including £27.3 million to the Family Fund in 2021/22 to support over 60,000 families on low incomes raising children and young people with disabilities or serious illnesses.

## ■ **Disability: Social Services**

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

[\[70245\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, what steps his Department is taking to measure the progress of the restoration of disabled children's social care services to pre-pandemic levels.

**Will Quince:**

From day one of the COVID-19 outbreak, the government's priority for vulnerable children has been to keep them safe, protect their welfare and put their best interests at the heart of every decision.

This is why we kept schools open for children with a social worker and children with special educational needs and disabilities, ensured that social workers observe those that do not attend, and that children needing social care support have continued to be identified. The government also provided more than £6 billion in non-ringfenced funding directly to councils during COVID-19 to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 spending pressures, including children's social care, further to their core spending power.

Local authorities set their own children's services budget from this core spending power, based on local need and priorities. This year, councils have access to £51.3 billion for their services, including a £1.7 billion grant for social care.

My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced at Spending Review 2021 that the government will provide local authorities with £4.8 billion of new grant funding over the next Spending Review period, which is intended to help meet the costs of delivering care for our most vulnerable children. This will enable the sector to maintain vital frontline services, including disabled children's social care services.

### ■ **Family Hubs: Luton**

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[71478\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, whether Luton will receive funding for family hubs as one of the 75 areas to receive that support.

**Will Quince:**

At Budget this October, the government announced £82 million to create a network of family hubs. This is part of a wider £300 million package to transform services for parents and babies, carers, and children in half of local authorities across England.

We will set out more detail in due course on how this funding will be allocated.

### ■ **Mathematics: Higher Education**

**Caroline Dinelage:**

[\[70256\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase the number of young people studying mathematics at higher education.

**Michelle Donelan:**

Universities are autonomous bodies, independent from government, and they have control over decisions about who to admit to their courses.

Mathematics remains the most popular A level subject and we are committed to increase participation in post-16 mathematics. We introduced reformed A levels which provide a better foundation to study Mathematics courses, including pure Mathematics, at a higher level. We fund the Advanced Mathematics Support Programme which supports schools and colleges to improve the effectiveness of level 3 maths teaching and provides targeted support for students preparing for study at higher education.

We are working with universities and academy trusts to establish a specialist Mathematics school in each region (and a total of 11 nationally). These aim to prepare more of our most mathematically able students to succeed in Mathematics disciplines at top universities.

We strongly believe effective careers guidance and advice is key to supporting young people in their education and career choices.

The government's Careers Strategy sets out a long-term plan to build a world class careers system to achieve this ambition. The delivery of the Careers Strategy will ensure that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) encounters, such as with employers and apprenticeships, are built into school career programmes.

The government also supports around 25% of the total PhD population in the UK through grants awarded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). Since January 2020, UKRI has awarded £104 million of additional funding into Mathematical Sciences, over and above the Engineering and physical Sciences Research Council's core Mathematical Sciences Theme budget.

### ■ Pre-school Education: Finance

**Kate Green:** [\[71327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, what additional funding he will make available for early years entitlements in (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

**Kate Green:** [\[71328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what the hourly rate for early years providers delivering government funded childcare hours will be in (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24, and (c) 2024-25.

**Will Quince:**

I refer the hon. Member for Stretford and Urmston to the answer I gave on 3 November 2021 to Question [68396](#).

Further to that response, the department will confirm the 2022/23 financial year hourly funding rates for individual local authorities shortly, followed by the initial allocations in December. Hourly rates for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years will be announced in following years, according to the usual timetable.

### ■ Pupil Exclusions

**Munira Wilson:** [\[63896\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate he has made of the number of pupils that have been off-rolled in state schools in each school year since 2015-16.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

The department does not hold estimates of the number of pupils that have been off-rolled in state schools in each school year since 2015-16. The information requested about pupils being taken off the school roll is not held by the department and cannot be estimated from current data sources.

**■ Secure Accommodation: Young Offenders****Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[71306\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report, Out of sight: Girls in the Children and Young People's Secure Estate, published by Centre for Mental Health on 5 October 2021, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of capacity in secure children's homes to meet demand.

**Ms Lyn Brown:** [\[71307\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the report, Out of sight: Girls in the Children and Young People's Secure Estate, published by Centre for Mental Health on 5 October 2021, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the geographic spread of secure children's home capacity to enable accommodation of children within a reasonable distance of home areas.

**Will Quince:**

This report raises a number of important issues of concern to all those who are responsible for the care and provision of accommodation for girls within the secure estate.

The responsibility to ensure there is adequate secure welfare provision rests with local authorities as they have a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient provision in their area to meet the needs of all children in their care.

The department has taken a number of steps to support local authorities in fulfilling this duty. The department established the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit in 2016 and continue to fund its work to help plan and coordinate welfare placements and to highlight capacity issues.

The department understands that local authorities sometimes find themselves in a position where the most appropriate placement is difficult to access, particularly for children with the most complex needs. That is why the government announced £24 million of investment to start a programme of work to support local authorities to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure children's homes and will mean children can live closer to their families and support networks, addressing geographic disparities, in provision that meets their needs.

In addition, as part of this year's Spending Review (SR), the government announced £259 million over the SR period to maintain capacity and expand provision in secure and open residential children's homes. The department will announce more details on this funding shortly and the findings of the Centre for Mental Health's report will be useful to inform the future design of the secure welfare estate.

**■ Special Educational Needs: Per Capita Costs****Helen Hayes:** [\[71409\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 57208 on Special Educational Needs: Expenditure, what estimate his



Department has made of the average per pupil funding provided through Education Health and Care plans in each year since 2016.

**Will Quince:**

I refer the hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood to the answer I gave on 20 October 2021 to Question [57208](#). Further detail, beyond that set out in my answer, is not available.

The department does not prescribe in detail how local authorities should allocate their high needs funding. The level of funding that an individual child or young person with an education, health, and care plan (EHC) attracts to a school or college is not information that is collected by the department from schools and colleges, or from local authorities to which we allocate high needs funding. The department can, therefore, provide neither specific per pupil levels of funding, nor averages for each year.

Furthermore, because of various adjustments between years in the funding allocated, the gradual introduction of EHC plans from 2014, and the different periods covered by the data that are collected, it is not possible to show the average funding per pupil with an EHC plan on a like-for-like basis.

■ **Special Educational Needs: Suffolk**

**Tom Hunt:**

[\[72601\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the funding of academy chain branches in Ipswich receiving comparatively less than the equivalent branch in London Tower Hamlets, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of regional disparities in funding for the provision of education for SEND students on the resource availability for those students in Suffolk.

**Mr Robin Walker:**

There are three key reasons why per pupil school funding rates are different in Tower Hamlets and Suffolk.

The first reason is historical. The national funding formula (NFF) replaced a system which was unfair, untransparent, and out of date, where similar schools and local areas received very different levels of funding with little or no justification. The NFF is improving fairness, so that funding is more closely matched to current needs, rather than historic differences. However, in this move to greater fairness it is also important to maintain stability for schools. The NFF ensures that all schools receive a minimum per-pupil increase in their pupil-led funding, while providing the greatest gains for areas which have been relatively lower funded historically. We believe this strikes the right balance between fairness and stability.

Secondly, it is right that schools with high numbers of pupils with additional needs – such as those indicated by measures of deprivation, low prior attainment, or English as an additional language – receive extra funding to help them meet the needs of all their pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, for example, is higher in Tower Hamlets than in Suffolk, and the funding system reflects this. In

addition, schools in more expensive areas, such as London, attract higher funding per pupil than other parts of the country to reflect the higher costs they face.

Thirdly, the current funding system allows for local variation in how funding allocations are determined for individual schools. Local authorities are responsible for designing a local funding formula, within certain parameters, to determine final budgets for schools in their area. This means that there continues to be significant differences in the way in which some local authorities allocate funding. The government has recently put forward its proposals to complete its reforms to the school's, which will determine schools' budgets directly rather than through local formulae set independently by each local authority. This will level up the school funding system so that all schools across the country are funded on a fair, consistent basis.

We are also aware that some local authorities have found it difficult to meet the increasing costs of provision for children and young people with education, health and care plans. The right response to tackling this is a multi-faceted approach which looks to the heart of the issues: significant increases in high needs funding nationally; targeted intervention for the local authorities which have struggled the most; and reform from the cross government special education needs and disabilities (SEND) review.

We announced in summer 2021 that high needs funding will increase by £780 million, or 9.6%, in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22; this follows the increase of more than £1.5 billion over the previous two years. This will bring the total high needs budget to £8.9 billion, an increase of over a third since 2019-20. Suffolk County Council's provisional high needs allocation for 2022-23 is £92.5 million, an increase of 8.1% per head of population aged 2-18 years, compared to 2021-22.

In addition, the autumn 2021 Spending Review will deliver an additional £4.7 billion for the core schools' budget by 2024-25, compared to previous plans. That includes an additional £1.6 billion for schools and high needs in 2022-23, on top of the funding we previously announced. We will confirm in due course how this additional funding for 2022-23, and for the two subsequent years, will be allocated for schools and high needs.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Carbon Emissions

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[57322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what emissions reductions his Department's (a) existing and (b) proposed policies deliver in the (i) fourth, (ii) fifth and (iii) sixth carbon budget periods.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Government's Net Zero Strategy sets the UK on the path to deliver on its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. The Net Zero Strategy sets out the

Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy and covers a wide range of actions across different sectors.

The Natural Resources, Waste and Fluorinated-Gases (F-Gases) chapter collates wide-ranging commitments, incorporating nature-based solutions into our approach to reach net zero, ensuring the pathway delivers multiple benefits for climate, biodiversity, and people. This brings together and builds on commitments and policies made in the 25 Year Environment Plan, the Agriculture Act and the Environment Act. We have committed to support the agriculture sector to reduce emissions, restore huge swathes of peat, create vast woodlands, and take action to reduce harmful waste and gases.

Table 8 in the technical annex of the Net Zero Strategy sets out sector emissions in future carbon budgets compared with current emissions levels.

## ■ Dogs: Sales

**Luke Pollard:**

**[70302]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to prevent advertising of dogs for sale through (a) Snapchat and (b) Instagram stories where content is temporarily held online.

**Victoria Prentis:**

This Government takes the issue of low-welfare and illegal supply of puppies very seriously. Significant steps have already been taken to improve and update the laws on dog breeding in England to crack down on unscrupulous breeders who breed dogs purely for financial greed at the expense of animal welfare.

My department supports the Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG) which was created to combat growing concerns about the irresponsible advertising of pets for sale, rehoming and exchange, including through social media platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram. We have backed a set of Minimum Standards that PAAG developed which several of the UK's largest classified websites have agreed to meet. Meanwhile my department maintains a national communications campaign (Petfished) to raise awareness of issues associated with low-welfare and illegal supply of pets. This includes providing clear signposting on where responsible breeders and rehoming centres can be found and encouraging prospective buyers to research the seller thoroughly before they visit and decide to purchase. The campaign provides a list of red flags for buyers to look out for when searching for a pet online. More information can be found here:

<https://getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk/>

Under The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs and/or who breeds three or more litters in a twelve-month period needs to have a valid licence from their local authority. Licencees must meet strict statutory minimum welfare standards, including provisions to protect dogs from being bred from too often or at an early age, which are enforced by local authorities who have powers to issue,

refuse or revoke licences. Any licensee advertising dogs for sale will need to include their licence number in the advert and specify the local authority who issued the licence. Additional requirements placed on advertisements include that the age of the dog for sale must be displayed along with a recognisable photograph.

We banned the commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens in England from 6 April 2020. This ban aims to disrupt the low-welfare trade that supports puppy farming by preventing pet shops, pet dealers and other commercial outlets from selling these animals in England unless they themselves have bred them. It means anyone looking to get a puppy must buy direct from a breeder or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead.

Furthermore, the Government has a manifesto commitment to crack down on puppy smuggling and one of our key reforms in the Action Plan for Animal Welfare is to end this abhorrent, cruel practice and low-welfare pet imports. We continue to maintain a close working relationship with the animal welfare sector, enforcement agencies and Governments across the four nations regarding the regulation of dog breeding and pet sales. This will allow us to explore a more consistent approach to addressing any cross-border issues associated with illegal or low-welfare supply.

## ■ Dogs: Smuggling

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[69122\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the recommendation from the Dog's Trust report, *Puppy smuggling: a tragedy ignored*, that the focus on enforcement of the pet travel legislation should be moved from carriers to a qualified animal professional from a government agency and include a requirement for adequate out-of-hours and weekend cover at ports.

**Jo Churchill:**

Carriers work closely with operational colleagues at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and Border Force and are committed to preventing illegal imports of pet animals. Authorised pet checkers are trained by APHA prior to being granted approval and receive annual audits of their checking and processing to ensure they uphold our requirements. APHA regularly reviews its border enforcement work against known travel trends of those that seek to illegally import puppies to the UK, to keep pace with this rapidly evolving criminal activity. Part of this work includes intelligence-led targeting of suspected smugglers, alongside partner agencies, including Border Force. Border Force operates a 24-hour service seven days per week and alerts APHA to suspected non-compliant dogs and puppies. Targeted intelligence-led work often takes place outside of normal working hours as needed. The Government is satisfied with the workings of these current arrangements.

## ■ Export Health Certificates

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[71286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 65537 on Export Health Certificates, what steps his Department is taking with the British Veterinary Association to increase veterinary capacity for Animal Health Certificate requirements; and what information his Department holds on the number of veterinary practises with capacity to issue AHCs.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Animal Health Certificate (AHC) format is mandated by the EU, and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has taken steps to help Official Veterinarians (OVs) complete them including by developing a model AHC together with accompanying printable guidance and associated training. APHA has publicised the availability of the training relating to completing AHCs. The model AHC is easily available on-line and can be accessed by all qualified OVs at any time.

We have been engaging with the British Veterinary Association to develop additional guidance to support vets in completing and issuing AHCs. This includes the development of a 'checklist', which can be used in addition to the comprehensive guidance already available to vets, and an explainer video that will guide vets through a worked-up AHC example.

The number of Official Veterinarians (working in private practice) who are able to issue AHCs is currently 7,896. Defra does not hold information on the related number of veterinary practices that are able to issue AHCs.

## ■ Food: Northern Ireland

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[70262\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland administration on having the Union Jack on labels of food that enters Northern Ireland.

**Victoria Prentis:**

Ministers and officials are in regular discussions with our counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive to discuss agri-food trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Our Command Paper, *The Northern Ireland Protocol: the way forward* (CP502) notes that the use of appropriate labelling would be one means of ensuring the destination of agri-food goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

## ■ Ivory

**Jonathan Edwards:**

[\[71311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will consider the potential merits of a scheme to safely remove unwanted ivory products in the UK.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Act will not affect the ownership of ivory items and therefore we have no plans for a Government surrender scheme for unwanted ivory items at this time. We recognise that, for some low value items, owners may decide it is not cost-effective to register them for sale. This will be a decision for individual owners. Such items may of course be gifted, donated, or bequeathed rather than discarded. We will explain to owners what options are available to them as part of our awareness raising campaign.

**Ivory Act 2018****Jonathan Edwards:**[\[71310\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he expects the 2018 Ivory Act to be implemented.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The consultation on the implementation of the Ivory Act 2018 was published on 9 March and closed on 4 May. We published a summary of responses on 14 September confirming our plans for implementation.

We plan to implement the ban this winter and for the ban to come into force in spring 2022.

**Meat: Australia****Theresa Villiers:**[\[70237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with reference to the trade deal agreed in principle between the UK and Australia, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact on anti-microbial resistance in the UK of increased meat imports from Australia where antibiotics are permitted to be used as growth promoters.

**Victoria Prentis:**

All meat and other animal products imported into the UK are subject to clear controls on limits of veterinary medicine residues, including antimicrobials. The UK also prohibits the use of artificial growth hormones in both domestic production and imported meat products. Our agreement with Australia changes neither of these facts.

Minimising the development and spread of Anti Microbial Resistance (AMR) to protect human and animal health is a key priority for the Government. As part of this, we have secured a commitment to cooperate on the fight against AMR with Australia. This includes exchanging information and expertise on combatting AMR, as well as collaborating in international fora on the development and implementation of international standards and initiatives on this matter.

Under Section 42 of the Agriculture Act, the Trade Secretary must report to Parliament on whether, or to what extent measures in new Free Trade Agreements, relating to trade in agricultural goods, are consistent with maintaining UK levels of

statutory protection in relation to human, animal or plant life or health, animal welfare and the environment. The deal with Australia will be subject to this requirement.

## ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Rosie Cooper:**

[\[69027\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, when he plans to respond to a letter from the hon. Member for West Lancashire of 16 September 2021, reference ZA57711 regarding a landfill site.

**Jo Churchill:**

A reply was sent to the hon. Member on 5 November 2021.

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[71453\]](#)

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 Cambridge on Inshore Vessel Monitoring dated 1 September 2021.

**Victoria Prentis:**

A reply will be sent to the hon Member in due course.

## ■ **Sewage: Waste Disposal**

**Tim Farron:**

[\[69040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many fines have been issued to each water company for discharging raw sewage into bodies of water years in (a) 2018, (b) 2019, (c) 2020 and (d) 2021 to date.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Environment Agency undertakes enforcement action in line with its enforcement and sanctions policy. Whilst the EA will always seek to prosecute for the most severe offences, it has a number of other enforcement options for lesser offences where offenders have shown lower levels of culpability, good cooperation and have responded positively to mitigate the pollution. For example, since 2018 the EA has used Enforcement Undertakings to secure over £8 million in payments from water companies to environmental charities to deliver environmental improvements.

In the period 2018 to 2021 there have been 11 successful prosecutions relating to pollution cases on the sewer network and storm overflows involving raw sewage. The number of prosecutions and value of fines for each year for each company are summarised in the table below:

YEAR	NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS WITH ILLEGAL WATER DISCHARGE ACTIVITY OFFENCES	
	INVOLVING RAW SEWAGE	WATER COMPANY AND FINE
2018	2	Northumbrian Water (fine £27,000) Thames Water (fine £1,800,000)
2019	4	Anglian Water (fine £146,000) Severn Trent Water (fine £500,000) South West Water (fine £44,000) Thames Water (fine £607,000)
2020	2 <sup>1</sup>	Anglian Water (fines £44,000 and £8,000) Severn Trent Water (fine £800,000)
2021 (to end of October 2021)	3	Southern Water (fine £90,000,000) Thames Water (fine £4,000,000) Northumbrian Water (fine £540,000)

<sup>1</sup> One prosecution in 2020 includes 2 separate cases against Anglian Water Services Limited sentenced in court on the same day

During this period there were also prosecutions of water companies involving partially-treated and treated sewage which are not captured in the table.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

### ■ Afghanistan: Football

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[70263\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assistance she will provide to enable the Afghanistan Girls National Football Team to travel to Australia safely to partake in football matches.

**James Cleverly:**

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is supporting the Afghanistan Girls National Football Team to travel to the UK from Pakistan. The Government is committed to supporting the people of Afghanistan and continues to do all it can to ensure safe passage for those who wish to leave. We will continue to work with the international community to use our influence to secure women's and girls' rights to participate in public life.



## ■ **Armed Conflict: Children**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[70268\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 29 June 2021 to Question 24364 on Armed Conflict and Violence: Children, when the new conflict centre as announced in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy became operational; and what the (a) scale and (b) areas of work have been which that centre has undertaken since its establishment.

**Vicky Ford:**

To deliver on the commitment in the Integrated Review to establish a conflict centre, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has created a new conflict directorate. The initial phase of forming this directorate was completed by April 2021, integrating the Stabilisation Unit with conflict teams and work that previously sat within the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The directorate leads on the UK's relationships with multilaterals in conflict prevention and peacebuilding; providing technical and financial support to strengthen the international system's response to conflict and promoting peace. It leads on gender and conflict policy, including: Women, Peace and Security and the cross Her Majesty's Government (HMG) National Action Plan (2018-2022) and Strategic Vision on Gender Equality; the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative; and Children in Armed Conflict. It also provides specialist conflict expertise and support to HMG's work in specific geographic contexts, drawing on best practice, evidence and analysis. This includes working to harness expertise from across HMG and beyond to increase our capability and effectiveness in key areas of conflict prevention, management, and resolution, such as supporting mediation and peace processes.

## ■ **Arnobis Zapata**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[71496\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to her Colombian counterpart on the reported armed attack on the house of Colombian social activist Arnobis Zapata in which his 14-year-old son was injured.

**Wendy Morton:**

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government. Most recently, the UK's Minister for the Environment, Lord Goldsmith, raised our concerns around violence and threats toward human rights and environmental defenders on a visit to Colombia from 5-8 October.

Colombia is a UK 'Human Rights Priority Country,' and we consistently raise our concerns regarding violence against human rights' defenders and social leaders at the UN Security Council, as we did at meetings in July, and on 14 October. We look

to the Colombian Government to further integrate its presence in conflict-affected areas, and strengthen the institutions that can investigate and prosecute the criminal actors responsible. We will continue to raise our concerns with the relevant state actors in Colombia.

#### ■ **Bahrain: Human Rights**

**Brendan O'Hara:** [\[70274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2021 to Question 53919 and with reference to her Department's Human Rights and Democracy: 2020 report published on 8 July 2021, whether the Government provided assistance for the development of Bahrain's integrated National Human Rights Action Plan; if the Government will support Bahrain in the implementation of that plan; and what reforms that plan is expected to deliver.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK government has not provided financial assistance for the development of Bahrain's National Human Rights Plan but did alongside others, including the UN, participate in the preparatory workshops. Until the Plan is published, it would be inappropriate to speculate on its content or possible UK support for its implementation.

#### ■ **Belarus: Politics and Government**

**Catherine West:** [\[70292\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her EU counterpart on the political and security situation in Belarus.

**Wendy Morton:**

The ongoing political crisis in Belarus features regularly in my engagements with EU and other colleagues. Most recently, I discussed Belarus with members of the Estonian Foreign Affairs Committee and with the Austrian Ambassador ahead of Austria hosting the 22 November international conference "Towards a Prosperous and Safe Future for Belarus". The Foreign Secretary also discussed Belarus with her Baltic counterparts when they met on 11 October. The UK will continue to work alongside our international partners in support of the Belarusian people and of a lasting solution to the political crisis.

#### ■ **Belarus: Russia**

**Catherine West:** [\[70293\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policies of the announcement of deeper integration between Belarus and Russia.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK wants to see a reformed Belarus that has a good relationship with Russia and with the West. There must be a transparent and peaceful process to allow Belarusians to determine their own future. As Belarus' closest ally, Russia is uniquely placed to exert positive pressure on the Belarusian authorities to end their campaign of repression and engage in genuinely inclusive political dialogue. We urge Russia to do so.

**■ British Indian Ocean Territory: Carbon Emissions****Patrick Grady:**[\[69639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether her Department is supporting the development of a net zero carbon strategy for the British Indian Ocean Territory.

**Vicky Ford:**

The UK Government, including through the Blue Belt Programme, works closely with the BIOT Administration and the US government - which has a leading role in the operation of the joint UK-US defence facility in the Territory - to protect and enhance the natural environment. This includes identifying opportunities to reduce the impacts of human activity in the Territory, for example through the introduction of renewable energy sources and reduction in the use of single use plastics.

**■ Canada: Military Alliances****Catherine West:**[\[70291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she has had discussions with her Canadian counterpart on security partnership and engagement since the announcement of the trilateral security pact between Australia, the UK and the US.

**Wendy Morton:**

The enhanced security partnership agreed between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States (AUKUS) is a concrete articulation of the UK's ambition, made in the Integrated Review, to deepen defence, security and foreign policy ties with like-minded allies across the globe. As NATO allies and close partners, the UK and Canada enjoy deep and long-standing security and defence ties, including a network of exchange officers, joint exercising, and joint operations.

**■ Colombia: Farmers****Mary Kelly Foy:**[\[70313\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the accuracy of reports of threats against leaders of the ASCAMCAT rural organisation, Juan Carlos Quintero, Junior Maldonado and Olga Quintero, by armed groups in Catatumbo, Colombia.

**Wendy Morton:**

The British Government remains concerned about the persistent level of violence towards human rights defenders and social leaders in Colombia. UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise human rights issues, as well as specific cases of concern, with the Colombian Government. Most recently, the UK's Minister for the Environment, Lord Goldsmith, raised our concerns around violence and threats toward environmental defenders during his visit to Colombia 5-8 October.

Through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which has provided £68 million in support of peace agreement implementation, security, and stability in Colombia since 2015, we will continue to prioritise funding interventions to protect human rights defenders, including environmental activists, and social leaders.

**Colombia: Homicide****Kate Osborne:**[\[70326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to her Colombian counterpart on the death of former FARC combatant María Steffania Muñoz on 14 October 2021 after her partner, Yorbis Valencia, was similarly killed in July.

**Wendy Morton:**

The British Government regularly raises concerns with Colombia regarding the persistent high levels of violence and threats towards former FARC combatants. Most recently, we raised the issue on 14 October at the UN Security Council meeting, at which the UN Secretary General's Special Representative presented his quarterly report on Colombia's peace process.

We will continue to support the Colombian Government's commitment to assisting former combatants in transitioning to civilian life, as agreed as part of the 2016 peace agreement. We have committed more than £68million over 5 years through our Conflict, Stability, and Security Fund to support reintegration, rural development, and security across conflict-affected regions.

**Colombia: Mining and Smuggling****Jim Shannon:**[\[70264\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with her Colombian counterpart on tackling (a) illegal mining, (b) cocaine production and (c) the trafficking of animals in Colombia.

**Wendy Morton:**

UK ministers and senior officials regularly raise environmental issues, as well as specific cases of concern, directly with the Colombian Government and in multilateral fora. Most recently, the UK's Minister for the Environment, Lord Goldsmith, discussed our concerns around environmental crime during his visit to Colombia 5-8 October.

Through the UK's £68m CSSF (Conflict, Stability and Security Fund) programming in support of peace and stabilisation, we continue to support the elements of the peace

agreement related to reducing coca production and trafficking. This has included a contribution to a \$2 million multi-donor project for crop substitution and food security, as well as funding the provision of technical advisers to the Colombian Government office overseeing this work.

The British Government is at the forefront of international efforts to protect endangered animals from poaching and illegal trade, and we are committed to supporting Colombia to host the Second High Level Conference of the Americas on Illegal Wildlife Trade. This builds on the ground-breaking conference series, which began in London in 2014, has secured ambitious agreements from governments to take urgent, coordinated action against the illegal wildlife trade.

### ■ Crimes against Humanity

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[70267\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, which Minister has responsibility for her Department's atrocity prevention work; how many officials in her Department are working on that work; and at what pay grades each of those officials is employed.

**Amanda Milling:**

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has oversight of Government policy on atrocity prevention. He is the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Minister with responsibility for human rights policy and matters relating to the United Nations, and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

We are unable to provide a total number of staff working on atrocity prevention, though staff at all grades in the UK and our missions overseas working on human rights issues, conflict prevention and sanctions contribute to the Department's work on atrocity prevention. Staff are able to call on the thematic lead on atrocity prevention and the Office for Conflict, Stabilisation and Mediation and other thematic leads for advice. Thematic teams include: Women, Peace and Security, Girls' Education, Children & Armed Conflict, the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI), tackling Modern Slavery, promoting the Freedom of Religion or Belief, safeguarding the Freedom of the Media, and supporting the protection of Christians from persecution.

### ■ Developing Countries: Nutrition

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[71432\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she plans to renew the Government's commitment to help 50 million people access nutrition services over the next five years.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Government is actively considering its approach to the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, following the conclusion of the Spending Review. We will set this out as early as possible as part of the business planning process.

The FCDO is continuing to work closely with the Government of Japan to make sure the 2021 Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit supports meaningful action by governments, donors, businesses, the UN and civil society.

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Written Questions****Tim Loughton:**[\[71261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she plans to respond to Question 67045 tabled by the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham.

**Wendy Morton:**

A response to the Honourable Member's question was issued on 8 November.

**Gaza: Reconstruction****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[71290\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the need to fully proscribe Hamas in order to facilitate the reconstruction of Gaza.

**James Cleverly:**

Hamas' military wing has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the UK since 2001 and the UK maintains a no contact policy with Hamas in its entirety. We welcomed Israeli Foreign Minister Lapid's speech on 12 September, proposing positive policy suggestions to support economic development in Gaza and greater security for Israel. A long-term solution for Gaza is needed to prevent further conflict and make progress towards a two-state solution. The UK will continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery.

**Iran: Islamic Centre of England****Dr Andrew Murrison:**[\[69590\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment her Department has made of the relationship between the Islamic Centre of England and the Iranian Government.

**James Cleverly:**

The Islamic Centre of England (ICE) and its director, Hojjat al-Islam Seyyed Mousavi, are the official religious representative of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei, in the UK. The ICE is distinct from the Iranian Embassy in London, which is the official diplomatic representation of the Government of Iran.

## ■ Israel: Oman

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[71288\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to encourage diplomatic normalisation between Israel and Oman.

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[71291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to promote diplomatic normalisation between Israel and Mauritania.

**James Cleverly:**

The United Kingdom (UK) warmly welcomed the normalisation agreements between Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan. These were historic steps which saw the normalisation of relations between friends of the UK. The United Kingdom will continue to encourage further dialogue between Israel and other countries in the region, to work towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for Israelis, Palestinians and citizens across the region.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Afzal Khan:** [\[70301\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment she has made of the effect of reductions in the aid budget on the UN's relief agency for (a) Palestinians and (b) the humanitarian situation.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). We recognise UNRWA's unique mandate from the UN General Assembly, to provide protection and core services including health and education to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. The UK's annual contribution to UNRWA's programme budget helps UNRWA to provide basic education to more than 533,000 children a year (half of whom are girls), access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable across the region.

## ■ Palestinian Authority

**Andrew Gwynne:** [\[71289\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the most recent Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and the Palestinian Authority, what representations officials in her Department have made to representatives of the Palestinian Authority on the glorification of Fadi Al-Qunbar, Baha

Alyan and Alaa Abu Jamal as martyrs on official Palestinian Authority TV news on 26 June 2021.

**James Cleverly:**

Our partnership with the Palestinian Authority (PA) includes a commitment from the Palestinian leadership to adhere to the principle of non-violence and to tackle any language and actions that could incite violence or hatred. We have a regular dialogue with the PA in which we reiterate the need for both sides to prepare their populations for peaceful coexistence, including by promoting a more positive portrayal of each other.

■ **Palestinians: Third Sector**

**Wayne David:**

[\[69589\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 62756, what information the Government has now received from the Israeli Government as the the basis for their designation of six Palestinian civil society organisations as terrorist.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK is aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities to designate six Palestinian Civil Society Organisations. We are in contact with the Government of Israel to understand the basis of the designations. We have made clear that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), including those focused on Israel's conduct in the Palestinian Territories.

■ **Somalia: Police**

**Kenny MacAskil:**

[\[71477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the efficacy of her Department's spending on the Somali police Goodir Unit; and what steps she is taking to report to Parliament on the potential effect of that spending on her Department's capability work.

**James Cleverly:**

As I [Minister Cleverly] stated in my answer of 8 November to your question 68471, 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.

Tackling Al Shabaab is one of the UK's top international counter-terrorism priorities, as we seek to keep the UK and our interests at home and overseas safe from the threat of terrorism. The group is also the largest obstacle to stability and reconstruction in Somalia. Our work with the Somali Police's Goodir Unit complements other counter-terrorism work the UK conducts to counter Al Shabaab



and contributes to our work supporting a more stable and secure Somalia. All monitoring and evaluation is completed in line with Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund program requirements, which include consideration of value for money.

#### ■ **Sudan: Internet**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[71435\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterpart in Sudan on the recent internet blackout.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[71436\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she or her Ministers most recently spoke to Abdalla Hamdok, Prime Minister of 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, declare a State of Emergency and restrict internet access across the country. 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 (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates 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. The Foreign Secretary also made a statement on 5 November setting out UK concerns and calling for the Sudanese military to reverse their actions.

I spoke to Prime Minister Hamdok following the attempted coup of 21 September and then met him during my visit to Sudan in October. Since the coup of 25 Oct he remains under house arrest and the Sudanese military have restricted access to him. Despite this, and as a signal of support for the full restoration of the civilian-led government, our Ambassador and other members of the diplomatic community in Khartoum met Hamdok on 27 October and 1 November. We continue to work with international partners to maintain public 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.

#### ■ **Tigray: Armed Conflict**

**Preet Kaur Gill:** [\[71437\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment she has made of the safety of Tigrayans outside of Tigray.

**Vicky Ford:**

We are extremely concerned by reports of widespread human rights violations. I spoke at a Westminster Hall Debate on 3 November and highlighted the horrific scale

and nature of human rights abuses against civilians as reported by the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is essential that all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses be held to account. All parties must implement the report's recommendations and ensure that victims have access to support.

The Foreign Secretary, our Ambassador in Addis Ababa and I continue to raise human rights issues in our discussions with the Ethiopian Government and more broadly we have reminded all warring parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

## ■ Turkey: Kurds

**Chris Stephens:**

[\[71371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions she has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Turkish Government on (i) human rights violations by the Turkish authorities against Kurdish communities in Turkey, (ii) efforts to outlaw Kurdish political parties and (iii) imprisonment of Kurdish political prisoners; and what steps the UK Government is taking to maintain peace, stability and democracy in that region.

**Wendy Morton:**

We hold regular discussions, both internally and with the Turkish government on a range of issues, including human rights in Turkey and the government's legal attempts to close down the People's Democratic Party (HDP), as well as the jailing of Kurdish politicians. We are following the HDP closure case closely. We have made it clear to Turkey that we expect the government to undertake any legal processes or actions against opposition parties fairly, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law. We will continue to engage closely with Turkey, including at Ministerial level, to insist that it fulfils its international legal obligations to secure the human rights of all people, regardless of their legitimate political affiliations, particularly in the areas of freedom of expression and assembly, press freedom and the treatment of detainees. We also encourage a return to talks around a peace process. We will hold Turkey to account using established international mechanisms, and look for opportunities to raise these issues with our international partners.

## ■ UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[71318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will raise with her Moroccan counterpart the matter of Morocco requiring MINURSO to use Moroccan vehicle number plates in occupied Western Sahara in contravention of the status of mission agreement.

**James Cleverly:**

We are closely monitoring the situation in Western Sahara. We have regular discussions with the parties and remain in close contact with MINURSO. The UK fully

supports the UN's efforts to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

#### ■ **Western Sahara: Natural Resources**

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[71495\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will make representations to the Moroccan Government on the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights urging that country to respect the Saharawis' right to consent with regard to the exploitation of their resources.

**James Cleverly:**

The UK notes the UN legal view from 2002, which stated that commercial activity in Western Sahara (including the exploration for, and exploitation of natural resources) is not inherently illegal but must be for the benefit of people of Western Sahara.

#### ■ **Western Sahara: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

**Grahame Morris:**

[\[71317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will ask the Moroccan Ambassador to explain the use of combat or surveillance drones over the Berm dividing Western Sahara.

**James Cleverly:**

According to the UN, Morocco maintains a significant security presence in Western Sahara, primarily in fortified positions along a berm running the entire length of the territory. The UK regularly discusses the situation in Western Sahara with the parties. We continue to urge the parties to avoid further escalation, return to a ceasefire and re-engage with the UN-led political process.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ **Abortion**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[68286\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish its response to the consultation on the home use of both pills for early medical abortion up to 10 weeks' gestation.

**Maggie Throup:**

We are considering all evidence submitted to the Government's public consultation and will publish our response in due course.

## ■ **Abortion and Miscarriage: Health Services**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[71335\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on increasing funding for the provision of (a) abortions and (b) managed miscarriages.

**Maggie Throup:**

There have been no specific discussions.

However, the Department issued a call for evidence for the Women's Health Strategy which specifically asked about women's experiences with fertility, pregnancy and baby loss. Officials are analysing the responses received to ensure that the Strategy reflects what women identify as priorities. We are also currently developing a Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and issues related to abortion services and provision are being considered as part of the development process.

## ■ **Abortion: Disinformation**

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[68291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps the Government is taking to tackle potential erroneous and misleading information on telemedicine for abortion care.

**Maggie Throup:**

It is important that women receive accurate and evidence-based information on abortion. The Department's Required Standard Operating Procedures set out that women must be given impartial, accurate and evidence-based information both verbal and written, delivered neutrally by all abortion providers.

## ■ **Anaesthetics: Vacancies**

**Ed Davey:**

[\[70218\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to tackle shortages in anaesthetic workforce in the forthcoming Elective Recovery Plan.

**Edward Argar:**

The government appreciates the dedication of Anaesthetists in the National Health Service. As of July 2021, there was an increase of 2.3% in full time equivalent (FTE) doctors and 2.0% FTE Specialty doctors and associate specialists working in the NHS in anaesthesia compared to a year ago. We have increased the number of medical school places in England by 25% increase from 2018/2019 to 2020/2021, helping ensure a larger potential pipeline for anaesthetists in coming years.

Staff retention is a priority for this Government. It was noted in the recent report by the Royal College of Anaesthetists about retention that there is particular concern about those leaving at the start and end of their career, resulting in targeted interventions to encourage them to stay. These include pension support, access to

health and wellbeing initiatives, flexible working opportunities, and mentoring and coaching.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will publish a plan for recovering elective services later this year.

## ■ **Analgesics: Prescriptions**

**Jim Shannon:**

**[70260]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to minimise the financial impact on the NHS of the availability on prescription of paracetamol and other basic painkillers.

**Edward Argar:**

Clinicians are responsible for making prescribing decisions for their patients, taking into account best prescribing practice and the local commissioning decisions of their respective clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). A General Practitioner (GP) is able to prescribe any product on the National Health Service they consider necessary for the treatment of their patient unless it is listed in Schedules 1 or 2 to the NHS (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) Regulations 2004. GPs and other prescribers are ultimately responsible for their own prescribing decisions. Where doctors prescribe products that are available over the counter, we expect that to happen for good clinical reasons and represent value for money to the NHS.

## ■ **Breastfeeding**

**Alison Thewliss:**

**[68340]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly Report published by the Scottish Government on 3 June 2019, if he will undertake and publish similar report for England.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* There are no current plans to publish a Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly (BBF) report for England. BBF study findings have been superseded by modernisation of the Healthy Child Programme, including supporting guidance on breastfeeding which is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-of-public-health-services-for-children>

## ■ **Cancer: Mental Health Services**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

**[69124]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of adequacy of the current national provision of teenage and young adult psycho-oncology.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The National Health Service Long Term Plan states that where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer should receive a Personalised Care and Support Plan. All patients, including young cancer patients, will have access to the right expertise and support.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all personalised care and support has continued by telephone, video, online or by post if face-to-face appointments and group sessions have not been possible.

NHS England and Improvement established a Task and Finish group chaired by Prof Peter Johnson, the National Clinical Director for Cancer, to look at COVID-19 recovery of psychosocial support for people affected by cancer, including psycho-oncology provision. The group included representation from teenage/young adult cancer charities.

The revised Cancer Care Review requirements for GP practices mean patients' psychosocial support needs will be assessed twice in their first year after diagnosis. This requirement encourages GP practices to have early and supportive conversations with cancer patients about their needs and ensure patients are aware of what help is available.

**■ Cancer: Nurses****Sir George Howarth:**[\[72362\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to double the number of cancer nurse specialists by 2030.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Following the outcome of the Spending Review 2021, plans for individual budgets for 2022/23 to 2024/25 inclusive, including for training cancer nurse specialists, will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course. Plans for subsequent years will be subject to future Spending Reviews.

**■ Cardiovascular Diseases: Drugs****Jim Shannon:**[\[58867\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with (a) the Royal College of Nursing and (b) Polypill on the three-in-one pill to lower blood pressure to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

**Maggie Throup:**

No discussions have been had with the Royal College of Nursing and Polypill on the three-in-one pill to lower blood pressure to reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes

## ■ Catheters: Urinary Tract Infections

**Martyn Day:**

[\[66237\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help reduce the number of catheter associated urinary tract infections acquired by patients in hospital.

**Edward Argar:**

NHS England is currently developing a national manual for infection prevention to outline standard precautions to prevent all infections, including those caused by urinary catheters. This will build on existing standard infection control precautions.

## ■ Chronic Illnesses

**Dr Kieran Mullan:**

[\[42210\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of social outcomes contracts in supporting people with long-term health conditions.

**Maggie Throup:**

Whilst no formal assessment has been made, NHS England and Improvement has been promoting the idea of outcomes-based commissioning of clinical services for some years, while acknowledging the difficulty of defining and measuring achievement of outcomes in a healthcare context. The National Tariff Payment System for secondary and tertiary care services has been encouraging commissioners and providers to incentivise achievement of long-term outcomes and management of long-term conditions by moving away from a purely episodic approach to a blended payment approach for services.

The Long Term Plan also commits to expanding personal health budgets up to 200 000 people by 2023/2024 giving people greater choice and control over how care is planned and delivered. Personal health budgets enable individual commissioning of care to meet identified health needs based on the individuals own identified health and wellbeing outcomes.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[65465\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of when the rate of covid-19 infection levels per 100,000 people in a rolling 7-day period will fall below (a) 400 and (b) 300 cases .

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 2 November 2021]:* Neither the Department nor the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has made such an estimate. As part of the Government's planning for Autumn and Winter, the Scientific Pandemic Influenza Group on Modelling (SPI-M-O; an operational subgroup of SAGE) considered potential epidemic trajectories over the next few months. This paper is available at

the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/spi-m-o-summary-of-modelling-for-scenarios-for-covid-19-autumn-and-winter-2021-to-2022-13-october-2021>

These are not projections or forecasts, but consider a range of potential scenarios that focus on outputs for hospital admissions in England during Autumn and Winter under different assumptions for potential behaviour in the population, uptake of booster vaccinations and waning of immunity. The timing and scale of any future peaks and forecasts in the epidemic remains uncertain due to the uncertainty around these factors.

**Tom Hunt:** [\[67277\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the impact of the relative timings of lifting covid-19 restrictions for mixed-household socialising in (a) pubs and hospitality settings and (b) homes on the mental wellbeing of (i) people with autism and (ii) other vulnerable people who may find pubs and hospitality settings inaccessible environments.

**Maggie Throup:**

We have made no specific assessment.

Throughout the pandemic, we have engaged with stakeholders to understand how the changes to COVID-19 policy and guidance impact people with autism.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[70317\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department plans to take to protect people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to covid-19 in the context of data from the ONS, published on 2 November 2021, that 91 per cent of those people are still shielding or taking additional precautions.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Government ended the Shielding Programme on 15 September 2021 and those previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable were advised to follow the same guidance as everyone else, whilst potentially thinking about extra precautions they could take to reduce their chance of catching COVID-19. They were also advised to raise any concerns with their specialist at their next routine appointment.

The updated guidance is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Some of this group may be eligible for a third primary dose of the vaccine, a booster vaccine, and for other treatments that are becoming available.

The Government will continue to assess the situation and the risks posed by COVID-19.



**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[72525\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to re-introduce mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing measures to limit covid-19 transmission.

**Maggie Throup:**

The COVID-19 Response: Autumn and Winter Plan 2021, published on 14 September, set 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. Plan B will include measures that help control transmission of the virus including requiring people to wear face coverings in some settings.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Drugs**

**Richard Fuller:**

[\[70252\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 October 2021 on Coronavirus: Drugs, whether his Department plans to make Ronapreve available for the treatment and prevention of covid-19 in immunocompromised patients; what the timeline is for Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's consideration of ADZ7442; and whether his Department plans to seek prioritisation of that appraisal.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 17 September, Ronapreve was made available to hospitalised patients through an interim NHS clinical policy. On 4 November 2021, the clinical policy was expanded. The clinical policy includes seronegative patients that are hospitalised for the management of acute COVID-19 infection and patients with hospital-onset COVID-19, if they are deemed to be at high risk of progression to severe COVID-19 or at risk of destabilising their condition or recovery from their procedure. This may include immunocompromised patients.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency needs to ensure that products such as AZD7442 are of acceptable quality, safety and efficacy. This is an independent process and approval can only be determined when the full data has been provided by the manufacturer.

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[70315\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out his timeframe for making antivirals, molnupiravir and ritonavir, available to clinically extremely vulnerable NHS patients following exposure to covid-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 20 October 2021 we announced that the Government had secured two COVID-19 oral antiviral treatments for United Kingdom patients. Molnupiravir (Lagevrio), one of the antivirals procured, received the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) authorisation on 4 November 2021. Deployment of the second antiviral, PF-07321332 (Paxlovid), will depend on MHRA approval, and would be

taken with Ritonavir, an antiretroviral already used in combination for other viral disease.

The Government intends to deploy antivirals initially through a national study that will prioritise those who are at most risk to COVID-19, including those National Health Service patients deemed clinically extremely vulnerable. This study will help to identify those who will benefit the most from treatment. We will provide more information on the national study, including information on the timeline, in due course.

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[70316]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to make available in winter 2021-22 novel options for covid-19 prophylaxis, such as antivirals or monoclonal antibodies, to people who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed, and have not had an adequate immune response following three doses of a covid-19 vaccine.

**Maggie Throup:**

Ronapreve is the first neutralising monoclonal antibody to receive marketing authorisation from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to treat and prevent COVID-19. The interim clinical policy was updated on 4 November to expand treatment access to a wider group of hospitalised patients, which may include immunocompromised patients.

This is the only neutralising antibody product currently that has evidence of efficacy in hospitalised patients. The clinical policy prioritises the most vulnerable patients for whom this treatment will have the largest benefit. Other antibody products are expected to undergo regulatory review, which, if approved, could be available to other patient groups.

On 20 October 2021 we announced that the Government had secured two COVID-19 oral antiviral treatments for UK patients. Molnupiravir (Lagevrio), one of the antivirals procured, has now received MHRA authorisation. The use of the second antiviral, PF-07321332 (Paxlovid), will depend on approval from the MHRA.

The Government intends to deploy antivirals initially through a national study that will prioritise those who are at most risk to COVID-19, including those who are immunocompromised, and help identify those who will benefit most from treatment. The Department will provide more information on the national study, including detail on eligibility, in due course.

The RAPID C-19 collaboration enables active multi-agency oversight of national and international trial evidence as it emerges for COVID therapies, for both treatment and prophylactic indications. To date, the evidence has most strongly supported treatment indications, but the evidence around prophylactic use will continue to be actively reviewed.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[56636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people have been invited to receive a booster vaccination for covid-19; and how many booster vaccinations for covid-19 have been administered as at 18 October 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* More than 13 million invites have already been sent to eligible people in England so far asking them to book their COVID-19 booster vaccination online through the National Booking Service. NHS England will be inviting another 3 three million people who will become eligible for their booster from week commencing 15 November 2021. Individuals become eligible for a booster 6 six months after their second jab.

If an individual has not been contacted by the NHS within a week of reaching six months since their second jab they can call 119 or use the online National Booking Service to book a COVID-19 vaccination booster, or go to various walk-in sites across the country.

As at 8 November 2021, a cumulative total of 8,838,609 COVID-19 booster vaccines and third doses have been administered in England. This information is available at the following link: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/vaccinations>.

As at 8 November 2021, a cumulative total of 10,580,122 booster vaccines and third doses have been administered in the UK. This information is available at the following link: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/vaccinations>.

**Stella Creasy:**

[\[57013\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the number of (a) people invited to receive a covid-19 booster vaccination and (b) covid-19 booster vaccinations issued by local authorities on a weekly basis.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* Individuals become eligible for a COVID-19 booster vaccination 6 six months after their second jab, and therefore the number of people eligible changes on a daily basis.

More than 13 million invites have already been sent to eligible people in England so far asking them to book their booster online through the National Booking Service which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/book-or-manage-a-booster-dose-of-the-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine/>.

NHS England will be inviting another 3 million people who will become eligible for their booster from week commencing 15 November 2021.

If an individual has not been contacted by the NHS within a week of reaching six months since their second jab they can call 119 or use the online National Booking

Service to book a COVID-19 vaccination booster, or go to various walk-in sites across the country.

Data on the number of COVID-19 boosters issued by local authorities on a weekly basis is not available. But data on the number of boosters administered broken down by NHS Region of Residence is published on a daily basis. Please note that these figures also include some third primary doses. This data is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

**Kate Osamor:**

**[59901]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Government's decision not to recognise Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna or Janssen jabs administered in Africa on the UK Government's relationship with (a) Uganda and (b) other countries in Africa that have received AstraZeneca vaccines from the UK.

**Maggie Throup:**

We have not made a specific assessment.

We now recognise the following vaccines: Pfizer BioNTech; Oxford AstraZeneca; Moderna and Janssen (J&J); and also formulations of the above four vaccines such as AstraZeneca Covishield, AstraZeneca Vaxzevria and Moderna Takeda from countries and territories with approved COVID-19 proof of vaccination. This includes a number of countries in Africa.

From 1 November, Uganda was added to the list of approved countries and qualifies under the fully vaccinated rules for travel to the United Kingdom.

We are working with an array of international partners and look forward to continuing the expansion of the policy to countries and territories across the globe in a phased approach, where this meets our certification requirements. Extension of vaccine certification will be reviewed regularly.

**Dr Ben Spencer:**

**[59981]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many and what proportion of people over the age of 18 have taken up covid-19 vaccination by (a) ethnicity and (b) age; and what assessment he has made of the (i) barriers to vaccination and (ii) effectiveness of Government measures to increase uptake in groups where take up is low.

**Maggie Throup:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement publish vaccine uptake by both age and ethnicity. This is published daily and ranges from 'Under 18' to '80+'. There are also weekly and monthly publications of these statistics, which provides a more detailed breakdown of vaccine uptake by age and a detailed breakdown of vaccine uptake by ethnicity. The data can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/>

The Department reviews research into COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy. This includes information gathered by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), health studies, and insights generated by the vaccine programme itself.

COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy is monitored by ONS. Data is published to record the reasons people give for vaccine refusal. A breakdown of this data can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandvaccinehesitancygreatbritain>

This is supported by Healthwatch, who undertook research in Spring 2021 and looked at uptake in ethnic minority groups who are known to be vaccine hesitant. They found that people commonly cited issues such as practical barriers, misinformation, and deeper cultural mistrust.

There have been a range of national and hyper-local initiatives in place to drive uptake, including national communications, provision of mobile/pop-up delivery models and work with faith/community leaders. These efforts have been hugely successful in communicating benefits of vaccination. Vaccine hesitancy has decreased from 9% in February to 3% in August for all adults per ONS data. The statistics also showed hesitancy has decreased for those aged 16 and 17 from 14% to 11%. Furthermore, YouGov polling indicates that hesitancy amongst ethnic minority groups has reduced from 63% to 14% from October to August. This success has been facilitated by the wide range of interventions and strategies employed to ensure strong vaccine uptake.

**Kim Johnson:**

**[59989]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department collects on the take-up of covid-19 vaccines by (a) Black and (b) BAME communities.

**Maggie Throup:**

NHS England and Improvement collect and publish vaccine uptake data broken down by ethnicity. This is published weekly and shows a breakdown of number of COVID-19 vaccines administered by; ethnicity, ethnicity by region, and Ethnicity by Integrated Care System Sustainability Transformation Partnership. There is also a monthly publication of these statistics, which provides a breakdown of vaccine uptake by ethnicity as a percentage of the population. This can be found via the following link:

<https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.england.nhs.uk%2Fstatistics%2Fstatistical-work-areas%2F covid-19-vaccinations%2F&data=04%7C01%7CTheo.Atkinson%40dhsc.gov.uk%7Cd4765375c24d4d747a7708d99d570dbb%7C61278c3091a84c318c1fef4de8973a1c%7C1%7C0%7C637713819479904654%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljojMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=zMsQ6mAMedEKZXhz5R9R6kc1zLigm0AXCZQsaFk%2FW1c%3D&reserved=0>

The UK Health Security Agency publishes data on COVID-19 vaccine uptake by ethnicity at national and regional levels in individuals aged 50 and over in the weekly flu and COVID-19 surveillance report. This data is extracted from the NHS National Immunisation Management Service and can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2021-to-2022-season>

**Dan Jarvis:**

**[67157]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the (a) availability of covid-19 booster vaccines, (b) average distance travelled to receive a covid-19 booster vaccine and (c) average waiting time for a resident to receive a covid-19 booster vaccine in Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council area.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 4 November 2021]:* Local sites in Barnsley have had access to vaccine supply for COVID-19 booster vaccinations since the start of the booster programme. Supply is distributed to local sites to meet the level of demand for booked appointments and capacity available. The level of supply has not been restricted and weekly orders have all been met.

There are currently 3 local vaccination sites in Barnsley (Apollo Court Dodworth, Goldthorpe LIFT building and Priory Campus), as well as pharmacy sites at Hoyland and Cortonwood. All Barnsley residents would fall within less than 10 miles of a vaccination site. The average distance travelled to a vaccination site is not collected centrally.

NHS England do not hold information on how long people wait for their vaccination. All eligible patients can book an appointment six months after receiving the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose either at a local site or any other site available through the national booking system; appointments are available 7 days per week. There are also walk-in centres available for COVID-19 booster appointments, which further increase accessibility to those people who may experience difficulty booking.

**Charlotte Nichols:**

**[67290]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that the NHS records single or double dose covid-19 vaccines received abroad so that patients can obtain an NHS England Covid pass.

**Maggie Throup:**

On 30 September we launched a pilot for English residents vaccinated abroad to request that their vaccines, either single or double doses, are uploaded to the national database. Vaccines equivalent to those approved in the United Kingdom and regulated by the European Medicines Agency, the United States Food and Drug Administration, Health Canada, Swissmedic and the Therapeutic Goods Administration can be recorded on the NHS COVID Pass. We are working to understand which non-Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency approved vaccines we would be confident to recognise on the NHS COVID Pass.

**Mr Gregory Campbell:****[68128]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will hold discussions with Health Ministers in the devolved administrations on steps being taken to ensure that there is similarly high uptake of the covid-19 booster or third dose vaccine across all nations of the UK.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Secretary of State holds weekly meetings with the Health Ministers of the Devolved Administrations (DAs). He has raised the importance of the uptake of COVID-19 boosters and third doses in these meetings with the DAs.

As health is devolved across the United Kingdom, vaccination deployment is managed by the health services in each nation: NHS England and NHS Improvement, NHS Wales, NHS Scotland, and Health and Social Care Northern Ireland. The UK government is working closely with the DAs to facilitate an aligned approach to COVID-19 vaccine deployment across the UK. Officials in the Department of Health and Social Care hold regular meetings with colleagues in the DAs to discuss COVID-19 vaccine uptake progress and interventions to drive vaccine uptake.

Data on the number of people who have received a booster or third dose COVID-19 vaccination in the UK, including a breakdown by nation, can be found at the following link: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/vaccinations>

**Andrew Percy:****[68204]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of including people under the age of 50 in the covid-19 vaccine booster programme.

**Maggie Throup:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's (JCVI) assessment of including people under the age of 50 years old in the COVID-19 vaccine booster programme is ongoing. On 14 September 2021, the JCVI advised that individuals who received COVID-19 vaccinations in phase one of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in priority groups one to nine should be offered a booster vaccine. This includes those aged 16 to 49 years old with underlying health conditions which put them at higher risk of severe COVID-19.

The JCVI has advised that it will continue to review data as it emerges and consider further advice on booster vaccinations in younger adult age groups, children aged 12 to 16 years old with underlying health conditions and women who are pregnant.

**Carolyn Harris:****[70286]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support people who wish to be vaccinated against covid-19 but are allergic to ingredients in the covid-19 vaccines available in the UK.

**Maggie Throup:**

The UK Health Security Agency's Green Book provides advice for clinicians to assess individuals with a history of allergy who may suffer a reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine. It also sets out how second dose vaccinations may be considered for those who experienced a reaction to the first. The advice has been developed with the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI).

The guidance states that anyone with a history of allergic reaction to an ingredient in a COVID-19 vaccine should not receive it except on expert advice. Those with any other allergies, including those with prior anaphylaxis, may receive the vaccine. If an individual has an allergic reaction to a first dose of vaccine, the BSACI has advised that they may be able to receive a second dose of vaccine. Many individuals have tolerated subsequent doses of the same vaccine and this is preferred as it avoids being incorrectly labelled as allergic for life. Individuals with non-allergic reactions to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine can receive the second dose of vaccine in any vaccination setting.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:****[70314]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's plans are on offering a second dose of the covid-19 vaccine to children aged 12 to 15.

**Maggie Throup:**

In their advice to the Secretary of State for Health on 13 September the Chief Medical Officers of the four nations (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) indicated that they would want the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to give a view on whether and what second doses to give to children and young people aged 12 to 15 years. JCVI's advice can be found here at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19/universal-vaccination-of-children-and-young-people-aged-12-to-15-years-against-covid-19>

The JCVI continues to review the evidence on COVID-19 vaccination for children aged 12-15 years, including the potential risks and benefits of a second dose, as it becomes available. Any advice will be released through an official statement once the relevant data has been considered. When released this statement will be published on GOV.UK.

**Mr Virendra Sharma:****[71308]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions his department has had with the Department for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on the diplomatic steps that may be taken to ensure the international recognition of Novavax trial participants to ensure that they are (a) exempt from quarantine and (b) not disadvantaged in comparison to those who have not taken part in the trial.

**Maggie Throup:**

We have worked very closely with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and their diplomatic posts in other countries to ensure participants should not



have to quarantine and should be treated as fully vaccinated. Discussions are ongoing with other countries, including through groups such as the G7, G20, the European Commission and the World Health Organisation to shape the approach taken around the world to sharing health status for travel, including vaccination status. However, there is currently no internationally agreed policy on clinical trial participants, although we are starting to see movement on this issue.

**Mr Toby Perkins:**

[\[71312\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department is issuing to children who have received two doses of covid-19 vaccine who are planning to travel to the US and who are required to show confirmation of their vaccination status to enter venues in that country but whose vaccination status cannot be registered on the NHS covid pass.

**Maggie Throup:**

The NHS COVID Pass is currently available to those aged 16 years and over. Few countries require children's vaccination status, a testing route is generally available or entry on the parent/guardians' status. The Government recognises that a small proportion of children over 12 years have or will receive a full course of vaccination following the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advice, and the growing requirement abroad for children to demonstrate their status. We are exploring ways for fully vaccinated children over 12 years to demonstrate their vaccination status for travel. For travel to United States, those under 18 years are exempt from vaccine requirements at the US border. Domestic certification requirements vary by US state.

## ■ **Coronavirus: York**

**Rachael Maskell:**

[\[60457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will meet with the Director of Public Health in York to discuss the local management of covid-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

While there are no current plans to do so, the Secretary of State regularly meets with regional Directors of Public Health (DsPH) through the Government's Local Action Committee (LAC) Gold meetings.

Oversight of the ongoing COVID-19 incident response takes place through the Government's LAC command structure (bronze, silver, gold) where local and regional concerns are escalated, and issues for discussion and decision by ministers across government are taken.

The United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Yorkshire and Humber Health Protection Team meet with the Yorkshire and Humber DsPH on a weekly basis.

Local DsPH have regular engagement with the UKHSA as part of the LAC structure. The UKHSA, National Health Service and the Office of Health Improvement and

Disparities regularly meet with the DsPH to advise on local management of COVID-19.

## ■ **Disability: Children**

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[70258\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021, what steps his Department is taking to measure how effective the additional funding is in tackling backlogs in disabled children's health service assessments.

**Gillian Keegan:**

The Department and NHS England and NHS Improvement constantly monitor data in order to help to maximise performance and tackle backlogs.

We are committed to ensuring greater stability of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services as we enter the recovery phase following the COVID-19 outbreak. NHS England and NHS Improvement will monitor local areas' performance in delivering SEND services, including those that had weaknesses before the COVID-19 outbreak and those that are struggling to respond to the challenges that the COVID-19 outbreak has brought.

In April, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission re-started their revisit programme of areas where SEND services need to improve and which received a Written Statement of Action. Full inspections resumed in June.

## ■ **Electronic Cigarettes: Health Hazards**

**Sir Greg Knight:**

[\[69012\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential future litigation risk to the NHS in the event that chemicals in NHS-prescribed e-cigarettes are found to be detrimental to public health.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* No assessment has been made as there are currently no medicinal e-cigarettes available prescribed via the National Health Service. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) published updated guidance on 29 October 2021 to encourage manufacturers to bring a medicinal e-cigarette to market.

For a manufacturer to achieve a medicinal licence, products would need to meet the standards of quality, safety, and efficacy expected of medicinal products. There would be a duty to continually monitor the performance of their product, submit vigilance reports to the MHRA when incidents occur and take appropriate safety action if required.

## ■ **Epilepsy: Cannabis**

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[71482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department is making provisions for families who cannot afford to access cannabis medication via private healthcare for children with epilepsy after being refused treatment by the NHS.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department does not make provision for the funding of medicines outside of the National Health Service (NHS) commissioning systems. NHS funding decisions follow clearly developed procedures that ensure equitable distribution of funding, prioritising those medicines that have proved their safety, quality, and clinical and cost effectiveness.

The licensed cannabis-based medicine Epidyolex is prescribed routinely on the NHS for Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (two forms of epilepsy). The cost of treatments, that have not been assessed for their quality, safety, clinical and cost effectiveness, sought privately, remains the responsibility of patients.

**Apsana Begum:**

[\[71483\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what criteria the NHS uses to decide whether a child with epilepsy can access a prescription for cannabis medication.

**Edward Argar:**

Whether to prescribe any medicine is a clinical decision.

The licensed cannabis-based medicine Epidyolex is prescribed and routinely funded on the National Health Service (NHS) for Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome (two forms of epilepsy).

However, the latest National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines demonstrate a clear need for more evidence to support routine prescribing and funding decisions for unlicensed cannabis-based products on the NHS.

If an NHS clinician wishes to prescribe these unlicensed products an individual funding request can be made based on whether there is evidence of exceptionality to justify funding the treatment. A request is made for an individual patient whose clinical circumstances are clearly different to other patients with the same condition, and there is a reason why the individual patient would respond differently to other patients and therefore gain more clinical benefit from the proposed treatment.

## ■ **EU Countries: British Nationals Abroad**

**Matt Vickers:**

[\[67309\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to facilitate international travel for British citizens resident in European countries that are administering only one dose of a two-dose vaccination programme to those who have previously been infected by covid-19.

**Maggie Throup:**

British citizens resident in European countries will be eligible to use the European Union's Digital COVID Certificate if they have been vaccinated in that country. Some EU Member States issue a certificate for individuals with one dose of a vaccine and recent recovery from COVID-19. However, at the United Kingdom border, we can only accept a full course of vaccination as meeting the definition of fully vaccinated and therefore exempting a traveller from self-isolation and reduced testing. This is based on the higher levels of health protection offered from a full course of vaccination and advice from public health experts.

**■ Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva: Screening****Sir Mike Penning:**[\[58778\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve new-born screening and genetic testing for fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva.

**Maria Caulfield:**

*[Holding answer 22 October 2021]:* There is no newborn screening programme for fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva (FOP) using genetic testing and it is not currently being considered for a national screening programme. National population screening programmes are implemented on the advice of the United Kingdom National Screening Committee (UK NSC), which makes independent, evidence-based recommendations to Ministers in the four UK nations. Proposals to screen for new conditions, such as FOP, can be submitted to the UK NSC via its annual call for new topics, which closes on 6 December 2021.

**■ Gambling: Health Services****Gerald Jones:**[\[68375\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has provided guidance to primary care providers on the referral of gambling disorder cases into specialist care pathways.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* NHS England has commissioned the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence to develop a national clinical guideline on the treatment of problem gambling. This will focus on identification, diagnosis and management of gambling-related harms and will support clinicians, including primary care providers, in referring people experiencing gambling disorder to appropriate treatment and support. Publication of the guideline is expected in 2024.

The Department continues to support the National Health Service with the phased expansion of up to 15 specialist problem gambling clinics by 2023/24. Work continues to explore how best to use existing treatment models to reach those most in need of support.

## ■ **Gastroschisis**

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[72428\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many children have been diagnosed with gastroschisis in the UK in the last five years.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Department does not hold information on the number of children diagnosed with gastroschisis in the United Kingdom in the last five years.

## ■ **General Practitioners**

**Justin Madders:**

[\[56246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GPs there are in each Integrated Care System area.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS Digital publish general practice workforce data, including the numbers of doctors in general practice in England by sustainability and transformation partnership (STP), which correlate with integrated care system (ICS) areas. The information requested, by full-time equivalent and headcount as of September 2021, is shown in the following table.

	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE HEADCOUNT
Our Healthier South East London STP	1,031	1,384
East London Health and Care Partnership STP	1,150	1,526
North London Partners In Health and Care STP	957	1,287
North West London Health and Care Partnership STP	1,310	1,762
South West London Health and Care Partnership STP	974	1,277
Devon STP	841	1,153
Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire STP	612	826
Gloucestershire STP	418	560

	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE HEADCOUNT
Somerset STP	368	464
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Health and Social Care Partnership STP	394	497
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire STP	609	855
Dorset STP	518	661
Kent and Medway STP	897	1,195
Frimley Health and Care ICS STP	440	590
Sussex and East Surrey STP	952	1,286
Hampshire and the Isle of Wight STP	1,035	1,342
Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West STP	1,100	1,466
Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership STP	617	844
Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP	571	707
Birmingham and Solihull STP	873	1,113
Joined Up Care Derbyshire STP	716	887
Lincolnshire STP	450	521
Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland STP	695	839
Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent STP	710	826
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin STP	316	395
Northamptonshire STP	487	567

	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)	DOCTORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE HEADCOUNT
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Health and Care STP	720	855
The Black Country and West Birmingham STP	847	1,071
Coventry and Warwickshire STP	655	792
Mid and South Essex STP	609	737
Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes STP	513	624
Suffolk and North East Essex STP	566	683
Hertfordshire and West Essex STP	922	1,205
Norfolk and Waveney Health & Care Partnership STP	629	762
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough STP	516	669
Healthier Lancashire and South Cumbria	990	1,219
Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership STP	1,984	2,465
Cheshire and Merseyside STP	1,855	2,256
South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw STP	968	1,211
Cumbria and North East STP	1,948	2,434
Humber, Coast and Vale STP	1,038	1,293
West Yorkshire and Harrogate (Health and Care Partnership) STP	1,582	1,995

Source: NHS Digital

Notes:

1. FTE refers to the proportion of full time contracted hours that the post holder is contracted to work. 1 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 in this table 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 are published against the regional hierarchy as at 1 April 2021.
1. 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.
5. Data as at the last day of the applicable month

## ■ Hormone Replacement Therapy

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[70328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2021 to Questions 65535 and 65536 on Hormone Replacement Therapy, for what reason HRT drugs and products have been affected by supply issues.

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[70329\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 4 November 2021 to Questions 65535 and 65536 on Hormone Replacement Therapy, what the nature of the issues was affecting the supplies of some HRT drugs and products.

**Edward Argar:**

Supply issues that have affected the availability of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) preparations include manufacturing issues, regulatory issues, problems accessing the raw pharmaceutical ingredient as well as commercial decisions made by some companies to divest these products.



## ■ Hospitals: Children's Play

**Caroline Dinenage:**

[\[60394\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many hospitals offer weekend play support staff for children.

**Maggie Throup:**

This information is not recorded centrally. These arrangements are managed by individual trusts.

## ■ Hospitals: Coronavirus

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[72431\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, following the lifting of some covid-19 restrictions, what additional steps he is taking to help prevent the spread of covid-19 in hospitals.

**Maggie Throup:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement work with National Health Service trusts to ensure hospitals are implementing robust COVID-19 control measures and effective implementation of the UK Health Security Agency infection prevention and control guidance in all areas, for both outpatient and inpatient care, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in hospitals.

Mechanisms for infection prevention including physical distancing, optimal hand hygiene, equipment and environment decontamination and extended use of face masks by healthcare staff, patients and visitors, are continually reviewed. The Department continues to have ongoing discussions with NHS England and NHS Improvement on controlling the spread of COVID-19 infection in all healthcare settings.

The vaccination programme has significantly weakened the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths and will continue to be our first line of defence against COVID-19.

## ■ Human Papillomavirus: Vaccination

**Jonathan Ashworth:**

[\[69081\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department had made of the recovery of the HPV vaccination programme from the covid-19 outbreak by October 2021.

**Maria Caulfield:**

NHS England and its commissioned school aged providers continue to follow and implement the advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) regarding human papillomavirus vaccinations. The National Health Service (NHS) is prioritising the first dose of the vaccine for all those eligible whilst working to recover those school aged immunisations that have been previously missed. NHS providers are adopting a flexible and transformative delivery model to ensure those

eligible receive their vaccine on time. NHS England has been working closely with the Department and the Department of Education to ensure that schools facilitate the continuation of vaccinations where possible. NHS England is accountable for the commissioning and operational delivery of immunisation services in England and commissions primary care and school aged providers to deliver services locally. NHS England nationally and regionally provides oversight to immunisation services, working collaboratively with local NHS systems to deliver services safely and effectively.

#### ■ Immensa Health Clinic

**Ruth Jones:** [\[65497\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the UK Health Security Agency on the covid-19 test errors at a private laboratory in Wolverhampton.

**Ruth Jones:** [\[65498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with the Welsh Government on the covid-19 test errors at a private laboratory in Wolverhampton.

**Maggie Throup:**

On the 12 October the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA) informed the Secretary of State that they were investigating reports that individuals who had tested positive on LFD testing were subsequently found to be negative on PCR testing. This meeting was followed by subsequent advice and emerging findings and the Secretary of State discussed the issue with UKHSA at regular points during that week.

The Secretary of State discussed the issue with the Welsh Government on the 14 October on the Four Nations Ministerial call. The Welsh government were alerted to the issue in advance of this call.

#### ■ Immensa Health Clinic: South West

**Thangam Debbonaire:** [\[68342\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, on what date it became known that Immensa had delivered false negative covid-19 test results to people in the South West.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The UK Health Security Agency identified this incident on 12 October 2021.

## ■ Influenza: Disease Control

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[66166\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answers of 28 October 2021 to Questions 62622 and 62623, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of implementing (a) community testing, (b) point-of-care testing and (c) wider antiviral treatment into the flu pathway.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 3 November 2021]:* The Department is currently assessing the scope to include testing for Influenza alongside existing community testing for SARS-CoV-2.

We are not currently assessing the potential merits of implementing point-of-care testing for flu and we have not made an assessment of the potential merits of implementing wider antiviral treatment into the flu pathway.

## ■ Influenza: Vaccination

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[72430\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to encourage uptake of the free seasonal flu vaccine among those aged 50-64.

**Maggie Throup:**

This year's marketing campaign encourages those over 50 years old to book their flu vaccine. The campaign will be advertised on broadcast media including terrestrial television, video on demand and radio advertising across a nine-week schedule. This will be amplified by advertising on digital and social media channels, activities aimed at multicultural groups, stakeholder partnerships and paid-for public relations. A bespoke campaign chatbot will provide a new, innovative way to provide information and aid appointment booking for all cohorts including those over 50 years old.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also recommissioned the national 'call and recall' service for the 2021/22 season. This national service supplements local contractual call and recall mechanisms to support driving up an increase in demand for those over 50 years old.

## ■ Maternity Services: Ethnic Groups

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[71422\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to improve maternal outcomes for black women.

**Maria Caulfield:**

To support NHS maternity services improve maternal outcomes for black women, NHS England and NHS Improvement published 'Equity and Equality: Guidance for Local Maternity Systems', which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/C0734-equity-and-equality-guidance-for-local-maternity-systems.pdf>

This guidance asks Local Maternity Systems (LMS) to produce an equity and equality analysis (covering health outcomes, community assets and staff experience) by 30 November 2021 and to co-produce an equity and equality action plan by 28 February 2022.

LMS are being asked to include evidence-based interventions that have been demonstrated to improve maternal outcomes in their action plans: implement maternal medicine networks with key performance indicators relating to outcomes and equalities; offer referral to the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme to women with a previous gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) diagnosis who are not currently pregnant and do not currently have diabetes. Women of Black African, Black Caribbean and South Asian ethnic groups are at high risk of developing GDM, so this intervention helps improve prevention and early detection of Type 2 diabetes; implement maternal mental health services with a focus on access by ethnicity; ensure personalised care and support plans are available to all, which has a positive impact on health inequalities; ensure the Maternity Voices Partnerships reflect the ethnic diversity of the local population, to encourage the uptake of services among those that may be reluctant to get involved and design interventions that are relevant to the local population, improving outcomes for black women.

LMS are also being asked to include plans to deliver the NHS Long-Term Plan commitment for targeted and enhanced Continuity of Carer with 75% of women from Black, Asian and Mixed ethnic groups receiving Continuity of Carer by 2024 and additional midwifery time to support women from the most deprived areas. Women who receive Continuity of Carer are 16% less likely to lose their baby and have an improved experience of care.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are providing £6.8m to support LMS to implement their Equity and Equality Action Plans.

## ■ Medical Treatments

**Chris Green:**

[\[70276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of progress in (a) improving patients' access to new medicines and (b) meeting the UK's ambitions to be a global life sciences hub in response to the recommendations arising from the NICE Methods Review; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

The Government is committed to ensuring patients can access clinically and cost-effective new medicines. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) appraises the clinical and cost effectiveness of all new medicines and National Health Service organisations are legally required to fund medicines recommended by NICE, normally within three months of the publication of final guidance. NICE recommends the vast majority of new medicines for routine use on the NHS and many thousands of patients have benefited from access to effective new medicines as a result.

NICE consulted on a range of proposed changes to its methods earlier this year as part of the ongoing review of its methods and processes for health technology assessment. The methods and process review will ensure that NICE retains global leadership in the evaluation and appraisal of new medicines and technologies. As reflected in the Life Sciences Vision, this will support the Government's ambition to make the UK the best place in the world to develop, trial, launch and adopt innovative new medicines, improving patient access to medicines.

### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**John Penrose:**

[\[70250\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Weston-super-Mare of 6 September and 4 October 2021 on behalf of constituent, Paul Maksimczyk, on re-accrediting retired dentists.

**Edward Argar:**

I replied to the hon. Member on 10 November 2021.

### ■ **Miscarriage: Health Services**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[71334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure women experiencing miscarriages are not subject to delays in access to managed miscarriages as a result of (a) public health restrictions and (b) any further public health restrictions in hospitals.

**Maria Caulfield:**

Updated guidance for maintaining services within health and care settings was jointly issued by the Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health Wales, Public Health Agency Northern Ireland, Health Protection Scotland/National Services Scotland, Public Health England and NHS England on 29 September 2021.

To ensure that women experiencing miscarriages are not subject to delays in access to managed miscarriages, the guidance sets out that all National Health Service organisations should ensure reliable application of all infection prevention and control recommendations and assurance on adherence, that Personal Protective Equipment is available and in supply, and that all staff training is up to date. The guidance includes key Infection, Prevention and Control recommendations and includes risk assessed patient pathway scenarios to help guide the implementation of measures to provide safe and effective care locally.

The guidance states that maintaining services requires a continuous review of ways of working to respond to the ongoing pandemic. Health and care settings should continue to maintain appropriate infection, prevention and control processes as necessary and this should be continually reviewed.

## ■ Neurology: Staff

**Kate Osborne:**

[\[69207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what his Department's long term strategy is to attract, recruit and retain neurology professionals.

**Edward Argar:**

This Government is committed to supporting staff and investing in the wider neurological workforce, including nurses and allied health professionals. The NHS People Plan, published in July 2020, sets out measures to support and grow the workforce and strengthen retention in the NHS. We have set up a comprehensive work programme to improve retention and support return to practice, invest in and diversify our training pipeline, and ethically recruit internationally.

Health Education England (HEE) determines the number of medical specialty training posts that are made available each year based on considerations including spending review allocations, strategic priorities for training the medical workforce and an annual process whereby local teams submit recruitment plans for specialty training programmes. Neurology is a popular specialty and generally achieves 100% fill rate for training places.

In July 2021 the Department commissioned HEE to work with partners to review, renew and update the existing long-term strategic framework for the health workforce.

## ■ NHS 111

**Daisy Cooper:**

[\[71474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) average call duration, (b) average waiting time and (c) total number of calls were to the NHS emergency advice service number 111 where the caller ended the call before it was answered in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020 and (iv) 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

The average call duration for NHS111 calls is not held centrally.

The average waiting time for NHS111 calls is only available for April – August 2021, and not for previous years. The average waiting from April to August 2021 was 271 seconds.

The total number of calls abandoned is only available for April – August 2021 which is 1,452,574. This data is not available for 2018, 2019, 2020 and current year to August, where only the number of calls abandoned after at least 30 seconds is available. This data is provided in the table below:

	2018	2019	2020	2021: JANUARY – AUGUST
Calls abandoned after at least 30 seconds	708,548	661,906	2,160,595	1,266,546

Source: NHS England

## ■ NHS and Social Services: Migrant Workers

**Sarah Owen:**

[\[70322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many overseas NHS and care workers have received a reimbursement for the immigration health surcharge since 1 October 2020.

**Edward Argar:**

The data requested is not currently collected in the format requested. The Department of Health and Social Care and the Home Office will continue to consider the most effective way of ensuring data transparency. Our partners are responsible for collecting information on the operation of the policy, which is used to maintain an effective service.

## ■ NHS Test and Trace: Leamington Spa

**Matt Western:**

[\[72560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many tests have been conducted at the Rosalind Franklin Laboratory in Royal Leamington Spa since it first opened in July 2021.

**Maggie Throup:**

As of the 11 November 2021, the Rosalind Franklin Laboratory has conducted 1,926,331 polymerase chain reaction tests.

## ■ NHS: Complaints

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[70235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Local Authority Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 allow for two separate complaints, made by a patient, on the delivery of NHS care and treatment to be investigated concurrently by the relevant professional bodies of qualified healthcare staff; and if will make a statement.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 do allow for two separate complaints made by a patient

to be investigated concurrently. There is nothing in the regulations that would prevent this from taking place.

## ■ Nurses: Training

**Martyn Day:**

**[71399]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment he has made of the availability of training opportunities for new nursing staff in (a) cancer nursing and (b) other specialisms.

**Edward Argar:**

The Department has not made any recent assessment. Individual employers are responsible for ensuring they have sufficient numbers of staff trained to meet their local needs and who are competent to carry out their role.

Health Education England supports the learning of the National Health Service workforce through their Workforce Transformation and Development and Continuing Professional Development funding. This provides opportunities for eligible nurses, midwives and allied healthcare professionals to continue their learning and development in their chosen career pathway or specialist areas of practice. This will include education programmes for cancer nurses, district nurses, general practice nurses. The Government has also made available £1,000 for each nurse in the NHS in England to support their Continuing Professional Development over a three year period.

## ■ Prescriptions: Fees and Charges

**Fleur Anderson:**

**[57400]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment his Department has made of (a) the equity of access to free prescriptions in the devolved nations and the cost for prescriptions in England and (b) the 30 per cent. increase in cost of a single prescription since 2010; and for what reason the consultation on the proposal to align the upper age exemption for NHS prescription charges with the State Pension Age closed on 2 September 2021, during the parliamentary recess.

**Edward Argar:**

*[Holding answer 20 October 2021]:* No impact assessment has been made on the equity of access to free prescriptions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the cost of prescriptions in England. Health issues, including the level of the prescription charge and who pays for them, are devolved matters and as such the devolved administrations have full discretion over how they spend their budgets and the day-to-day administration of health.

The prescription charge increase is agreed and implemented annually so no impact assessment covering the period since 2010 has been made.

The public consultation was launched as soon as practicable to seek views on this very important proposal. The consultation ran for 9 weeks and received 117,562 responses.



## ■ Protective Clothing: Contracts

**Gareth Thomas:**

[\[64527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what comparative estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of contracts for personal protective equipment being awarded to (a) VIP Lane providers and (b) non VIP Lane providers; and if he will make a statement.

**Edward Argar:**

At the point of being prioritised through the high priority lane (often referred to as the 'VIP lane') offers for the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) went into exactly the same Technical Assurance, Closing (contract negotiation) and Procurement (contract award) process as all the other offers. Information obtained through an independent audit found no discernible difference in overall prices paid by the Department to suppliers processed through the high priority lane relative to those which were not.

## ■ Research: Finance

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[71406\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of future funding for the scientific research consortia.

**Maria Caulfield:**

The recent Spending Review settlement provides £5 billion for health-related research and development. This includes an increase of £605 million on 2020/21 funding levels by 2024/25 or a further £2 billion by the end of the Spending Review period.

## ■ Smoking: Children

**Mr Nicholas Brown:**

[\[69582\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to reduce the (a) appeal and (b) availability of (i) e-cigarettes and (ii) other nicotine products to children.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2021]:* E-cigarettes in the United Kingdom are regulated by the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPR) and the Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 (NIP). These regulations aim to reduce the risk of harm to children and include restrictions on mainstream television and radio advertising; requirements on the packaging and labelling of e-cigarettes, prevent sale to under 18s; and limit both tank sizes and nicotine content.

We are currently undertaking a post implementation review of TRPR to assess if the regulations are meeting their objectives. The Government aims to publish its response by the end of the year. The post implementation review on the Nicotine

Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations 2015 is available at the following link:

[Tobacco legislation coming into force between 2010 and 2015: post implementation review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## ■ Sotorasib

**Jim Shannon:** [\[70261\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when new drug, Sotorasib, will be available on the NHS for lung cancer patients.

**Edward Argar:**

Sotorasib was licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in September 2021 through Project Orbis. It is now being appraised by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to determine whether it should be routinely funded on the National Health Service in England.

In view of the rapid approval of Project Orbis medicines, NHS England and NHS Improvement and NICE have developed an interim process to support patient access to medicines where there is a gap between Project Orbis licensing approval and publication of NICE guidance. Sotorasib is now available to NHS patients in England through an interim access deal agreed with the manufacturer. Decisions on access are a matter for the devolved administrations.

## ■ Surgery

**Alex Sobel:** [\[71441\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what information his Department is collecting on the number of NHS Trusts that are cancelling priority two elective procedures in response to capacity limitations.

**Edward Argar:**

The information is not held in the format requested.

## ■ Travel Restrictions: Coronavirus

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[52457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 2 March 2021 to Question 156324, if he will make it his policy to publish the data used to inform the Government's decisions on whether a country is on the red list including evidence of (a) variants of concern, (b) epidemiology, (c) imported cases and (d) traveller volumes; and if he will make a statement.

**Maggie Throup:**

The decision to include countries on the 'red list' is informed by the latest scientific data and public health advice from a world-leading range of experts, including risk assessments from the United Kingdom Health Security Agency.

Data considered includes epidemiological metrics (such as case and testing rates), genomic surveillance capability, evidence of the presence of high risk variants and evidence of exported cases of variants to the UK and elsewhere. Travel connections with the United Kingdom and details of the in-country and territory vaccination profile are included as contextual information. You can find further information on the methodology for international travel risk assessments at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-risk-assessment-methodology-to-inform-international-travel-traffic-light-system>.

Data informing international travel risk assessments is published every three week's following the latest country allocations by Ministers. You can find this data at the following link; <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/data-informing-international-travel-risk-assessments>.

The list of red list countries is kept under review

## ■ Vaccination

**Dr Matthew Offord:**

[\[71322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when his Department plans to publish a vaccine strategy.

**Maggie Throup:**

The publication of England's national Vaccine Strategy has been delayed as a result of the Department's ongoing focus on responding to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the Vaccine Strategy has been kept under review and is in the process of being refreshed to reflect the changed landscape the pandemic has brought, including new developments from the COVID-19 vaccine and extended National Health Service flu programme.

## ■ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: UK Delegations

**Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[69025\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 56847, on the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, if he will provide the details of the people comprising the UK delegation at the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control COP9.

**Maggie Throup:**

*[Holding answer 8 November 2021]:* The Deputy Director for Addictions and Inclusion Policy for the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities will lead the delegation COP9, supported by members of the Tobacco Control team and support from the United Kingdom Mission in Geneva.

**HOME OFFICE****■ Alcoholic drinks: Drugs**

**Alex Sobel:** [\[71443\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the number of drink spiking incidents in England and Wales.

**Alex Sobel:** [\[71444\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps her Department is taking to protect women from drink spiking in (a) bars and (b) other venues in England and Wales.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The reports of the spiking of drinks with illegal substances are of course concerning. This is an ongoing matter which the police are investigating.

The Government is supporting the rollout of pilot initiatives to improve the safety of women in public spaces at night, including in the night-time economy. We have committed to delivering a £5 million 'Safety of Women at Night' fund, in addition to the £25 million Safer Streets Fund Round 3. These funds will support projects that target potential perpetrators, seek to protect potential victims, or deliver programmes intended to address offending behaviour.

Licensing authorities have a number of options available to them to manage the night-time economy through a range of powers to tackle existing individual premises including the use of conditions, licence reviews and closure powers under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The police are working at pace to gather intelligence on these crimes and identify perpetrators. It is a changing and evolving picture. We have been gathering reports from forces across the country, and currently, we have 218 reports of needle assaults and injections since September. Over the same period, the police are aware of 250 incidents of drink spiking. Those numbers are subject to change as the police continue to gather information. This is a crime in which not all instances are reported. We strongly encourage anyone who has been a victim to report it to the police but it does mean that it is difficult to make comparisons with the past, and we will continue to strive to understand more about this crime.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has convened to discuss this issue with the NCA and the NPCC has committed to report back on the needle issue specifically (rather than drink spiking), and the results will be published in due course.

**■ Asylum: Death**

**Patrick Grady:** [\[69637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what data her Department holds on the number of people who have died while waiting for a determination on asylum applications in each of the last five years.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office are unable to provide data on the number of people who have died while waiting for a determination on asylum applications in each of the last five years as this information is not held in a reportable format and to gather it would incur disproportionate cost.

**■ British Nationality: Applications**

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[71364\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what her Department's target time is for reconsidering an application for citizenship.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[71365\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average length of time has been for reconsidering applications for citizenship in each of the last three years.

**Kirsten Oswald:** [\[71366\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many and what proportion of live requests for reconsideration of an application for citizenship have been awaiting a decision for (a) more than six months and (b) over a year.

**Kevin Foster:**

71364 The service standard for reconsidering an application for citizenship is six months.

71365 & 71366 We do not hold the data as requested. This is because a reconsideration request is not counted as a new application and current IT systems do not provide the specific data.

**■ Drugs: Misuse**

**Crispin Blunt:** [\[R\] \[70217\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 58293 on Drugs: Misuse, whether a formal consultation process in line with guidelines has been used in developing the drug strategy, as was the case in the 2010 and other previous drug strategies; how existing external experts were chosen; and to what extent the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs has (a) been involved in the new strategy's development or (b) provided feedback on the draft.

**Kit Malthouse:**

Like the 2017 Drug Strategy, the forthcoming Drug Strategy has been informed by extensive consultation with key partners in the drugs field. This includes through Dame Carol Black's review of drugs, which involved significant consultation with external partners to gather information.

The calls for evidence for parts 1 and 2 of the review received responses from a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the public, academics, people working in the substance misuse sector and enforcement partners. Dame Carol also led an

extensive programme of consultation events to develop her recommendations on drug treatment for part 2 of her review.

Our Strategy is responding to Dame Carol Black's review in full. We have built on the research undertaken as part of the review, and have continued to consult external experts in order to shape the approach and interventions set out in the strategy. This includes Dame Carol Black in her role as independent advisor and Dr Ed Day our national Recovery Champion. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs' Full Council has also been briefed on our strategic approach and members of the Council have provided feedback.

### ■ **Emergency Services: County Durham**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[70254\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what the average 999 emergency police response times are for incidents in (a) Peterlee and (b) Seaham in the latest period for which data is available.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The handling of 999 calls, including response times and performance targets is an operational matter for the police.

The Home Office does not collect data on the 999 emergency service. However, in the Beating Crime Plan, the Government has committed to improving the responsiveness of police to 999 calls by working with HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services to develop league tables for answering calls and ensuring that the public know how responsive their local force is when they call them for help.

### ■ **General Practitioners: Easington**

**Grahame Morris:** [\[70253\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will expedite Skilled Worker Visas (Tier 2 Application) for GP surgeries in the Easington constituency that are seeking to employ and retain doctors.

**Kevin Foster:**

Applications submitted under the Health and Care Visa route already benefit from shortened service standards compared to the Skilled Worker Route more widely.

General Practitioners, regardless of location of the surgery, are included in the group who benefit from this.

### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

**Robert Largan:** [\[70330\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when she plans to respond to the email correspondence of 7 July 2021 from the hon. Member for High Peak, regarding migrant Channel crossings, reference RL24348.

**Tom Pursglove:**

I, as the Minister for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration, responded on 12 November 2021

**Helen Hayes:****[71408]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 20 October 2021 to Question 57200 on Correspondence, what estimate she has made of the total number of items of correspondence from hon. Members (a) awaiting response and (b) awaiting response after the twenty day service standard has passed as at 8 November 2021.

**Kevin Foster:**

Data about intake and performance in answering MP Correspondence are published quarterly and this includes data up to and including the end of quarter 2 – 2021 with the latest Quarter available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/customer-service-operations-data-q2-2021>

We are proposing the release of data for quarter 3 in due course.

**■ Migrant Workers: Hospitality Industry and Tourism****Ian Murray:****[71316]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of trends in workforce supply and demand in the hospitality and tourism sectors; and what assessment she has made of the potential merits of allowing those sectors a special visa category to help attract overseas workers.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Points Based System provides for several occupations within the hospitality and tourism sectors, including chefs, publicans, restaurant managers and hotel managers to be recruited on a global basis, subject to the requirements of the system, including English language and salary, thresholds being met.

Beyond the Points Based System, there is the existing UK labour market, which includes those who come to the UK through our Youth Mobility Schemes (which we are looking to expand), our new British National (Overseas) visa for those from Hong Kong, dependants of those arriving under the expanded skilled worker route, as well as over 6 million applications under the EU Settlement Scheme and those who arrive through our family and humanitarian protection routes, who all have access to the UK labour market.

We therefore do not intend to introduce a general immigration route allowing recruitment at or near the minimum wage in occupations with relatively short work-based training requirements.

Most of the solutions to recruitment issues need to be driven by industry, with a big push towards improving pay, conditions and diversity needed, alongside taking advantage of the schemes offered by Department for Work and Pensions to support

employers looking to recruit, rather than turning to the Home Office for immigration policy changes as an alternative to doing this.

## ■ **Motorcycles: Antisocial Behaviour and Crime**

**Grahame Morris:**

**[70255]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if she will produce a national police strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour and crime associated with off-road bikes.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The police have powers under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Police Reform Act 2002 to seize vehicles being used driven illegally without a valid driving licence or insurance or in an anti-social manner respectively. Decisions on when to use these powers are operational matters for Chief Constables in conjunction with local policing plans. They are best placed to understand how to meet the needs of local communities.

In addition the Government has provided the police, local authorities and other local agencies with a range of tools and powers that they can use to respond quickly and effectively to all forms of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) through the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014*. These powers are deliberately local in nature, and it is for local agencies to determine whether their use is appropriate including for nuisance involving vehicles.

In January of this year, the Home Office updated [statutory guidance](#) to support local agencies to make effective use of these powers and in July the [Beating Crime Plan](#) laid out the Government's plan for tackling crime and ASB.

## ■ **Police: Poverty**

**Rachael Maskell:**

**[69641]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of whether there is a relationship between levels of policing and areas of greater deprivation.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government has committed to reviewing the police funding formula before the next General Election and our intention is to introduce new arrangements at the earliest opportunity.

Reviewing the funding formula will be a complex process that will require close working with the policing sector and relevant experts to develop proposals, and a full public consultation will take place before any new funding arrangements are put in place.

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



## ■ Refugees: Afghanistan

**Munira Wilson:**

[\[63898\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many letters her Department has sent to Afghan nationals in the UK telling them to make arrangements to leave the country or face deportation since the Taliban assumed power in Afghanistan; and what arrangements those affected should make in the absence of flights from the UK to Afghanistan and in response to Government advice not to travel to that country.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office processes many different types of immigration applications and/or asylum claims from Afghan nationals. All immigration decisions, including those from Afghan nationals, are carefully considered on a case by case basis, on their individual merits in accordance with our international obligations and Home Office policy.

The Home Office has reviewed the country situation given recent changes in Afghanistan, have updated and published our country policy and information notes for Afghanistan on those seeking protection, latest update 2 November 2021, which reflect revised assessments of risk of persecution. Decision making in regards protection claims from Afghanistan have resumed, following a short pause to review policy, and have ensured our decision makers are considering claimants' protection needs in line with up-to date country information.

No one who is found to be at risk of persecution or serious harm will be expected to return to Afghanistan. Inadmissibility rules apply to all nationals where it is considered that there has been an earlier presence or connection to a safe third country. Removals to Afghanistan have been suspended.

We have been clear that people should claim asylum in the first safe country that they reach and should not seek to enter the UK illegally. Our New Plan for Immigration underpins this principle.

**John Healey:**

[\[70225\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Afghans her Department estimates to process through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme before March 2022.

**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 and remains under development. 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.

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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement).

**Sir Charles Walker:**

**[70236]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, when vulnerable female Afghan nationals sheltering in Tehran, and other cities and countries outside Afghanistan, will be able to access the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme; and if she will make a statement.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), the UK will relocate up to 20,000 people at risk. It will prioritise those who have stood up for values such as democracy and women's rights in Afghanistan, as well as vulnerable groups, including ethnic and religious minorities. This will include some of those who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme, which prioritised individuals who were considered to be at particular risk – including women's rights activists, prosecutors and journalists.

The scheme is not yet open and remains under development. 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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-resettlement-and-immigration-policy-statement).

## ■ Schools: EU Countries

**Wera Hobhouse:**

**[70295]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the UK's new immigration rules on the number of school trips from the EU to the UK.

**Kevin Foster:**

As part of the changes to the Immigration Rules in September 2021, we no longer accept national identity cards as a valid travel document from EU, EEA and Swiss visitors to the UK.

An impact assessment was undertaken of this change.

## ■ Visas: Hong Kong

**Steve Reed:**

**[70270]**

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many Hong Kongers have arrived in the UK via the British National (Overseas) visa scheme since its launch, by local authority.

**Kevin Foster:**

The Home Office publishes data on visas and the British National Overseas (BN(O)) route in the 'Immigration Statistics Quarterly Release' on GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release> .

At present it is not possible from this data to say how many of those issued with a visa have arrived in the UK or where they are planning to settle within it..

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE****■ Import Duties: USA****Patrick Grady:****[69635]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions she has had with (a) US trade representatives and (b) industry bodies on efforts to (i) reach a resolution to the Section 232 dispute with the US and (ii) the removal of the 25 per cent tariff on imported US whiskey.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

My Rt hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has engaged with US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, most recently on 12 November, to press for a resolution to the Section 232 tariffs. We have also been engaging with industry bodies, including The Scotch Whisky Association. UK importers are aware that our preference is the full removal of 232 tariffs, in which case the UK's 25 per cent tariff on imported US whiskey will not be required.

**David Linden:****[69683]**

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the announcement of an agreement between the US and EU in the section 232 steel and aluminium trade dispute which includes the removal of the EU's tariff on American Whiskeys, if her Department will hold discussions with representatives of (a) the UK steel industry and (b) UK importers subject to tariffs on the potential merits of a similar agreement for the UK to ensure that businesses in Scotland are not left at a competitive disadvantage.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

In preparation for resuming talks with the US on Section 232 tariffs, we continue to work closely with the UK steel and aluminium industries to understand the implications of the US-EU deal. Any deal that the UK secures with the US must work for the steel and aluminium sectors. We have also been engaging with UK importers, including the SWA. Importers know that our preference is the full removal of 232 tariffs, in which case the UK's rebalancing measures will not be required, ensuring that UK industries are not left at a competitive disadvantage.

**■ Trade Agreements: Animal Welfare****Theresa Villiers:** [\[70238\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what steps the Government is taking to use its trade policy to promote higher animal welfare standards around the world.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

HM Government is working to secure world-class free trade agreements that uphold our manifesto commitment to not compromise on the animal welfare standards for which our country is rightly renowned. To promote higher animal welfare standards, we will consider the full range of mechanisms available to us, including at international fora such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the World Trade Organisation.

We have secured ground-breaking provisions on animal welfare with Australia and New Zealand. This includes a standalone animal welfare chapter, a non-regression clause and a comprehensive partnership to work with Australia and New Zealand to progress animal welfare internationally.

**■ Trade Agreements: Australia****Theresa Villiers:** [\[70239\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether her policy on the trade terms on agriculture agreed in principle with Australia (a) will or (b) will not become the standard terms to be offered to other countries with lower food and animal welfare standards.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

All trade deals are different, and tailored to the relationships and markets of the countries involved. However, the Government has committed that it will never lower food standards. The UK's food standards are overseen independently by the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland. Decisions on these standards are made separately from any trade agreements.

The UK-Australia trade deal does not compromise our animal welfare high standards and does not create new permissions for imports from Australia.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[71298\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, with reference to the modelling set out in the UK-Australia FTA strategic approach, published on 17 July 2020, what forecast her Department has made of the effect of the UK-Australia trade agreement on total economic output in Northern Ireland.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

Following the conclusion of negotiations, a full impact assessment will be published prior to scrutiny by Parliament. This will present the results of economic impacts of the agreement, including on UK sectoral output and employment and the potential implications for the UK nations and English regions.

In June 2020 the government published a scoping assessment, which provided a preliminary assessment of the potential long run impacts of an agreement with Australia. This contained potential implications for UK nations and English regions and is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uks-approach-to-negotiating-a-free-trade-agreement-with-australia>.

#### ■ Trade Agreements: Palestinians

**Emily Thornberry:**

[70248]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, whether the meeting of the Joint Committee for UK-Palestinian Authority Trade and Cooperation held on 22 September 2021 discussed the implications of the UK-Palestine trade agreement for the tariff treatment of goods manufactured in UK freeports.

**Mr Ranil Jayawardena:**

It did not.

#### ■ Whisky: USA

**Mr David Jones:**

[70240]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent discussions her Department has had with the US Administration on the removal of UK tariffs on American whiskeys.

**Penny Mordaunt:**

My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade has engaged with the US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, most recently on 12 November, to press for a resolution to the Section 232 tariffs. Our preference is the full removal of 232 tariffs, in which case the UK's tariffs on American whiskeys will not be required.

## JUSTICE

#### ■ Prisoners' Release: Homelessness

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[69035]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Birmingham, published on 3 November 2021, what steps he is taking to prevent immediate releases from court to homelessness.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[69036]

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Birmingham, published on 3 November 2021, what proportion of prisoners released from HMP Birmingham in a typical year will be ineligible for accommodation on release following the full implementation of the new accommodation contract.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

**[69037]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP Birmingham, published on 3 November 2021, which prisons in England and Wales are covered by a prison leaver accommodation contract that does not cover (a) releases from remand, (b) immediate releases from court and (c) those released without a probation licence or supervision period.

**Kit Malthouse:**

This government is committed to reducing the risk of homelessness on release from custody. In support of this, the MoJ have published a policy framework which mandates the roles and responsibilities of both prison and probation staff in making effective referrals to Local Authorities in relation to those at risk of homelessness at this critical point.

In relation to immediate releases from Court, where an individual is homeless or at risk of homelessness at the point of sentence, the Probation Service Court Team take steps to ensure that a referral to the Local Housing Authority is undertaken.

In addition, Pre-Release teams working in prisons currently provide a service to those who are unconvicted and this includes identification of immediate resettlement needs on reception, including sustaining tenancies. These teams will remain embedded in all prisons which house those who are unconvicted, including HMP Birmingham, and their role includes planning for a potential release from Court.

Releases from HMP Birmingham of offenders who have received a custodial sentence have been falling from around 2,100 in 2015 and 2016 to 750 in 2020, which was an atypical year impacted by the Covid pandemic. All of those who are eligible will be supported by the new Accommodation Services commissioned as part of the reforms to the Probation Service. This provision includes pre and post-release support to obtain and sustain tenancies.

A proportion of those released without a custodial sentence will receive a Community Order and therefore will be eligible for the new Accommodation Services support at that point. For those who are released without charge or the case is discontinued, Probation staff in Court will offer advice to the individual on how to make representation to their Local Authority homeless unit.

Information on what proportion of prisoners released from HMP Birmingham in a typical year will be ineligible for accommodation support on release following the full implementation of the new accommodation contract, can only be obtained from individual case files at disproportionate cost.

Access to stable accommodation has been identified as one of the key resettlement pathways to support people address their offending behaviour and to reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Accommodation Services are a key element of Commissioned Rehabilitative Services (CRS) Framework, which went live on 26 June 2021. The CRS accommodation contracts provide services for prisoner released under Probation supervision and covers the entire prison estate. We are currently

looking into what accommodation and rehabilitative support could additionally be provided to people in prison who are unconvicted and who are at risk of homelessness on release.

## ■ Prisoners: Mothers

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[69034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, further to the Answer of 2 November 2021 to Question 62679 on Prisoners: Mothers, if he plans to make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the Report's estimate that the cost of local authority interventions and costs to HMPPS of maternal prison sentences total up to £265,008 per family.

**Victoria Atkins:**

Further to the detailed response to Question 62679, we are not planning to undertake a detailed assessment of the total cost set out in the report. However, we will take account of the combined costs set out in the report as we develop and refine our policies in relation to maternal imprisonment.

## ■ Prisons: Construction

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[68168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent estimate he has made of the cost of additional prison places that HM Prison Service plans to open in (a) 2022-23, (b) 2023-24 and (c) 2024-25.

**Victoria Atkins:**

We have answered your question on the assumption that it relates to the estimated cost of delivering the additional prison places.

The estimated capital costs currently expected to be incurred in delivering the 20,000 additional prison places in the relevant years is in line with our Spending Review capital settlement, which is as follows:

- 2022-23 - c£1,050m
- 2023-24 - c£1,730m
- 2024-25 - c£980m

We are unable to provide the capital cost of places opened in each of these years, as the relevant information is commercially sensitive.

## ■ Swinfen Hall Young Offender Institution: Repairs and Maintenance

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[69596\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, published on 4 November 2021, what estimate he has made of the additional cost to the public purse of refurbishment work that has had to be repeated at that establishment.

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[69597\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to Annual Report of the Independent Monitoring Board at HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall, published on 4 November 2021, what steps he is taking to ensure (a) value for public money, (b) timeliness and (c) quality in the contracting of refurbishment works at that establishment.

**Victoria Atkins:**

There has been no additional cost to the public purse for repeated refurbishment works at Swinfen hall. It was paid for by the contractor as the initial works were not up to the required standard.

We encountered several issues during the refurbishment of A, B and C wings; however, these were beyond our control. We continue to monitor our contractor's performance

and have regular meetings with them to resolve any difficulties as quickly as possible.

#### ■ **Telecommunications: Crime**

**Damian Collins:**

[\[69611\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to the report by the Law Commission, Modernising Communications Offences, published in July 2021, which recommendations in that report he plans to accept.

**James Cartlidge:**

The Law Commission's Report – Modernising Communications Offences – was sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Recommendations on new offences that fall to the MoJ are being carefully considered. We will set out our position on these matters in due course.

## LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

#### ■ **British National (Overseas): Hong Kong**

**Steve Reed:**

[\[70269\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department will provide applicants to the National VCSE Grant Scheme with a decision.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Department has received a high volume of applications for the Hong Kong BN(O) Welcome Programme Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise grant schemes, which will fund work to support BN(O)s in a number of innovative ways.

We are grateful to all those organisations who have taken the time to apply and we will be in contact with final decisions as soon as possible.



## ■ Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities: Staff

**Angela Rayner:**

[\[71345\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, how many civil servants have been transferred to his Department since 15 September 2021; and what units have been transferred to his Department from other government Departments since he became Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Department is ensuring that the number of civil servants matches the demands and responsibilities the new Department has. The total numbers of staff can be found in our workforce management reports which are published monthly and can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dluhc-workforce-management-information>.

## ■ Evictions

**Fabian Hamilton:**

[\[69578\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he is taking steps to (a) end Section 21 evictions and (b) ensure no other route is created for no fault evictions.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government is committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market that works for both tenants and landlords, which includes taking steps to end Section 21 evictions.

We will publish a White Paper in 2022 detailing our plans for reform of the private rented sector, and we are working with stakeholders from across the sector to inform this. It will provide further detail on repealing Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 to improve security for tenants by putting an end to evictions where the landlord doesn't have to provide a reason.

At the same time, we must ensure landlords have the tools they need to gain possession of their property when they have a valid reason to do so. Through the Bill, we will strengthen the rights of landlords to recover their properties when it is necessary and fair, including when they want to sell or move into the property themselves.

This represents a generational change in the law that governs private renting, and it is only right that our legislation considers the impact of the pandemic and is a balanced set of reforms which improves the private rented market.

We will bring forward legislation in due course and when parliamentary time allows.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[71410\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what progress his Department has made on ending the use of section 21 no fault evictions.

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[71411\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what the Government's timescale is for bringing forward legislative proposals to end the use of section 21 no fault evictions.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government is committed to bringing in a Better Deal for Renters, including abolishing section 21 evictions, to deliver a fairer and more effective rental market that works for both tenants and landlords. We have been working with stakeholders across the sector, including holding a series of roundtable discussions, to inform this.

We will publish a White Paper that sets out the Government's plans in 2022 to allow the requisite time to develop an ambitious and considered package of reforms. Our priority is to create a fairer private rented sector that works for both landlords and tenants. It is vital that we take the time to get this right to avoid any unintended consequences for the sector.

We remain firmly committed to the Renters Reform programme, including abolishing section 21 evictions, and we will continue to engage with the sector to inform this. We will bring forward legislation in due course and when parliamentary time allows.

#### ■ **Housing Associations: Safety**

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[71341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to encourage housing associations to share fire and similar safety assessments with tenants and residents.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Building Safety Bill requires Accountable Persons to provide residents of high-rise buildings with information about safety measures in their building. This includes fire safety information that will include the risks to residents identified by the fire risk assessment and the preventative and protective measures in place. Residents will be able to request further safety information from the Accountable Person.

As building owners, housing associations will need to identify an Accountable Person and provide relevant safety information. Residents will be able to request further safety information from the Accountable Person.

#### ■ **Housing Associations: Service Charges**

**Lucy Powell:**

[\[71340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what assessment he has made of the (a) value for money of service charges collected by housing associations and (b) adequacy of the rights of tenants to challenge those charges.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government believes very strongly that service charges should be transparent and communicated effectively. All service charges must be set in line with the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, with service charges payable only when the costs are reasonable. The law is clear that service charges and any increase in costs must be reasonable and, where costs relate to work or services, the work or services must be of a reasonable standard. This applies equally to social housing tenants.

The Government's policy statement on rents for social housing (published in February 2019) encourages registered providers of social housing to keep increases for services charges within CPI+1% per annum, to help keep charges affordable.

We also believe that there should be a clear route to challenge or redress if things go wrong. Both leaseholders and social housing tenants have the ability to apply to the Property Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal for a determination where they do not believe the charges are reasonable, and must be consulted when major works are being proposed.

**■ Housing: Planning****Sir Mike Penning:**[\[70244\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which local authorities do not have a housing plan in place.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local plans should provide a framework for addressing housing needs, as well as other economic, social and environmental priorities.

As of 30 September 2021, 23 local planning authorities (7%) do not have an adopted local plan (under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Most are at an advanced stage of preparing plans: 12 have submitted their plan for examination in public; and a further 2 have had their plans found sound following examination and expected to adopt shortly. The authorities that have no plan in place are:

Amber Valley

Ashfield

Basildon

Brentwood

Bury

Calderdale

Castle Point

Eastleigh

Epping Forest

Liverpool

Medway  
North East Derbyshire  
North Hertfordshire  
Northumberland  
Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation  
Salford  
St Albans  
Tameside  
Uttlesford  
Welwyn Hatfield  
Windsor and Maidenhead  
Wirral  
York

#### ■ Local Government: Ethics

**Steve Reed:**

[\[70271\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when his Department plans to respond to the Committee on Standards in Public Life review of local government ethical standards.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Committee on Standards in Public Life report recommends numerous legislative changes and other amendments to strengthen the local government standards and conduct system. Of the 26 recommendations, 22 were aimed at Government. We will be issuing the Government response to the report in due course.

#### ■ Local Plans

**Sir Mike Penning:**

[\[70243\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, if he will provide (a) details and (b) the number of local plans that have been halted by the Planning Inspectorate in each year since 2010.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Since 2011, 55 local plan Development Plan Documents (DPDs) have been withdrawn by the local authority, or been found unsound or legally non-compliant by an Inspector, following:

- Identification of serious soundness problems; or
- Failure of the Duty to Cooperate.

A breakdown by year is provided below:

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER OF LOCAL PLAN DPDs</b>
2011	6
2012	4
2013	15
2014	12
2015	8
2016	0
2017	2
2018	1
2019	0
2020	6
2021 (up to 31 October)	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>

This constitutes 9% of all DPDs examined during this period, with 639 DPDs (91%) found sound subject to modifications.

Most of the plans withdrawn or found unsound or legally non-compliant, 45 out of the 55, were examined during the period 2011-2016. The reduction in the last 5 years has resulted from a letter from the then Secretary of State in 2015, asking that Inspectors work pragmatically with LPAs to find plans sound.

#### ■ **Members: Correspondence**

##### **Sir Christopher Chope:**

[\[70222\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, pursuant to the Answer of 20 September 2021 to Question 49020 on Members: Correspondence, when a response to the invitation will be issued and what the reason is for the delay.

##### **Eddie Hughes:**

I apologise for the delay in replying to the Honourable Member. A reply to his invitation has been sent to him.

#### ■ **Non-domestic Rates: Tax Allowances**

##### **Sir Charles Walker:**

[\[70234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, when local authorities will begin to allocate the £1.5 billion made available under the Business Rates Relief Fund announced in March 2021; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government announced a £1.5 billion pot of additional business rates relief for properties affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that have not otherwise been eligible for existing reliefs. My Department will publish guidance to help local authorities set up their local schemes once the legislation relating to COVID-19 Material Change of Circumstances provisions has passed.

**NORTHERN IRELAND**■ **Irish Language: Education****Jim Shannon:**[\[72425\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if he will take steps to ensure a choice for schools who do not wish to teach the Irish Language in any legislative proposals on the Irish Language.

**Conor Burns:**

The Government is taking forward the carefully negotiated legislative commitments on identity, language and culture in the New Decade, New Approach agreement as the Northern Ireland Executive has not done so.

The New Decade, New Approach agreement did not include provision for the teaching of the Irish language in schools and as such, the legislation the Government will introduce makes no change to the current arrangements

**TRANSPORT**■ **Aviation: Fuels****Seema Malhotra:**[\[71339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on the delivery of decarbonisation targets in aviation as part of the discharge of its economic regulation function.

**Robert Courts:**

We are working closely with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to achieve net zero aviation – or Jet Zero – by 2050. In July, we published the Jet Zero Consultation which focuses on the rapid development of technologies in a way that maintains the benefits of air travel and maximises the opportunities that decarbonisation can bring for the UK. We are currently assessing responses to this consultation, including on whether changes to our approach to landing charges and slots could support our decarbonisation objectives.

We are collaborating with the CAA to support the enabling of demonstration activity of zero- and low-emission aircraft in a safe way, and to ensure the UK remains the best location in which to develop and deploy these new aircraft. We are also working with

the CAA as co-sponsors of the Airspace Modernisation Programme, the national programme of airspace change amongst major UK airports.

The CAA are active members of the Jet Zero Council, a key partnership between industry and government – co-chaired by DfT and BEIS Secretaries of State - to drive the delivery of new technologies and innovative ways to cut aviation emissions.

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[71527\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he made of the potential merits of introducing a price support mechanism for reducing the price of Sustainable Aviation Fuels, modelled on the Renewable Obligation scheme that has commercialised wind energy.

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[71528\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether he plans to hold a consultation on financial mechanisms to support the commercialisation of sustainable aviation fuels.

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[71529\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential for sustainable aviation fuels to reduce carbon emissions from (a) domestic, (b) short haul and (c) long haul flights before 2050.

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[71530\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans he has to bring forward legislative proposals to ensure a statutory commitment to the ambition of 10 per cent Sustainable Aviation Fuel usage by 2030 as outlined in the Net Zero Strategy.

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[71531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department has plans to help reduce the price difference between sustainable aviation fuels and conventional fossil kerosene.

**Robert Courts:**

The Jet Zero consultation, published in July, sets out our vision for the aviation sector to reach net zero by 2050. Our proposed approach focuses on the rapid development of technologies, including sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), in a way that maintains the benefits of air travel and maximises the opportunities that decarbonisation can bring for the UK.

The Department has made no specific assessment of carbon reductions from SAF deployment by flight type or journey length. However, relevant to the future uptake of SAF, the Jet Zero consultation provided several illustrative scenarios. Our “high ambition” and “high ambition with a breakthrough in SAF” scenarios estimate that by 2050 carbon emission reductions from SAF could be between 8 and 20 megatonnes per year. That is the equivalent of between 14 and 36 per cent of carbon reductions in aviation overall.

Future carbon reductions are dependent upon the ability of SAF suppliers to scale up production. We understand the challenges in securing investment in SAF, including the comparative production costs of SAF and fossil equivalents. This is why we are making available £180 million of new funding for the development of SAF plants, building on the progress made through previous advanced fuels competitions. It is also why the Government has consulted on a new stand-alone mandate for SAF, similar to the Renewables Obligation.

Our Net Zero Strategy published in October confirmed our ambition to see 10% SAF blended into the UK fuel mix by 2030. We are currently reviewing responses to the SAF mandate consultation, which closed in September, and will bring forward updated proposals next year. Core to this work is ensuring that the policy framework cost-effectively delivers rapid SAF commercialisation and carbon reductions.

### ■ **Bus Services: Finance**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[R] [\[70265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what funding is available to deliver (a) the bus service improvement plan in England and (b) the bus service improvement plan in the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority area.

**Trudy Harrison:**

At the Budget, we announced £1.2 billion of new dedicated funding for bus transformation deals, which will support the delivery of Bus Service Improvement Plans in England. Further details on how this money will be allocated will be announced in due course.

### ■ **Driving Instruction: Recruitment**

**Layla Moran:**

[\[71440\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 28 September 2021 to Question 51863, what recent progress has been made on the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's plan to recruit 300 new driving examiners; and how many and what proportion of the examiners recruited as at July 2021 were actively conducting practical driving tests on a full-time basis as at 8 November 2021.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has an ongoing campaign to increase the number of examiners by recruiting around 300 driving examiners between 1 April 2021 and June 2022. As at 8 November 2021, 190 examiners have been recruited.

42 of these examiners that were recruited during this period were actively conducting practical driving tests on a full-time basis as at 8 November 2021. A total of 62 have completed training into driving test centres.

As a result of all previous recruitment campaigns, there are 75 people either attending, or booked to attend, their training between now and January 2022. There



are 53 candidates who are at various stages of the pre-employment checks awaiting confirmation of start date.

A new exercise will launch w/c 15 November 2021 to recruit to maintain a continued pipeline of new entrants into training courses January / February 2022 onwards.

To support the recruitment campaign, the Agency is also exploring options to temporarily contract in experienced driving assessors from other road safety organisations to become driving examiners.

The DVSA has put a number of measures in place to increase practical driving tests and reduce waiting times. These include offering a national recovery allowance and annual leave buy back to examiners, asking all those qualified to conduct tests, but who do not do so as part of their current day job, to return to conducting tests, and conducting out of hours testing (such as on public holidays and weekends).

## ■ Driving Licences

**Steve McCabe:**

**[70224]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if his Department will update guidance issued by the DVLA on holding expired licences awaiting renewal.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services are the quickest and easiest way to renew a driving licence. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their driving licence within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application for a driving licence. The latest information on DVLA services and the turnaround times for paper driving licence applications can be found [here](#).

Holders of driving licences that expired between 1 February and 31 December 2020 were given an 11-month extension from the date of expiry. Drivers do not need to renew their photocard or entitlement to drive until 11 months after the original expiry date.

Most drivers applying to renew their licence can continue driving while their application is being processed. Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 allows drivers who have sent a valid application to the DVLA to continue driving while waiting for their application to be processed. Strict criteria apply and these are outlined online [here](#).

**Patricia Gibson:**

**[70281]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent steps he has taken to help tackle the backlog of applications awaiting a decision at the DVLA; and what recent progress the DVLA has made in reducing those backlogs.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)'s online services are the quickest and easiest way to make an application. There are no delays in successful online applications and customers should receive their documents within a few days.

However, many people still choose or have to make a paper application. The latest information on turnaround times for paper applications can be found [here](#).

The DVLA has introduced additional online services, 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.

Work is ongoing to reduce the backlog of paper applications. There has been a particular focus on vocational driving licence applications to support the HGV driver shortage. This has been successful with vocational applications now back to normal turnaround times.

The DVLA understands the impact that delays can have on people's everyday lives and continues to work as quickly as possible to process paper applications and return people's documentation to them.

### ■ **Electric Vehicles: Charging Points**

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[71282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how the £620 million of funding for charging infrastructure and plug-in grants announced at the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 will be allocated; and if he will publish the methodology used to determine what proportion of that funding will be allocated to light commercial vehicles.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Building on the £1.9 billion from Spending Review 2020, the Government has committed an additional £620 million to support the transition to electric vehicles. The additional funding will support the rollout of charging infrastructure, with a particular focus on local on street residential charging, and targeted plug-in vehicle grants. The total funding committed by this Government to vehicle grants and infrastructure is £2.5 billion. Further detail about the allocation of the funding will be made available in due course.

### ■ **Electric Vehicles: Vans**

**Kerry McCarthy:** [\[71283\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to support (a) the adoption of electric vans by small and mid-size enterprises and (b) van fleets facing additional costs to install charging infrastructure.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Government grants for plug in vehicles continue to be available to help reduce the up-front purchase price of electric vans. Demand for zero emission vans increased substantially in 2020, with increased interest from commercial fleets. Since the plug in grant scheme was introduced in 2012, it has supported over 15,000 electric vans and HGVs across the UK. There are more than 20 models eligible for the grant. Policies and grant rates are kept under review and we will monitor the market closely, to ensure the grant remains an effective incentive and good value for money for the

taxpayer. Zero emission vans are exempt from vehicle excise duty, and from 6 April 2021 zero emission company vans were exempt from the van benefit charge.

There are also grants available to support the installation of chargepoints at homes, workplaces and on residential streets. The £950m Rapid Charging Fund will deliver substantial, future-proofed connections to the electricity grid at motorway and major A road services, to enable the delivery of ultra rapid chargepoints up and down the country. Building on the £1.9 billion from Spending Review 2020, the Government has recently committed an additional £620 million to support the transition to electric vehicles. The additional funding will support the rollout of charging infrastructure, with a particular focus on local on street residential charging, and targeted plug-in vehicle grants. Ofgem has also consulted on proposals that would reduce costs for installing new EV chargepoints where reinforcement of the existing network is required.

## ■ Heathrow Airport: Transport

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[71338\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority and Heathrow Airport Ltd on mechanisms for funding transport improvement projects to and from Heathrow.

**Robert Courts:**

My Department maintains regular dialogue with both Heathrow Airport Ltd and the Civil Aviation Authority on a range of issues, including mechanisms for funding transport improvement projects to and from Heathrow.

The Civil Aviation Authority sets the policy for cost recovery by Heathrow Airport Ltd on surface access costs and where appropriate will consult on the application of this policy to projects proposed by Heathrow Airport Limited.

## ■ Motor Vehicles: Ownership

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[71284\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders on incentivising consumer behaviour change for increasing the use of car clubs, rentals and other shared vehicles.

**Trudy Harrison:**

My officials have engaged with various stakeholders to discuss measures to support shared mobility. Discussions focussed on how the Government can begin implementing commitments in the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, such as support for zero emission car clubs and improving vehicle occupancy rates. We are in conversation with organisations such as CoMoUK, Liftshare, and the Energy Savings Trust. This includes developing a toolkit for local authorities to introduce shared mobility and support the decarbonisation of transport.

## ■ Motorways

**Sarah Owen:**

**[70323]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps he is taking to ensure that drivers understand the guidance on driving on a smart motorway.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Smart Motorway Safety Evidence Stocktake and Action Plan, published in March 2020 committed to an additional £5 million on national and targeted communications campaigns to further increase awareness and understanding of smart motorways.

In March 2021, National Highways launched a £5 million major national public information campaign, 'Go left', to give drivers clear information about what to do in a breakdown. Wave 2 of this campaign was launched in October 2021 with the intention to deliver a further wave in due course.

We also committed to updating the Highway Code to provide more guidance for motorists on smart motorway driving. Improvements to The Highway Code to improve safety on motorways and other high-speed roads came into effect on Tuesday 14 September 2021, with the publication of a revised edition on the Government website: [www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code).

The DVSA sent direct emails to the driver, rider, and vocational training sectors, trainer bookers, professional drivers, vehicle operators, Highway Code email alert subscribers and learner drivers and riders, with nearly half a million people notified of the changes.

National Highways has an ongoing programme to communicate safety guidance to drivers across the strategic road network including the following:

- A communications campaign in Autumn 2021 to highlight the e-call feature, that automatically contacts the emergency services in the event of a collision, that is built into new cars;
- Raising awareness of using the emergency phones in emergency areas with timings to be confirmed, and about Red X compliance, currently planned to take place in November/December 2021;
- Referencing and linking to the new Highway Code in future waves of National Highways' breakdown campaign;
- Communications around the next print edition of the Highway Code in spring 2022; and
- A campaign about the dangers of close following took place in September 2021 and with a further wave to run in due course.

My Rt Hon Friend the Transport Secretary is absolutely committed to making smart motorways as safe as possible and we will always look at what more we can do.

**■ Railways: Fares**

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[70318\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the effect on (a) passenger numbers and (b) income to the public purse that would result from (i) increasing rail fares by RPI+1, (ii) increasing rail fares by RPI, (iii) freezing rail fares, and (iv) reducing rail fares by 5 per cent.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Prior to any fares changes, Ministers consider analysis of a variety of options. Any changes on forthcoming national rail fares changes for 2022 will be announced in due course.

**Daisy Cooper:** [\[70319\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, if he will publish the modelling undertaken by his Department in respect of the yield analysis of different rail fare scenarios.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

Details of any changes in national rail fares for 2022 will be announced in due course.

**■ Railways: North East**

**Peter Gibson:** [\[71468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with train operators on (a) extending or (b) replicating the Network Railcard in the North East.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

We are working with the rail industry to develop a number of recovery initiatives, focused on restoring passenger confidence in travelling by rail.

**■ Roads: Kirklees**

**Kim Leadbeater:** [\[70331\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how much funding he has allocated to Kirklees Council for the resurfacing of local roads.

**Trudy Harrison:**

The Department for Transport is providing over £36 million to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority for local road maintenance during 2021/22. It is entirely for the Combined Authority to decide how much of this to allocate to Kirklees Council.

**■ Roads: Snow and Ice**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[70247\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 21 October 2021 to Question 58329 on Roads: Snow and Ice, if he will publish the full results of his Department's salt survey of English local highway authorities.

**Trudy Harrison:**

As Government has no powers to intervene on local highway authority winter service planning and their treatment of roads. The salt survey primarily seeks to understand local authorities' preparedness with regards to David Quarmby's recommendations of local authorities having sufficient quantities of salt to carry out gritting operations four times a day for twelve days on their respective Key Route Networks.

Where relevant, the Department will share the conclusions of the survey with the sector to help support their preparations.

**■ Transport: Carbon Emissions****Kerry McCarthy:**[\[71285\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 and the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, what steps he has taken to support car clubs to reach zero emissions.

**Trudy Harrison:**

Car clubs reduce dependency on private ownership, and in the context of the 2030 phase out, provide a great way for electric vehicles to be used in communities all across the UK.

Within our Transport Decarbonisation Plan, we committed to support car clubs to go fully zero emission. We will produce guidance for local authorities on shared car ownership and shared occupancy schemes and services, including car clubs.

**TREASURY****■ Banks: Closures****Steve McCabe:**[\[71267\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the effect on local communities of closures of local branch banks.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises the continued importance of access to banking. However, decisions on opening and closing branches are a commercial issue for banks and building societies.

In May 2017, the largest banks and building societies signed up to the Access to Banking Standard which commits them to ensure customers are well informed about branch closures, the bank's reasons for closure and options for continued access to banking services.

Guidance from the Financial Conduct Authority also sets 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 planned branch closures on their customers' everyday banking and cash access needs and consider

possible alternative access arrangements. This ensures the implementation of closure decisions is undertaken in a way that treats customers fairly.

Alternative options for access can be via telephone banking, through digital means such as mobile or online banking and the Post Office. The Post Office Banking Framework allows 95% of business and 99% of personal banking customers to deposit cheques, check their balance and withdraw and deposit cash at 11,500 Post Office branches in the UK.

Furthermore, LINK (the scheme that runs the UK's largest ATM network) has commitments to protect the broad geographic spread of free-to-use ATMs and is held to account against these commitments by the Payment Systems Regulator. The financial services industry is also working with retailers to introduce cashback without a purchase to thousands of local shops following changes to the law by the Government through the Financial Services Act 2021.

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. The Government's Access to Cash Consultation closed on 23 September 2021. This set out 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.

#### ■ **Debts: Advisory Services**

**Hilary Benn:** [\[70226\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he made of demand for face to face debt advice when recommissioning the debt advice service of the Money and Pensions Service.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[70227\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the number of face to face debt advice appointments that will be available to people in England after the proposed recommissioning of the Money and Pension Service debt advice service compared to the number of those appointments currently available.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[70228\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the number of face to face debt advisers who will be available for appointments with clients after the proposed recommissioning of the Money and Pension Service debt advice service in 2022, compared to the current number of advisers.

**Hilary Benn:** [\[70229\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will place in the Library any impact assessment undertaken on the recommissioning of the Money and Pension Service debt advice service.

**John Glen:**

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) assesses debt advice demand and makes decisions about advice provision. MaPS's statutory responsibilities include the need to consider the most vulnerable in its decision-making.

The Government cannot comment in detail on an ongoing commercial tendering process. However, the MaPS-led recommissioning exercise is expected to materially increase the amount of debt advice available to people in England, and ensure services – including face-to-face provision – are built around customers' needs. The exercise is an important step towards a more resilient debt advice sector and will drive better quality of advice and customer outcomes over the longer term.

**Caroline Lucas:**[\[72394\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the proposed (a) increase in digital and (b) reduction in community face-to-face debt advice provision under the Money and Pension Services proposed recommissioning model on the adequacy of the levels of face-to-face provision of debt advice for people who (i) are digitally excluded and (ii) have difficulty accessing advice over the telephone as a result of (A) complex mental health issues, (B) disability and (C) language barriers; and if he will make a statement.

**Caroline Lucas:**[\[72395\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he has had discussions with relevant stakeholders on the potential effect of the timeframe for the recommissioning process for debt advice services on the ability of smaller debt advice organisations and charities to (a) lead bids for one of the three proposed regional debt advice services and (b) become a delivery partner in joint bids; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) assesses debt advice demand and makes decisions about advice provision. MaPS's statutory responsibilities include the need to consider the most vulnerable in its decision-making.

Information on the bids received as part of MaPS' procurement process is commercially sensitive while that process is still ongoing, with it being set to conclude early in 2022. However, the procurement exercise is expected to materially increase the amount of debt advice available to people in England, and ensure services – including face-to-face provision – are built around customers' needs. The exercise is an important step towards a more resilient debt advice sector and will drive better quality of advice and customer outcomes over the longer term.

**Equitable Life Assurance Society****Kim Johnson:**[\[71497\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the upcoming expiration of his Department's contract with Capita for the administration of the Equitable Life Payments Scheme, if he will confirm that future awardees of the contract will be subject to the same



contractual requirement to hold, in a searchable format, the personal, bank account and payment data for all those non-WPA (With Profits Annuitants) Equitable Life policyholders who have already received a payment from that scheme.

**John Glen:**

I refer the Honourable Member to the answer I gave to PQ UIN67299 on 9<sup>th</sup> November.

■ **Foreign Exchange: Fees and Charges**

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[71263\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 28 October 2021 to Question 62566, what plans he has to require banks to show the difference between the mid-market (interbank) exchange rate and the rate they use when offering foreign exchange products to customers; and if he will make a statement.

**John Glen:**

The Government recognises the importance of transparency of fees and charges in protecting consumers and ensuring effective competition between payment service providers (PSPs) such as banks. To this end, the UK has regulatory requirements in place to ensure that currency conversation rates are clearly communicated to customers before a transaction takes place.

The Government has no plans at this time to amend these requirements, but keeps all policy under review.

■ **Hospitality Industry: VAT**

**Ian Murray:**

[\[71315\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the (a) effectiveness of the reduction in VAT for the hospitality sector and (b) potential merits of extending that reduction.

**Lucy Frazer:**

The temporary reduced rate of VAT was introduced on 15 July 2020 to support the cash flow and viability of around 150,000 businesses and protect over 2.4 million jobs in the hospitality and tourism sectors. As announced at Spring Budget 2021, the Government extended the 5% temporary reduced rate of VAT for the tourism and hospitality sectors until the end of September. On 1 October 2021, a new reduced rate of 12.5% was introduced for these goods and services to help ease affected businesses back to the standard rate. This new rate will end on 31 March 2022.

All taxes are kept under review, but there are no plans to extend the 12.5% reduced rate of VAT. This relief has previously been costed at over £7 billion, but the latest forecast means it may now cost over £8 billion. The Government has been clear that this relief is a temporary measure designed to support sectors that have been severely affected by COVID-19. It is appropriate that as restrictions are lifted and demand for goods and services in these sectors increases, the temporary tax reliefs

are first reduced and then removed in order to rebuild and strengthen the public finances.

## ■ International Monetary System

**Harriett Baldwin:**

[\[72407\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to draw down the Special Drawing Rights issued recently to the UK by the International Monetary Fund.

**John Glen:**

Under the UK's Presidency, G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors supported a general allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) equivalent to \$650bn that was approved by the IMF Board of Governors in August. The UK was a strong proponent of this allocation. G7 leaders also agreed in June to a global ambition of \$100bn of SDR to support vulnerable countries most in need.

At the IMF's Annual Meetings in October, the Chancellor committed to channelling up to SDR 4bn of the UK's new allocation, starting with an additional loan of SDR 1bn to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust which provides zero interest loans to low-income countries.

The UK is also supportive of the IMF's proposed Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) which would redirect SDR towards supporting vulnerable countries in addressing climate change and other long-term structural challenges.

## ■ Mortgages: Private Rented Housing

**Sir George Howarth:**

[\[71272\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of outstanding mortgages relating to buy-to-let properties in the UK.

**John Glen:**

According to the latest data held by UK Finance, as of August 2021, the value of the buy-to-let mortgage stock in the UK was £281.1 billion.

**Sir George Howarth:**

[\[71273\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of private landlords who have used a buy-to-let mortgage since the first buy-to-let mortgage was issued in 1996.

**John Glen:**

According to data from UK Finance, 4.1 million buy-to-let mortgages have been advanced since 2000. However, it is not possible to determine if any given buy-to-let mortgage has been given to a landlord who has taken out other buy-to-let mortgages, so it is not possible to provide a number of landlords for this period. This figure includes both total purchases and remortgages. Figures prior to this date are not available on a comparable basis.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[70296\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2021 to Question 66248, on Overseas Aid, whether the UK's Special Drawing Rights contribution to the International Monetary Fund Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust counted as Official Development Aid (ODA); and whether that funding will be in addition to the 0.5 per cent ODA budget.

**John Glen:**

I refer the Hon. Member to the answer given on 4 November to Question 67246 to the Hon. Member for Oxford West and Abingdon (Ms. Moran).

**Preet Kaur Gill:**

[\[70297\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 3 November 2021 to Question 66248 on Overseas Aid, what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the allocation and disbursement of the UK's Special Drawing Rights; and on whether the funding is in addition the £1 billion to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust.

**John Glen:**

Under the UK's G7 Presidency, the Government led G7 and other partners to commit to channelling Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to support vulnerable countries, with G7 leaders agreeing in June to a global ambition of \$100bn to countries most in need.

At the IMF's Annual Meetings, the Chancellor committed to channelling up to 4bn in SDR, starting with an additional loan of SDR 1bn to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust which provides zero interest loans to low-income countries.

The UK is also supportive of the IMF's proposed Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) which would redirect SDR towards supporting vulnerable countries in addressing long-term challenges such as climate change. The RST received G20 and International Monetary and Financial Committee support at the IMF Annual Meetings in October.

## ■ Retail Trade: Non-domestic Rates

**Stuart Anderson:**

[\[70312\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the impact of business rates on new shops setting up in high streets and city centres.

**Lucy Frazer:**

Business rates is a tax that applies to all non-domestic properties in England.

Throughout the pandemic the Government has provided unprecedented business rates support to eligible businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in England worth £16 billion in 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The business rates review confirmed a new temporary relief worth almost £1.7 billion for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in 2022-23 which, together with

SBRR, will result in over 90% of retail, hospitality and leisure businesses receiving at least a 50% reduction in their business rates bills.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ ASW: Pensions

**Stephen Doughty:** [\[72461\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the real-terms change in the value of pension payments that were not index linked for Allied Steel and Wire pensioners under the FAS in each of the last five years as a result of inflation.

**Guy Opperman:**

No such assessment has been made by the Secretary of State.

### ■ Department for Work and Pensions: Remote Working

**Gavin Newlands:** [\[68328\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of staff in her Department are currently working from home on a full-time or part-time basis whose residence is in (a) England, (b) Scotland and (c) Wales.

**Guy Opperman:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2021]:* The information requested is only available at a Great Britain level.

The proportion of DWP staff who are contractual home workers is 0.03%.

35.55% of staff work in customer facing front line roles which predominantly require staff to work in the office.

The remaining 64.42% of roles in the department can be performed on a hybrid basis, meaning they split their time between working in a workplace and at home. Employees in these roles have been returning to the office in a safe and considered way over the last few months. As part of this, every staff member is having a one-to-one conversation with their manager to discuss their return to the workplace.

DWP maintained its services throughout the pandemic; Jobcentres have remained open throughout the pandemic for anyone who needed face-to-face support and could not be helped in any other way, with DWP employees available on site to support the most vulnerable claimants. On 12 April 2021, Jobcentres in England and Wales returned to normal opening hours from 9am to 5pm, with Jobcentres in Scotland restarting the same face to face service from 26 April 2021.

Across all DWP offices, safety measures remain in place as per the relevant Government and devolved administration health and safety guidance, and whilst these measures are in place it is not possible to return to full office capacity.

**■ Department for Work and Pensions: Telephone Services****Drew Hendry:** [\[71373\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that people whose voices cannot be understood by her Department's automated helpline systems are redirected to a human operator.

**Guy Opperman:**

All except two of the Freephone lines that DWP provides operate with a menu of options for customers to select the most appropriate one before the call is then routed to an agent. The two lines which operate differently; Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL) and the Jobcentre Enquiry Line (JEL) use a function called Natural Language Call Steering which will revert to a menu of options if the customer is not understood or chooses not to speak

**■ Employment and Support Allowance: Telephone Services****Drew Hendry:** [\[71372\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the average telephony waiting time for people seeking support with their employment support allowance via her Department's helplines as of 8 November 2021; and what assessment she has made of the acceptability of those waiting times.

**Guy Opperman:**

We actively manage our Percentage of Calls Answered (PCA) to achieve the optimal service to our customers by balancing our resources to meet the needs of our customers. To achieve this, we consider a variety of factors of which average speed of answer is one. These figures are calculated using historic data available to us and balancing this alongside current demand.

For The period 1 October 2021 – 31 October 2021 the average speed of answer for Employment and Support Allowance was 21 minutes and 08 seconds. Call volumes received during the month of October were 8.6% higher than our forecast figures. This will have contributed to the slight increase in the average speed of answer for the month.

To actively achieve the optimal PCA of 80% the accepted average speed of answer for Employment and Support Allowance enquiries is 18 minutes 48 seconds.

**■ Housing Benefit****Sir George Howarth:** [\[71276\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average housing benefit is for (a) social and (b) private landlord properties, by region in England.

**David Rutley:**

For the information requested on the average housing benefit amounts for social and private rented properties, by region, in England, this is published and available at: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

## ■ Housing Benefit: Service Charges

**Lucy Powell:** **[71342]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how much and what proportion of housing benefit payments are spent on service charges.

**David Rutley:**

The information requested is not available.

## ■ Kickstart Programme

**Caroline Ansell:** **[71418]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many kickstart scheme placements have been (a) approved, (b) advertised and (c) started by young people by (i) nation (ii) region and (iii) sector, and if she will make a statement.

**Mims Davies:**

As of the 9<sup>th</sup> November, over 306,000 jobs have been approved for funding and over 100,000 young people have started a Kickstart job. Over 217,000 jobs have been advertised and made available for young people to apply to through the scheme

Below are tables listing the number of Kickstart jobs which have been made available and started by young people to date by geographical area of Great Britain and work sector. The figures used are correct as of the 9<sup>th</sup> November and these figures have been rounded according to departmental standards.

Jobs made available and starts quoted here include some unfunded Kickstart jobs. Over time, some previously approved jobs have been removed where the employer chose not to follow up the application. Included in the Great Britain total are a small number of jobs made available (less than 100 in total) that have an unrecorded job location. Data on approved jobs is taken from a snapshot of the Kickstart system at a point in time. This figure can be affected by retrospective changes resulting from applications being rescinded.

The number of approved jobs is defined as the number of jobs associated with approved applications recorded on the Kickstart application system on the date above. This total excludes approved jobs that have been withdrawn from the Kickstart Scheme by agreement with employers and gateways.

Although care is taken when processing and analysing Kickstart applications, referrals and starts, the data collected might be subject to the inaccuracies inherent in any large-scale recording system, which has been developed quickly.

The management information presented here has not been subjected to the usual standard of quality assurance associated with official statistics, but is provided in the interests of transparency. Work is ongoing to improve the quality of information available for the programme.

**Table 1- Kickstart jobs made available and started by location.**

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>JOBS MADE AVAILABLE</b>	<b>CUMULATIVE JOBS STARTED</b>
East Midlands	13,230	6,180
East of England	17,210	7,090
London	47,750	21,550
North East	8,940	4,770
North West	27,110	12,760
Scotland	16,110	8,640
South East	24,380	10,900
South West	15,030	6,370
Wales	11,100	4,850
West Midlands	19,420	9,330
Yorkshire and The Humber	17,270	8,040
Other	80	20

\*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals.

**Table 2- Kickstart jobs made available and started by sector.**

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>JOBS MADE AVAILABLE</b>	<b>CUMULATIVE JOBS STARTED</b>
Administration	53,550	25,060
Animal Care	1,250	790
Beauty & Wellbeing	1,600	800
Business & Finance	7,930	3,700
Computing Technology & Digital	15,130	8,230
Construction & Trades	6,460	3,100
Creative & Media	17,780	10,000
Delivery & Storage	6,150	2,840

SECTOR	JOBS MADE AVAILABLE	CUMULATIVE JOBS STARTED
Emergency & Uniform Services	520	220
Engineering & Maintenance	6,660	3,070
Environment & Land	4,020	1,980
Government Services	790	300
Healthcare	6,680	2,110
Home Services	1,560	530
Hospitality & Food	25,390	8,380
Law & Legal	490	320
Managerial	1,050	460
Manufacturing	5,890	2,670
Retail & Sales	32,390	16,740
Science & Research	850	500
Social Care	4,610	1,630
Sports & Leisure	5,180	2,460
Teaching & Education	10,280	4,010
Transport	750	210
Travel & Tourism	700	290

\*These numbers are rounded and so may not match provided totals.

## ■ Kickstart Scheme

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[72348\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to enable people aged 16 to 24 who are (a) not universal credit claimants and (b) at risk of unemployment to undertake work placements as part of the Kickstart scheme.

**Mims Davies:**

The Kickstart Scheme offers six-month jobs for young people aged 16 to 24 years' old who are currently claiming Universal Credit (UC) and are at risk of long-term



unemployment. There are no current plans to extend the eligibility criteria of the Kickstart Scheme.

For those not eligible to claim UC, they can still receive help from our DWP Youth Hubs who work with a range of local providers to help them address and overcome any barriers and support them in moving forward into employment.

### ■ **Personal Independence Payment: Medical Examinations**

**Dr Lisa Cameron:**

[\[69114\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of personal independent payment assessment criteria for renal patients in the UK; and if she will make a statement.

**Chloe Smith:**

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is based on the daily living and mobility needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability, rather than being based on the condition or disability itself. People with renal conditions are able to access support with additional costs through PIP in the same way as other people with long-term health conditions or disabilities.

### ■ **Social Security Benefits**

**Rebecca Long Bailey:**

[\[72482\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when benefit and pension claimants Post Office Card Accounts will be closed as part of the changes in benefit and state pension claim mechanisms.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Post Office card account contract ends in November 2022. The Department is contacting Post Office card account customers asking them to update their payment method to a transactional bank, building society, credit union or internet based account. The number of Post Office card account customers has reduced from 2.2m in January 2016 to less than 300k in October 2021. Post Office card account customers who do not update their payment method to a transactional account are being migrated on a month by month basis to the new Payment Exception Service.

### ■ **Social Security Benefits: Disability**

**Marion Fellows:**

[\[70282\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to publish the results of the public consultation in response to the Health and Disability Green Paper.

**Chloe Smith:**

Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper explores how the benefits system can better meet the needs of claimants now and in the future by

improving claimant experience of our services, enabling independent living and improving employment outcomes.

We had over four and a half thousand responses to our consultation and, following this, a White Paper will be brought forward next year, setting out our next steps.

## ■ State Retirement Pensions

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[70242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the potential merits of (a) increasing financial support for people in receipt of the State Pension and (b) bringing Government expenditure on the State Pension in line with that in other countries, such as France and Germany.

**Guy Opperman:**

The State Pension is the foundation of support for older people. Under this Government, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is now over £2,050 higher than in 2010.

The Secretary of State is required by law to conduct a review of applicable benefit and pension rates each year. The review is on-going and decisions will be announced shortly.

International comparisons are misleading due to differences in the pension systems as there are many factors to take into account.

**Paul Bristow:**

[\[71493\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the (a) administrative cost and (b) effectiveness of the 25 pence addition to the state pension for pensioners aged 80 and above.

**Guy Opperman:**

Age addition payments are made automatically as part of the person's ongoing State Pension entitlement. The administration costs are therefore negligible.

The age addition should be considered alongside the range of other measures and benefits that are available to pensioners over age 80. These include Pension Credit which can top up a pensioner's income to a minimum of £177.10 a week for single pensioners and £270.30 for couples and provide access to a range of other benefits such as help with rent, council tax, energy bills and, for those aged 75 or over, a free television license. Moreover, households with a person aged 80 or over receive a Winter Fuel Payment of £300, instead of the standard Winter Fuel Payment of £200 for households with a pensioner below that age.

The age addition is only payable to those who reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016 – it is not paid to those receiving the new State Pension.

**Yasmin Qureshi:**

[\[72387\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the State Pension in tackling pensioner poverty; and if she will make a statement.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Government is committed to alleviating levels of pensioner poverty.

In the latest statistics there were 200,000 fewer pensioners in absolute poverty, after housing costs, compared to 2009/10.

The State Pension is the foundation of support for older people, providing the basis on which people can build additional private savings for their retirement. Under this Government, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is now over £2,050 higher than in 2010.

In addition, Pension Credit provides invaluable financial support for the most vulnerable pensioners and is a passport to a range of other benefits.

#### ■ **State Retirement Pensions: Females**

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[70241\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Prime Minister's answer to the Oral Question asked by the hon. Member for Linlithgow and East Falkirk on 3 November, Official Report, col 912, what options the Government is assessing to ensure that 1950s-born women receive fair pensions.

**Guy Opperman:**

Under this Government, the full yearly amount of the basic State Pension is now over £2,050 higher than in 2010. For future pensioners, auto-enrolment into workplace pensions has transformed pension saving for millions of workers and our 50 plus: choices agenda aims to maximise the labour market opportunities for people to earn and save for longer.

Auto-Enrolment has been especially transformative for women, low earners and young people, who have historically been poorly served by or excluded from workplace pensions. Between 2012 and 2020 participation for private sector eligible women increased from 40% to 86% (equal to men) and double what it was in 2012.

The Reforms to the State Pension in 2016 put measures in place to improve State Pension outcomes for most women. Over three million women stand to receive an average of £550 more per year by 2030 as a result.

Pension Credit also provides invaluable financial support for the most vulnerable pensioners. We are undertaking a range of actions to raise awareness and increase take up.

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[70304\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with the Welsh Government on Women's State Pension Age.

**Guy Opperman:**

There have been no recent discussions with the Welsh Government about Women's State Pension Age.

**Ruth Jones:**[\[70311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what further steps she will take to address the concerns of the WASPI women.

**Guy Opperman:**

Changes to State Pension age were made over a series of Acts by successive governments from 1995 onwards, following public consultations and extensive debates in both Houses of Parliament. The decision to equalise the State Pension age dates back to 1995, and addresses a longstanding inequality between men and women.

The Government's position on the changes to State Pension age remains clear and consistent under successive governments. Any amendment to the current legislation which creates a new inequality between men and women would unquestionably be highly dubious as a matter of law.

Parliament set out successive Pensions Acts transitional arrangements when it introduced the changes to State Pension age. There are no plans for further transitional provisions.

State pension has risen by 2,050 in real terms since 2010 and with pensioner benefits of £129 billion, the state pension and supporting benefits have never been higher.

**■ State Retirement Pensions: Payments****Amy Callaghan:**[\[69702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what progress her Department is making on clearing the backlog of state pension payments; and what her Department's timeframe is for making those payments.

**Guy Opperman:**

As of 4 November, there were 3,220 claims where we await further information from the customer before we can finalise their claim.

**■ Steve Moir****Daniel Zeichner:**[\[70275\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the Health and Safety Executive investigation into the death of Steve Moir on the Guided Busway in Cambridgeshire will conclude.

**Chloe Smith:**

I have made enquiries with the Health and Safety Executive, who have confirmed that the investigation into the death of Mr Moir is ongoing. I was informed that a detailed

and thorough investigation is being carried out and it is anticipated the remaining lines of enquiry will continue into 2022.

## ■ **Winter Fuel Payments**

**Alex Norris:**

**[72577]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the part-payment of winter fuel payment being available to those who have narrowly missed the age cut-off.

**Guy Opperman:**

There are no plans to change the legislation relating to the qualifying week as this would add unnecessary cost and complexity.

We will continue to pay £200 to those households with someone of state pension age and under 80 and £300 to those households with someone aged 80 or over.

Other help with energy costs is available to those eligible through the warm home discount scheme and cold weather payments. Further details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

<https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment>

## ■ **Women against State Pension Inequality**

**Ruth Jones:**

**[70305]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when she last met representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality group.

**Guy Opperman:**

The Secretary of State has not met with representatives of the Women Against State Pension Inequality group.

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Publication of Acas Guidance

**Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully):** [\[HCWS390\]](#)

I welcomed the publication on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> November by the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) of their online guidance “Making changes to employment contracts – employer responsibilities.”

I strongly encourage all businesses to consider this new guidance on how employers should approach workplace problems that might conceivably require contractual changes. In the guidance, Acas states that an employer should only consider dismissing and offering to rehire someone on new terms as a last resort. Before doing so, an employer must have made all reasonable attempts to reach agreement through a full and thorough consultation.

The guidance is available at: <https://www.acas.org.uk/changing-an-employment-contract/employer-responsibilities>.

#### ■ Use of the Industrial Development Act 1982 for Coronavirus related assistance

**Government Whip, Lord Commissioner of HM Treasury and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Industry) (Lee Rowley):** [\[HCWS391\]](#)

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Hon. Members to bring to their attention spend under the Industrial Development Act 1982. In addition to the obligation to report on spend under the Industrial Development Act annually, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a new quarterly reporting requirement for spend which has been designated as coronavirus-related under the Coronavirus Act. This statement fulfils that purpose.

The statement also includes a report of the movement in contingent liability during the quarter. Hon. Members will wish to note that measures such as Local Authority grants, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, and tax measures such as the suspension of Business Rates are not provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 and hence are not included below.

This report covers the second quarter of 2021, from 1 April to 30 June 2021, in accordance with the Coronavirus Act.

The Written Ministerial Statement covering the first quarter of 2021 was published on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.

#### ***Spend under the Coronavirus Act 2020***

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay before Parliament details of the amount of assistance designated as Coronavirus related provided in each relevant

quarter. In the period from 1 April to 30 June 2021, the following expenditures were incurred:

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT FROM 1 APRIL TO 30 JUNE 2021	£573,322,073
--	--------------

Actual expenditure of assistance provided by Her Majesty's Government from 25 March 2020	£3,272,359,763
--	----------------

### ***Expenditure by Department***

ACTUAL EXPENDITURE OF ASSISTANCE FROM 1  
APRIL TO 30 JUNE 2021 PROVIDED BY:

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	£ 567,348,740
--	---------------

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs,	£ 5,973,333
--	-------------

### ***Contingent liability under the Coronavirus Act 2020***

CONTINGENT LIABILITY OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FROM 1 APRIL TO 31 JUNE 2021	£3,468,776,393
--	----------------

All contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020	£70,323,958,288
---	-----------------

## **DEFENCE**

### ■ **Afghan Relocations Assistance Policy Data Breach Investigation - Update**

**Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Ben Wallace):**

[\[HCWS389\]](#)

On 21 September, I committed to update the House on an investigation into MOD data breaches concerning the email addresses of Afghan nationals who are eligible for the Afghanistan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), but at that time remained in Afghanistan.

#### **Incident**

The first report of a data breach was received on the evening of 20 September and consisted of 245 live email addresses. On 22 September, following my statement to the House, the MOD was made aware of a previous breach of 55 addresses – ten of which

were in addition to the first breach – which had occurred on 13 September. Subsequent investigations identified that a third breach had occurred on 7 September involving an additional 13 email addresses not previously compromised.

Upon learning of the initial breach, I immediately ordered the undertaking of an investigation and any actions that would prevent further breaches. The investigation was conducted in two parts. The first addressed the circumstances of the breach, its causes and the immediate and longer-term actions required to prevent recurrences and mitigate any potential additional risks to those Afghan nationals affected. The second part of the investigation concerned the data handling and data protection arrangements that were in use by the ARAP team and made recommendations on how best to ensure an appropriate data handling regime was in place.

### **Investigation Findings**

The investigation has concluded that the breaches arose in almost identical circumstances. All three took place in the ARAP casework team, tasked with providing personal support and advice to the cohort of ARAP-eligible Afghan nationals and all involved a group email to elements of that cohort, which used the ‘carbon copy’ instead of ‘blind carbon copy’ field to anonymise the recipients.

The cause of these mistakes was not simply human error in isolation, but a lack of written standard operating procedures and training, which should have prevented such a mistake being made. That in turn was assessed to be the result of several contributing factors, all arising from the intense speed, scale and operational pressure of the casework, and the fact that the team had been built and then expanded quickly in order to support the rapid increase in activity necessary as a result of the evacuation. As a result, some members of the team were inexperienced and insufficiently trained for such casework management.

The ARAP team’s efforts to evacuate as many Afghans as possible in a short period of time, was followed by a rapid transition to communicating with those who were unable to relocate, in order to begin providing follow-on support. In the haste of this transition the risks arising from changing how officials communicated – which had previously been done on an individual basis, often by telephone rather than email – were not fully recognised or managed.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has undertaken further investigation of any possible increased threat to those affected. Whilst media reports have indicated some localised Taliban reprisals against Afghan nationals formerly employed by Coalition Forces, the MOD assesses that the Taliban are not conducting centrally directed and co-ordinated targeting of ARAP-eligible persons. The investigation found that no further personal or locational information was revealed in the data breaches that has substantively increased the ability of the Taliban to target ARAP eligible persons.

All ARAP-eligible individuals whose details were involved were notified within thirty minutes on discovery of the breach on 20 September and advised on actions to minimise the risk to them and have subsequently been contacted to provide additional security advice. The MOD is not aware that anyone has come to harm as a result of these



breaches, but continues to provide security support to ARAP-eligible families while they await relocation to the UK.

### **Remedial Actions**

Significant remedial actions have now been taken to prevent such incidents occurring again. These include:

- Establishing new data handling procedures for ARAP casework management
- Ensuring all staff appointed to the ARAP team are fully aware of those procedures and trained in their proper employment
- Creating a 'Registry' function, with authority over data handling procedures and a remit to continually improve those processes and assure that all staff are familiar and compliant with them
- Appointing additional ARAP team members with specific responsibilities for all record keeping and information management
- Instigating a 'two pairs of eyes rule' so that any external email to an ARAP-eligible Afghan national must be reviewed by a second member of the team before it is sent
- Ensuring that any group emails, such as routine updates, must be authorised at the OF-5 or B1 level (i.e. Colonel equivalent).

As a consequence of the breaches, two personnel were suspended from the ARAP team, pending the outcome of the investigation. The individuals' actions that contributed to the data breaches were not found to have been deliberate or negligent, but the result of insufficient training and data handling procedures. They have subsequently been reassigned to other roles, outside of the ARAP team.

The ARAP team has now received additional recommendations and support from Defence Digital (the directorate responsible for ensuring effective use of Digital and Information Technology (D&IT) across Defence) which are being applied to further improve the ARAP team's handling and protection of casework data. Finally, the MOD reported itself to the Information Commissioner and will cooperate fully with all investigations and findings.

The remedial actions outlined above are already providing much greater assurance of data handling within the ARAP team. I am confident that their continued application is sufficient to prevent any recurrence, but have directed that the team seeks to continually improve its processes.

### **ARAP Progress**

The data breaches detailed above were unacceptable and fell short of the high standards to which the MOD typically holds itself. They were also a breach of the trust many former Afghan staff have placed in us to honour our commitment and do all that we can to keep them safe. We continue that work and it is also important to reflect on the scale of the challenges and achievements of the ARAP team.

Since the scheme was launched in April over 89,000 applications have been made and many more continue to be received, each requiring detailed review and processing. As a result of these efforts more than 7,000 Afghan nationals (staff and their families) who worked in support of the Government's mission in Afghanistan have now been successfully relocated to start new lives in the security of United Kingdom.

There were a further 311 ARAP-eligible Afghans who were called forward with their families during the evacuation operation, but sadly unable to board flights. There are now fewer than 200 remaining in Afghanistan and we continue to work with urgency to relocate all those who remain via a range of routes. Those who have left Afghanistan for third countries are being provided with support in-country and assisted to continue their journey to the UK. As part of that process we have already conducted five RAF flights, carrying more than 400 people. The flights will continue as long as necessary and the ARAP scheme is not time-bounded so any further applicants who are found to be eligible will continue to be relocated indefinitely.

The scale of these achievements should not be underestimated and has been made possible by the professionalism and determination of the ARAP team and their colleagues across Defence who continue to honour our debt of gratitude to the Afghan nationals who supported our operations in the country. ARAP remains a foremost priority for the MOD and I continue to closely monitor the progress of the ARAP team to ensure its performance remains of the highest possible standard.

I would like to take the opportunity to assure the House that although the impact of these breaches appears to have been limited, all breaches of personal data are taken extremely seriously by MOD.

Finally, I offer again my sincerest apologies to all those affected by these data breaches and assure them that we continue to make every effort to relocate them to the UK as quickly and safely as possible.

## EDUCATION

### ■ Contingency arrangements for GCSEs and A/AS levels in 2022

**Secretary of State for Education (Nadhim Zahawi):**

[\[HCWS387\]](#)

The government's policy is that GCSE and A/AS level exams will go ahead in 2021/22, with adaptations to take account of the disruption to education that students have experienced. These include providing a choice of topics or content in some GCSE subjects, advance information on the focus of the content of exams to support students' revision, and support materials in some GCSE exams. These adaptations, along with our support for education recovery, public health measures and the approach to grading that Ofqual has announced, will help to ensure exams can proceed safely and fairly next summer.

However, there remains a small risk that further disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic will mean it is not possible for exams to go ahead safely or fairly. On 30 September the Department for Education and Ofqual therefore set out our intention to

use Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for GCSES, AS and A levels in 2022 in the unlikely event that it proves necessary to cancel exams, and published a joint consultation.

The consultation outlined proposals on how teachers should collect evidence over the rest of this academic year to support the awarding of TAGs, if necessary, including arrangements for private candidates. The consultation also sought views on improvements to the 2021 arrangements for quality assurance and appeals.

On 11 November, the department and Ofqual published the [decisions taken](#) following analysis of the responses to the consultation.

The proposals that were set out in the consultation received broad support and Ofqual have now published [guidance](#) for schools, colleges and other exam centres on collecting evidence that would be used to assess students' performance if exams were cancelled. The guidance takes a proportionate approach and is being published now so that teachers know how to collect evidence from their students in advance of any decision to cancel exams. Ofqual have confirmed that, where possible, centres should use their existing assessment plans.

Ofqual will only publish guidance on how to determine TAGs, and centres would only be required to develop policies for awarding TAGs, if exams are cancelled.

Ofqual have also confirmed that they will not take decisions at this point about the quality assurance arrangements that would be used for TAGs in 2022, or how student appeals would work. These are both dependent on the timing of any decision to cancel exams and the reason for that decision, including any public health restrictions in place at the time.

If it proves necessary to cancel exams in some parts of England, exams will be cancelled for all students and the TAGs approach will be implemented nationally.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### ■ Covid-19 update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Vaccines and Public Health) (Maggie Throup):** [\[HCWS392\]](#)

The UK's COVID-19 vaccine programme continues to protect the nation against the virus. As of 13 November, 50.5 million people have now received their first COVID-19 vaccine dose and 46 million have had their second dose. Over 12.6 million of the most vulnerable have also received a third dose/booster vaccine to keep them as safe as possible over the winter months.

The independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has published further advice on the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Her Majesty's Government (HMG) has accepted this advice and all four parts of the UK intend to follow the JCVI's advice.

**Children and Young People aged 16-17:**

The JCVI has provided further advice on the vaccination of those aged 16 and 17. 16-17 year olds included in Phase 1 of the adult vaccination programme, 16-17 year olds who are household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals, and those aged 17 and 9 months or over are already eligible for a second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The JCVI has now recommended a second dose of vaccine be offered to all remaining individuals between 16 and 17 years of age 12 weeks after their first dose. The preferred vaccine for all those aged under 18 remains Pfizer/BioNTech

**Expansion of the COVID-19 booster vaccination programme to all those aged 40-49 years:**

The JCVI has recommended expanding the COVID-19 booster vaccination programme by offering all adults aged 40 to 49 years a booster vaccination, six months after their second dose.

The booster vaccination should preferably be undertaken with either the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, or a half dose of Moderna vaccine.

This announcement follows the advice published on 14 September which recommended booster vaccinations be given to individuals who received vaccination in Phase 1 (cohorts 1-9).

With deployment of the extended booster vaccination offer imminent, I am now updating the House on the liabilities HMG has taken on in relation to further vaccine supply via this statement and the Departmental Minute containing a description of the liability undertaken. The agreement to provide indemnity with deployment of further booster doses to the population increases the statutory contingent liability of the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Given the proximity between receiving JCVI advice and deployment, we regret that it has not been possible to provide 14 sitting days' notice to consider these issues in advance of the planned extension to the booster programme in the UK.

Deployment of effective vaccines to eligible groups has been and remains a key part of the Government's strategy to manage COVID-19. Willingness to accept the need for appropriate indemnities to be given to vaccine suppliers has helped to secure access to vaccines, with the expected benefits to public health and the economy alike, much sooner than may have been the case otherwise

Given the exceptional circumstances we are in, and the terms on which developers have been willing to supply a COVID-19 vaccine, we along with other nations have taken a broad approach to indemnification proportionate to the situation we are in.

The COVID-19 vaccines have been developed at pace, however at no point has safety been bypassed. The MHRA approval for use of the currently deployed vaccines clearly demonstrates that these vaccines have satisfied, in full, all the necessary requirements for safety, effectiveness, and quality. We are providing indemnities in the very unexpected event of any adverse reactions that could not have been foreseen through the robust checks and procedures that have been put in place.

I will update the House in a similar manner as and when other COVID-19 vaccines or additional doses of vaccines already in use in the UK are deployed.

HM Treasury has approved the proposal.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ International Labour Organization Convention 190

**The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Dr Thérèse Coffey):**

[\[HCWS388\]](#)

I would like to inform the House that, today, the Government will lay the text of a Convention of the International Labour Organization, the Violence and Harassment Convention, in the form of a Command Paper in both Houses together with an Explanatory Memorandum stating the Government's proposal that the UK should ratify it. If no objections are raised in the next 21 sitting days, the Government will move to draw up the UK's Instrument of Ratification. The Convention will come into force 12 months after the Instrument of Ratification is deposited with the International Labour Organization.

This is the first international treaty to recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment. This Convention, along with its supplementing Recommendation (No. 206), sets out a common framework for action to prevent and address violence and harassment in the world of work. It is a broad instrument, affording comprehensive protections to a broad range of individuals, including those most vulnerable to violence and harassment at work, in relation to a wide range of work environments and activities.

The Government already has the legal framework in place to meet the requirements of the Convention, including civil and criminal law provisions, as well as occupational health and safety law.

Following our response to the sexual harassment in the workplace consultation, published earlier this year, the Government will also be introducing a new proactive duty requiring employers to take steps to prevent their employees from experiencing sexual harassment and introducing explicit protections for employees from harassment by third parties, for example customers or clients. These measures will not only strengthen protections for those affected by harassment at work but will also motivate employers to make improvements to workplace practices and culture.

The Government will not waver in our defence of the rights of women and girls to live free from violence and abuse. The UK will continue to protect and promote the safety and rights of women and girls overseas, and call for all Member States to remain committed to international Conventions, including by ratifying the International Labour Organization Violence and Harassment Convention as a means of promoting its aims globally.

It has taken time to get to this point. The UK played a leadership role in the two-year negotiations on the content of the Convention, building on our already strong position on

violence against women and girls. Following this we consulted the devolved administrations and our social partners, all of whom are in full support of ratification.

Ratifying this Convention is the right course of action and I hope it reassures the Houses of the Government's commitment to tackling violence and harassment in the world of work.