



Daily Report

Friday, 17 December 2021

This report shows written answers and statements provided on 17 December 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (04:16 P.M., 17 December 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	4	■ Children: Social Services	12
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	4	■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	12
■ Carbon Emissions: Environmental Audit	4	■ Foster Care	13
■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries	4	■ Offences against Children	14
■ Energy Company Obligation	6	■ Parents	15
■ Housing: Carbon Emissions and Energy	7	■ Physical Education: Expenditure	15
■ Nuclear Power	7	■ Pupils: Absenteeism	16
■ UK Emissions Trading Scheme	8	■ Schools: Absenteeism	17
CABINET OFFICE	8	■ Schools: Coronavirus	18
■ Business: Closures	8	■ Schools: Sports	19
■ Civil Service: Veterans	8	■ Social Workers: Children	19
■ Veterans: Females	9	■ Special Educational Needs	20
■ Veterans: Suicide	9	ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS	20
DEFENCE	10	■ Agriculture: Sewage	20
■ Air Force: Training	10	■ Game: Gun Sports	21
■ Military Aid: Ambulance Services	10	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	21
DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	11	■ British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus	21
■ Charities	11	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	22
EDUCATION	11	■ Antibiotics: Breast Cancer	22
■ Children: Disability	11	■ Brain: Tumours	22
		■ Cancer: Health Services	22
		■ Dementia: Research	23

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Carbon Emissions	23	■ Public Transport: Midlands	36
■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions	23	■ Railways: Birmingham and Nottingham	37
■ Diabetes: Screening	24	■ Railways: Midlands and North of England	37
■ Integrated Care Boards: Conflict of Interests	24	■ Travel Restrictions: Nigeria	37
■ Kidney Diseases: Dialysis Machines	25	TREASURY	38
■ Members: Correspondence	25	■ Business and Self-employed: Coronavirus	38
■ Menopause: Drugs	26	■ Children: Day Care	39
■ Motor Neurone Disease: Research	26	■ Coronavirus: Government Assistance	39
■ NHS: Coronavirus	27	■ Fossil Fuels: Taxation	40
■ NHS: Pay	28	■ Infrastructure: Climate Change and Nature Conservation	41
■ Oxygen: Medical Treatments	29	■ Treasury: Carbon Emissions	42
■ Strokes: Health Services	29	WALES	43
■ Surgical Mesh Implants: Compensation	30	■ Human Rights Act 1998: Wales	43
INTERNATIONAL TRADE	30	■ Wales Office: Official Hospitality	43
■ Coronavirus: Vaccination	30	WORK AND PENSIONS	43
■ UK Trade with EU: Exports	31	■ Access to Work Programme	43
JUSTICE	31	■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Health	44
■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT	31	■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification	44
■ Ministry of Justice: Theft	32	■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud	45
LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES	34	■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses	46
■ Buildings: Insulation	34	■ State Retirement Pensions	46
NORTHERN IRELAND	35	■ State Retirement Pensions: Newport West	46
■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland	35	■ Unemployment	47
TRANSPORT	35	■ Universal Credit: Habitual Residence Test	48
■ Aviation: Coronavirus	35		
■ Blue Badge Scheme	35		
■ Cycling	36		

Notes:

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

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

ANSWERS

BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

■ Carbon Emissions: Environmental Audit

Mr Barry Sheerman:

[\[90334\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to help ensure that carbon emissions produced by public and private entities are audited by local authorities.

Greg Hands:

Whilst the Government recognises that Local Authorities have an important role to play in delivering net zero, they are not responsible for auditing the emissions produced by public and private entities.

■ Clothing: Manufacturing Industries

Claudia Webbe:

[\[90517\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral evidence by the then Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility to the Environmental Audit Committee on 18 December 2018, HC 1148, whether he has plans to publish the outcomes of investigations into underpayment of the national minimum wage and/or national living wage in Leicester's garment industry.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[90518\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral evidence given by the then Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility to the Environmental Audit Committee on 18 December 2018, HC 1148, if he will publish the (a) scope and (b) nature of the investigations into underpayment of the national minimum wage and/or the national living wage in Leicester's garment industry.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[90519\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral evidence given by the then Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility to the Environmental Audit Committee on 18 December 2018, Session 2017-19, HC 1148, if he will publish any recommendations, conclusions and findings from the investigations into underpayment of the national minimum wage and/or the national living wage in Leicester's garment industry.

Claudia Webbe:

[\[90520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to implement recommendations arising from investigations into underpayment of the national minimum wage and the national living wage in Leicester's garment industry.

Claudia Webbe:

[90521]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral evidence of the Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility to the Environmental Audit Committee on 18 December 2018, HC 1148, published on 30 January 2019, which Government agencies were involved in the investigations into underpayment of the national minimum wage and the national living wage in Leicester's garment industry.

Claudia Webbe:

[90522]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, with reference to the oral evidence given by the then Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility to the Environmental Audit Committee on 18 December 2018, Session 2017-19, HC 1148, whether prosecutions were made after the investigations into underpayment of the national minimum wage and/or the national living wage in Leicester's garment industry.

Claudia Webbe:

[90523]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps his Department has taken to (a) improve working conditions and (b) ensure payment of at least the minimum wage in Leicester since the investigations into wage exploitation in Leicester's garment industry.

Paul Scully:

A multi-agency taskforce operated in Leicester for over a year to investigate allegations of widespread labour market non-compliance, including underpayment of National Minimum Wage. HMRC investigate the National Minimum Wage, but the taskforce also included the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority, Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, Health and Safety Executive, National Crime Agency, Leicestershire Police and Home Office Immigration Enforcement. The taskforce visited over 300 premises in the city to ensure compliance and also undertook a programme of community engagement in Leicester to encourage whistle-blowers to come forward. While the bodies involved remain vigilant, the activity undertaken so far has not uncovered evidence of widespread modern slavery.

HMRC have a number of open cases remaining and will continue to investigate based on intelligence and risk-modelling, sharing information as appropriate. Enforcement action will be considered according to the evidence. To date, HMRC have issued two Labour Market Enforcement Undertakings to employers in the Leicester garment industry. There have not been any criminal prosecutions. We cannot comment on ongoing investigations.

■ Energy Company Obligation

Chris Elmore:

[90481]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits for consumer protection of requiring installers of Energy Company Obligation 3 be approved and regulated by Ofgem.

Greg Hands:

The Government has implemented the key recommendations of the independent Each Home Counts Review of consumer advice, protection, standards and enforcement for energy efficiency and renewable energy. This has included the launch of TrustMark as the government endorsed quality mark and the introduction of improved design and installation standards for domestic retrofit (PAS2035:2019 and PAS2030:2019).

All insulation measures under ECO must be carried out by TrustMark registered businesses which adhere to its framework operating requirements, code of conduct and consumer charter.

The Each Home Counts Review did not recommend that Ofgem should regulate installers.

Chris Elmore:

[90482]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what comparative assessment he has made of the accessibility of information and advertisements on Energy Company Obligation 3 to consumers and energy suppliers.

Greg Hands:

Simple Energy Advice (SEA) is a government-funded site which offers information for consumers on all BEIS schemes, including ECO. Information can be accessed on their website at www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk or by calling the Simple Energy Advice helpline on 0800 444202.

Information for energy suppliers can be found through delivery guidance published by Ofgem, the scheme administrator, and more information can be found at GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/energy-company-obligation>. BEIS and Ofgem also meet regularly with obligated energy suppliers.

Chris Elmore:

[90483]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how businesses that falsely use Energy Company Obligation 3 are penalised.

Greg Hands:

As the administrator of the scheme, the Office of Gas and Energy Markets (Ofgem) undertakes enforcement action as appropriate where companies falsely use the Energy Company Obligation scheme or commit fraud. Ofgem has a dedicated fraud team to deal with such cases.

■ Housing: Carbon Emissions and Energy

Alexander Stafford:

[\[88852\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what the Government's long-term strategy is for incentivising owner-occupiers, that have means and access to finance, to make their properties low carbon and more energy-efficient.

Greg Hands:

In order to incentivise owner-occupiers to improve the energy performance of their homes, the Government will:

- a) provide some financial support where needed over the next three years, especially to fuel poor and lower income households, in order to grow the market, including £950 million for the Home Upgrade Grant, £450 million for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme, and £1 billion per year for the Energy Company Obligation scheme.
 - b) offer tailored advice and information to homeowners through the Simple Energy Advice service, and support green finance product innovation.
 - c) Set higher minimum standards to improve energy performance across all housing tenures, seeking primary powers to enable regulatory measures when time allows.
- The Government also recently published its energy related products framework which will encourage manufacturers to produce more energy efficient appliances and products.

■ Nuclear Power

Mark Menzies:

[\[88689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the potential contribution of nuclear energy in (a) improving the UK's energy security and (b) achieving net zero; and what steps he plans to take to raise awareness of that contribution.

Greg Hands:

Analysis published by BEIS with the Energy White Paper (EWP) [1] in 2020 shows that, alongside significant amounts of wind and solar, a stable, low-cost electricity system to meet net zero will also require other forms of low-carbon power, including nuclear, to complement the intermittency of those technologies.

As outlined in the Net Zero Strategy[2] published in October 2021, we need to continue to deploy all known low-carbon technologies at scale over the next decade to ensure optionality is maintained, whilst developing new options to mitigate delivery risk and reduce costs. The Government has confirmed that it aims to reach a Final Investment Decision on at least one large-scale nuclear project this Parliament and recently announced £210m for Rolls-Royce's Small Modular Reactor design. We will also publish a roadmap for new nuclear in 2022. It will focus on what is needed to support the deployment of further new nuclear in the UK. I was proud to host an event about nuclear energy in the UK Pavilion at COP26 and my officials are working with industry to build on that momentum.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/energy-white-paper-powering-our-net-zero-future>.

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy>.

■ UK Emissions Trading Scheme

Alan Brown:

[88769]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, if he will consult on expanding the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to incorporate the 67 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions that are not currently covered by that scheme.

Greg Hands:

The Government reiterated its commitment to explore further expansion of the UK ETS to activities not yet covered, and to providing a further update in due course.

CABINET OFFICE

■ Business: Closures

Seema Malhotra:

[91974]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate his Department has made of the potential number of business deaths during the first quarter of 2022.

Michael Ellis:

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

Attachments:

1. UKSA Letter Response to PQ91974 [UKSA Letter Response to PQ91974.pdf]

■ Civil Service: Veterans

Stephanie Peacock:

[90932]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the number of veterans who have received (a) an interview and (b) a job through the Great Place to Work scheme.

Stephanie Peacock:

[90933]

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, with reference to the announcement entitled Detail of the Great Place to Work for Veterans initiative published in October 2020, how many and what proportion of civil service vacancies were filled through this initiative in (a) January to March, (b) April to June and (c) July to September 2021.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[90934\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many veterans were employed by the Civil Service in (a) February 2020 and (ii) November 2021.

Leo Docherty:

I am committed to ensuring that veterans enter appropriate employment post service. The Great Place to Work for Veterans Scheme is an example of one of the initiatives we have brought in to support veteran employment. A successful trial phase ran in six departments for nine months.

1,524 veterans who applied through the scheme received an interview and 344 received a job offer.

Given this was just a trial phase rolled out in six early adopter departments, it is not appropriate to measure the proportion of jobs filled through the scheme across the whole Civil Service.

■ Veterans: Females

Jim Shannon:

[\[90421\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what steps he is taking to ensure that women who leave the armed forces are not subject to (a) abuse or (b) attacks.

Leo Docherty:

The Government takes the issue of women's safety incredibly seriously and we are determined to tackle crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls.

We are also committed to providing the best support available for veterans and their families as they transition back into civilian life. This includes ensuring they know where to turn to access support if they need it. NHS services and charities provide a wide range of help and advice, such as Forward Assist and their women-veterans-specific projects.

■ Veterans: Suicide

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[92050\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress his Department has made on its review of veteran deaths through suicide in the last ten years.

Stephanie Peacock:

[\[92051\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what recent progress his Department has made on developing new ways to measure loss of veteran lives through suicide.

Leo Docherty:

The Office for Veterans' Affairs has been working with the Office for National Statistics to further develop plans for a ten year retrospective study looking at suicides within the veteran community. We are working with the MoD to access the data required for this study, and this analysis will look at issues including the frequency of suicide within the veteran community since 2011 and how this rate has changed. This study is expected to be conducted with results published next year.

The Office for Veterans' Affairs also continues to engage with the Office for National Statistics as analysis plans are put in place for the veterans data collected in the 2021 England and Wales census, which will be used to produce a measure of the number of veterans who take their own lives each year. It is expected that the first annual statistic on this will be published in 2023.

DEFENCE**■ Air Force: Training****Mr Kevan Jones:**[\[91850\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, where RAF Recruit training will happen following the closure of RAF Halton.

Leo Docherty:

Assessment studies are ongoing to finalise the future location of RAF recruit training, with RAF Cranwell the preferred option.

■ Military Aid: Ambulance Services**Rob Roberts:**[\[87877\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many times the Welsh Ambulance Service has (a) submitted and (b) been granted a MACA request for assistance from his Department in each of the last five calendar years, including 2021 as of 6 December.

James Heappey:

[Holding answer 14 December 2021]: Within the last five years, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust had submitted eight requests for Defence support, five of which were approved (as of the 6 December). The sixth request was withdrawn as the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust identified a commercial provider.

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

■ **Charities****Helen Hayes:**[\[92036\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions her Department has had with the charity sector on the effect of bank branch closures on charities' ability to bank cash collections.

Helen Hayes:[\[92037\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans she has to engage with the charity sector on the potential effect of bank branch closures on their operations.

Nigel Huddleston:

We regularly engage with sector representatives to understand challenges and opportunities facing the sector, as does the regulator of charities, the Charity Commission of England and Wales, and the Fundraising Regulator. To date, DCMS has not received representations about the immediate risk to the sector of branch closures. However, we are aware of the longer term pressures that a move towards a cashless society will create for some in the sector. The Government is keen to engage with the sector on this issue, and work on it with the regulators.

EDUCATION

■ **Children: Disability****Caroline Lucas:**[\[90391\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the open letter to the Government by the Disabled Children's Partnership, dated 26 November 2021, seeking clarification on how spending review funding will meet the health and social care needs of disabled children and their families, how his Department's spending review settlement will (a) help every family with disabled children get the short breaks social care support to which they are entitled and (b) allow disabled children to recover lost progress in managing their conditions; and if he will make a statement.

Will Quince:

The department believes it is right for local authorities, who know their areas' needs best, to determine what services are required locally, including short breaks.

This year, councils have access to £51.3 billion to deliver their core services, including a £1.7 billion grant for social care. The government has also given over £6 billion in funding directly to councils to support them with the immediate and longer-term impacts of the COVID-19 spending pressures. This includes children's services.

The department will continue to work with other government departments, including the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to ensure the needs of children's services are met. The autumn 2021 Spending Review delivers an

additional £4.7 billion for the core schools' budget by the financial year 2024-25. This settlement 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.

■ Children: Social Services

Rachael Maskell:

[90459]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of funding levels for children services in local authorities.

Will Quince:

Local authorities set their own children's services budget from their core spending power, based on local need and priorities. This financial year (2021-22), councils have access to £51.3 billion core spending power 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.

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Rachael Maskell:

[90912]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he will take to increase the take-up of the covid-19 vaccine in schools in York.

Mr Robin Walker:

Vaccinations are the best way to protect people from COVID-19. As of 11 December 2021, 44.7% of 12 to 15 year olds, 61% of 16 to 17 year olds and 68.4% of 18 to 24 year olds in England received a first dose of the vaccine. As of 11 December, 59.7% of 18 to 24 year olds in England have received a second dose. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, has also announced on 29 November that young people aged 12 to 15 in England will be offered a second dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination, following advice from Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-advice-on-covid-19-booster-vaccines-for-those-aged-18-to-39-and-a-second-dose-for-ages-12-to-15>.

Throughout autumn, thousands of schools have held vaccination clinics and over 1.25 million young people have received a vaccination either in school or via the out of school offer. Healthy 12 to 15 year olds can receive their first COVID-19 vaccination in their school or out of school, such as through vaccination centres. The two offers run in parallel. 16 and 17 year olds are eligible for two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination. They will be able to access both doses through the adult vaccination

system. They can access the first vaccination at GP surgeries, vaccination centres via the national booking system and at some walk in COVID-19 vaccination sites.

To accelerate the COVID-19 programme in schools, the NHS has bolstered the in-school offer to make it more efficient and increase the scale and pace of delivery, as well as target communications to parents, young people, and the public to improve uptake and increase overall confidence in the programme. We continue to work on increasing uptake through repeat offers. To support schools, and based on feedback we gathered we have published new 'how to' guides, available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cT6adcSVsLer0kvcSul4QcBYdlmdgb5x>. This includes useful information and resources for schools, including a template letter that can be used to communicate with parents. The COVID-19 vaccination guidance and leaflets for parents, children and young people are being translated by Public Health England (PHE). The accessible versions include braille, British Sign Language (BSL), and web and print versions in 27 languages.

To ensure even more young people can get the vaccine as quickly as possible the national booking system is open for vaccination bookings for young people.

■ Foster Care

Rachael Maskell:

[90463]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of parent and child foster placements; and what steps he plans to take to recruit and train more foster carers in those fostering arrangements.

Will Quince:

The government is committed to ensuring that children and young people in the care system have the best possible outcomes. Foster carers play an essential role in this by providing stable, loving homes for some of our most vulnerable children.

The department continues to prioritise supporting local authorities and foster carers to provide stable and loving foster homes. The department is investing in different approaches to help local authorities provide additional foster care places, including trialling different ways to plan and commission placements.

Local authorities have a duty to ensure they have sufficient placements to meet the needs of the looked after children in their area, this includes parent and child foster placements.

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, and the National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services, clearly set out the expectation that support and training is made available to foster carers to assist them in meeting the specific needs of the children they are caring for or are expected to care for. This would include ensuring that foster carers have the knowledge and skills required to support looked after children in a parent and child foster placement.

When arrangements are made for a parent and child to live together with foster parents the placing authority and the fostering service are responsible for any additional support and training that their foster carers may need.

■ Offences against Children

Rachael Maskell: [\[90455\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many serious case reviews there have been in each of the last 20 years.

Will Quince:

Since 2018, Serious Case Reviews (SCR) have been replaced by Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), which introduced a stronger focus on learning from serious incidents. A total of 352 LCSPRs have been initiated since September 2019 when new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were implemented.

Prior to this, 1,704 SCRs were submitted to the department between 2001 and 2019.

Rachael Maskell: [\[90456\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many serious case reviews in the last 20 years have resulted in all recommendations being implemented.

Will Quince:

Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) are locally led enquiries and as such most recommendations are for local safeguarding partnerships to implement. The department has commissioned regular reviews of SCRs to analyse their content, the latest of which was published in March 2020. This noted that the majority (89%) of respondents to a survey of all English Local Safeguarding Children Boards felt that SCRs had facilitated local change.

As part of the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, safeguarding partnerships are required to report annually on how they have implemented the learning from local reviews. These are both published and submitted to the national panel.

Rachael Maskell: [\[90457\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to implement recommendations from serious case reviews at the earliest possible opportunity, including during the review if appropriate.

Will Quince:

Responsibility for implementing local learning sits with the local Child Safeguarding Partnership. Working Together, 2018, outlines that Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPR) should be completed and published as soon as possible and no later than six months from the date of the decision to initiate a review. Prior to initiating an LCSPR safeguarding partnerships are required to undertake a rapid review which gathers the facts of the case and whether there is any immediate action needed to ensure children's safety and share any learning appropriately.

Where there are issues of national significance these are picked up by the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel who will consider if a national review is necessary. The government takes the recommendations of the national panel extremely seriously.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[90458\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make it his policy to establish a cross-departmental working group to review multi-agency findings of serious case reviews to help ensure co-ordinated and successful system change.

Will Quince:

The responsibility for how the system learns the lessons from serious child safeguarding incidents lies at local level with the safeguarding partners and at national level with the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (the Panel).

The Panel is responsible for identifying and overseeing the review of serious child safeguarding cases which, in its view, raise issues that are complex or of national importance. The Panel have published three national reviews to date, making recommendations both across government and to local practitioners.

■ Parents

Rachael Maskell:

[\[90460\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking to ensure that vulnerable parents are supported while child needs and risk assessments are being undertaken.

Will Quince:

The Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) statutory guidance is clear that local authorities should provide early help by identifying emerging problems and unmet needs of children and families.

It specifies that assessments should be focussed on the needs of the child and on the impact any services are having on the child. However, the guidance sets out that assessments should be holistic in their approach, addressing the child's needs within their family and that they may result in support for parents and carers.

Post-qualifying standards for child and family practitioners emphasise the need for practitioners to be able to build relationships with children and their families and to communicate effectively and sensitively, working from a position of partnership during assessment whilst maintaining professional curiosity and authority.

■ Physical Education: Expenditure

Daisy Cooper:

[\[90951\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to increase the number of hours spent teaching PE in state funded schools.

Will Quince:

Physical education is an important part of a broad and balanced curriculum and should be taught to pupils of all ages. That is why it is the only foundation subject compulsory through all stages of the national curriculum. It is for schools to decide how much time should be dedicated to physical education and the department does not set specific expectations.

The department has invested £1.6 billion in primary PE and sport since 2013 through the PE and Sport Premium, and taken a range of actions with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Health and Social Care to deliver on our School Sport and Activity Action Plan, which we will be updating next year. The department is also working to deliver on the nearly £30 million announced in October towards improving and opening school sport facilities in England, as well as to improve the teaching of physical education at primary school.

■ Pupils: Absenteeism**Sir Mark Hendrick:****[90350]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the reasons for poorer pupils having missed more school days in autumn 2020 compared with their better off counterparts; and what plans his Department has to tackle that discrepancy.

Mr Robin Walker:

Regular attendance is vital for children's education, mental health and long-term development.

The national statistics release on pupil absence in schools in England during the autumn term includes information on absence by free school meals (FSM) and is published here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england-autumn-term>. For pupils eligible for FSM, the overall absence rate was 7.8% and for pupils not eligible, the overall absence rate was 3.8%.

From the autumn term 2020 data, for pupils eligible for FSM, the three biggest reasons by percentage of sessions missed were illness (43.4%), unauthorised absence for no specified reason (34.9%) and authorised absence for no specified reason (10.4%).

Ensuring that the most disadvantaged children and young people regularly attend school to be able to catch-up on any lost education is a top priority for the department. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, has established an alliance of national leaders from education, children's, and allied services to work together to raise school attendance. The Attendance Action Alliance, which includes amongst others Dame Rachel De Souza, the Children's Commissioner, Isabelle Trowler, the Chief Social Worker for Children and Families and Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, have pledged to take a range of actions to remove barriers preventing children attending school. This also includes work by Rob Tarn, CEO of the Northern Education Trust, a multi academy trust

serving areas with high levels of disadvantage, who will work with other trust leaders to identify and disseminate best practice across schools. A webinar on the Northern Education Trust's approach to attendance took place on 14 December and has been recorded for all schools to view.

The department recognises that the COVID-19 outbreak has affected all students, but especially disadvantaged students. That is why we are investing nearly £5 billion in education recovery, which will be targeted at those that need help most. This includes an additional £1.8 billion of funding announced in the recent Spending Review to support young people to catch up on lost education. This is on top of a strong core funding settlement, which will see funding rise by £4.7 billion by the 2024-25 financial year compared to existing plans.

The department continues to make clear that schools can and should use their additional recovery and pupil premium funding to support strong improved attendance for disadvantaged children where this is identified as an issue.

The Government's Supporting Families programme continues to work closely with families where absence is an issue, to support better attendance. More information on this programme is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/supporting-families>.

■ Schools: Absenteeism

Rachael Maskell:

[90909]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of school absences as a result of covid-19 on the assessments of students planned for summer 2022.

Mr Robin Walker:

The department is monitoring the path of the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on education closely, including through attendance data. It remains the government's firm intention that exams and assessments will go ahead in 2022.

The department and Ofqual consulted on and announced a range of adaptations to exams and assessments over this academic year. We engaged with a range of stakeholders, including students and parents, on these measures and sought to ensure that students have breadth of knowledge, whilst also giving them support with focusing revision. In the interests of fairness to students, Ofqual has also confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year for grading and has set out its plans for a mid-point between 2021 and pre-outbreak grades. This reflects that we are in a COVID-19 recovery period and students taking exams in 2022 have experienced disruption to their education.

The government understands that contingency arrangements are also needed to deal with the unlikely event that exams cannot go ahead fairly or safely. Following a joint consultation with Ofqual, the department has confirmed that, should exams not be able to go ahead, students will receive teacher assessed grades (TAGs) instead. The changes to the TAGs process take account of lessons learned from 2021 and

minimises burdens on both teachers and students. We have also published contingency plans for vocational and technical qualifications, which seek to achieve parity and consistency where relevant with the arrangements proposed for GCSEs and AS/A levels.

The department understands that there will be specific instances where pupils who test positive for COVID-19 or present with COVID-19 symptoms cannot attend school on site but are well enough to learn from home. A comprehensive package of support continues to be available to schools to help them meet expectations for remote education, accessible at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>.

■ Schools: Coronavirus

Rachael Maskell:

[90908]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will put a covid-19 testing plan in place for schools in the new year.

Mr Robin Walker:

The testing programme is well-established in nurseries, schools and colleges and continues to help to break the chains of transmission of COVID-19 in education settings. The government has set out plans for COVID-19 testing in nurseries, schools and colleges, including that staff, pupils and students should continue to test twice weekly at home, with lateral flow device (LFD) test kits, 3-4 days apart, for the remainder of the Autumn term and into the Spring term. On 26 November, the government announced that all secondary schools prepare to test their pupils once on-site on return in January after a period of social mixing over the school holidays.

Staff and students who are continuing to attend nurseries or colleges over the Christmas period, such as those attending adult education providers or early years settings, should continue to be encouraged to test at home twice weekly. Those who are who are not attending their setting during the holiday period may wish to take a rapid lateral flow test in situations where they are more likely to catch or spread COVID-19. This includes spending time in crowded and enclosed spaces, or before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they catch COVID-19.

On return in January, all secondary school pupils should undertake one test on-site at the start of term in their school asymptomatic test site (ATS), followed by one LFD self-test at home 3-4 days after their on-site test. They should then continue to test twice weekly at home, with LFD test kits, 3-4 days apart. Testing all pupils in school boosts testing participation and will help reduce transmission after a period of social mixing over the holidays. Tests, personal protective equipment and funding to support the workforce will be provided as before.

From 14 December, adults who are fully vaccinated, and young people between the ages of 5 and 18 years and 6 months who are identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19, whether Omicron or not, should take an NHS rapid lateral flow test every day for 7 days to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Unvaccinated adults must self-

isolate for 10 days if they are a contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19, Omicron or not. Daily rapid testing for contacts of COVID-19 can help protect nurseries, schools and colleges by reducing transmission and will also help keep pupils in face-to-face education

Schools and colleges are not required to monitor if staff and students are taking daily tests. All testing is voluntary although strongly encouraged. Staff and students should be encouraged to report their testing results to the school/college as well as NHS Track & Trace and the school/college should keep a log of these results and try to encourage testing and reporting.

■ Schools: Sports

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[90382\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has for the funding of the School Games Organiser network beyond March 2022.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[90383\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has for the future of the primary PE and Sport Premium funding.

Ms Lyn Brown: [\[90384\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will commit in the next six months to long-term funding for (a) physical education and (b) sport in schools.

Will Quince:

I refer the hon. Member for West Ham to the answer I gave on 9 December 2021 to Question [86530](#).

■ Social Workers: Children

Rachael Maskell: [\[90462\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to help ensure that children's social workers have appropriate and manageable caseloads.

Will Quince:

Local authorities are responsible for the recruitment and deployment of social workers in a way that effectively meets their local needs. The right caseload for an individual social worker will depend on their role, and the nature of the cases. Ofsted inspects children's services to ensure consistent, high quality decision making.

Strong leadership in children's social care is essential for creating the right environment for social workers to support and protect children, including ensuring they have appropriate and manageable caseloads.

Through our professional development programmes, the department supports leaders in social work to continue to develop the knowledge and skills needed to provide the best possible services for children and families.

For example, this year the department is investing £3 million in our leadership programmes, supporting more than 750 leaders across 110 local authorities. These programmes support leaders from practice supervisor level through to the Directors of Children's Services.

We are also supporting local authorities with the recruitment and retention of social workers through our investment in the fast-track programmes Frontline and Step Up to Social Work, as well as through our professional development programmes.

The number of child and family social workers has increased by over 10% since 2017. As at 30 September 2020, local authorities reported that the average child and family social worker caseload across England was 16.3 down from 17.8 in 2017.

■ Special Educational Needs

Rachael Maskell:

[\[90911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will commit to reviewing the Education and Health Care Plan to permit children with special educational needs and disabilities to apply for additional support via a fast track process.

Will Quince:

Schools, colleges, and other institutions are required to identify and address the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) of the pupils they support, and to use their best endeavours to make sure that a child or young person who has SEND gets the support they need

Where a child or young person has a greater need, parents, or the education provider, can ask the local authority to carry out an education, health and care (EHC) needs assessment, which gives additional support on top of what is already being supplied. The current system includes a time limit of 20 weeks for completion of an EHC plan, which was set to reflect the changed process of assessment, as well as responding to the need to ensure a smoother and swifter system for determining special educational provision for children and young people. Local authorities and health bodies currently have the flexibility to provide additional support from their high needs' budgets, regardless of whether a child or young person has an EHC plan. The SEND review will consider all elements of the SEND system, including the effectiveness of EHC plans, and will publish as a green paper for full public consultation in the first three months of 2022.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

■ Agriculture: Sewage

Justin Madders:

[\[87706\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions (a) he and (b) officials in his Department have had with relevant stakeholders on the concerns raised by Greenpeace on the Environment Agency's Sludge Strategy.

Rebecca Pow:

The Greenpeace article published on 4 February 2020 was associated with a consultant's report produced as part of an Environment Agency Materials-to-Land project. The Environment Agency takes its responsibility to protect the environment very seriously, which is why it commissioned this report to inform its upcoming sludge strategy and make sure regulations are based on the latest scientific data.

On 17 March 2020 the Environment Agency completed and published its Strategy for safe and sustainable sludge use on gov.uk. Section 9.5 of the strategy lays out aims associated with hazards including chemicals and micro-plastics. An update was then published on 15 July 2020 to reflect adjustments to our delivery timeline due caused by having to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current timeline is to implement the strategy in 2023. The Environment Agency is currently working with the water industry, Defra and other key stakeholders on the preparation for a public consultation to effect the changes laid out in the published strategy.

Game: Gun Sports**Jim Shannon:**[\[90420\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with (a) shooting and (b) country sports groups on the potential merits of population increases in (i) game pheasants, (ii) ducks and (iii) deer in the UK.

Rebecca Pow:

There have been no recent discussions with shooting or country sports groups about the potential merits of population increases for these species in the UK.

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus****Andrew Percy:**[\[91915\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that citizens in the British Overseas Territories receive booster shots of the covid-19 vaccine.

Amanda Milling:

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has been supporting the Overseas Territories since the outset of the pandemic. This includes the provision of vaccines which have been provided on a population proportionate basis with the United Kingdom. The UK Overseas Territories have some of the highest vaccination rates globally and the roll out of booster vaccines began in October 2021. To date, eleven (Anguilla, Ascension Island, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, St Helena, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the Turks & Caicos Islands Overseas Territories) have received booster vaccines. Plans are in hand to deliver boosters to the remaining

three Overseas Territories (Pitcairn, Tristan da Cunha and staff at the British Antarctic Territory) in early 2022.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

■ Antibiotics: Breast Cancer

Jim Shannon:

[\[92939\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he has had recent discussions with (a) the Royal College of Nurses and (b) other relevant bodies on any connection between antibiotic usage and the development of breast cancer.

Maria Caulfield:

We have had no such discussions.

■ Brain: Tumours

Drew Hendry:

[\[85326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much of the £20 million committed by his Department in 2018 to brain tumour research over a five year period is still to be allocated; and what assessment he has made of the effect of the covid-19 outbreak on brain tumour research funding.

Maria Caulfield:

[Holding answer 6 December 2021]: Since this funding was announced in February 2018, a further £20 million was announced in May 2018, bringing the total planned investment to £40 million over five years.

The information on spending still to be allocated is not held in the format requested. The National Institute for Health Research's (NIHR) infrastructure spending on cancer research does not record the specific type of cancer. Studies can be applicable to cancer in general, such as the type of tumour and research on supportive and palliative care interventions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic many of the NIHR's research programmes, studies and trials were necessarily paused. However, the NIHR's funding competitions remained open throughout, including for brain tumour research.

■ Cancer: Health Services

Jim Shannon:

[\[91965\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps his Department has taken to support new training and development opportunities in cancer care within the NHS.

Edward Argar:

The Spending Review in 2020 provided £260 million to increase the National Health Service workforce and support commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan. This included £52 million in 2021/22 for Health Education England to further invest in the

cancer and diagnostics workforce, offering training grants for 250 nurses wishing to become cancer clinical nurse specialists and for an additional 100 nurses wishing to become chemotherapy nurses.

Following the outcome of the Spending Review in 2021, spending plans for individual budgets for 2022/23 to 2024/25, including for training the cancer workforce, will be subject to a detailed financial planning exercise and finalised in due course.

■ Dementia: Research

Thangam Debbonaire:

[\[92976\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the timetable is for allocating additional funding for dementia research.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government has committed to invest £375 million in neurodegenerative disease research over the next five years to fund projects into a range of diseases including dementia. This funding will be provided through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The NIHR and UKRI rely on researchers submitting high-quality applications to access funding therefore details of allocations and timescales are not currently available.

All applications are subject to peer review and judged in open competition, with awards being made on the basis of the importance of the topic to patients and health and care services, value for money and scientific quality. A new dementia strategy, which will set out our plans on dementia for England for future years, will be published in 2022. The strategy will include our ambitions for dementia research.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Carbon Emissions

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[91938\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Edward Argar:

The Department is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050. Between 2009/10 and 2019/20 it reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 64%. The Department is currently developing a sustainability strategy and undertaking surveys of its estate to understand the changes required to achieve net zero.

■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Daisy Cooper:

[\[76029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to answer Question 58509, tabled by the hon. Member for St. Albans on 18 October 2021.

Edward Argar:

I refer the hon. Member to the answer to Question [58509](#).

■ Diabetes: Screening

Andrew Rosindell: [\[92833\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of making c-peptide testing available on the NHS for type one diabetics in England.

Maria Caulfield:

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for developing evidence-based guidance for the National Health Service to drive best practice. NICE's clinical guideline on the diagnosis and management of type 1 diabetes does not recommend routinely measuring C-peptide or diabetes-specific autoantibody titres to confirm type 1 diabetes in adults.

NICE guidelines are developed by experts based on a thorough assessment of the available evidence and through extensive engagement with stakeholders. NICE is currently updating its guidance on the diagnosis of type 1 diabetes and expects to publish final recommendations in March 2022.

Andrew Rosindell: [\[92834\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if officials in his Department will hold discussions with their counterparts in the Scottish Government on the Scottish roll-out of c-peptide testing for type one diabetics.

Maria Caulfield:

We have no current plans to do so. At present the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) clinical guideline on the diagnosis and management of type 1 diabetes does not recommend routinely measuring C-peptide or diabetes-specific autoantibody titres to confirm type 1 diabetes in adults. NICE is currently updating recommendations on C-peptide testing and recommendations will be published in March 2022.

■ Integrated Care Boards: Conflict of Interests

Clive Lewis: [\[92034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2021 to Question 80412 on Integrated Care Boards: Conflict of Interests, what assessment he has made of the effect of the Health and Care Bill on the ability of employees of private sector companies, that would financially benefit from ICBs decommissioning services currently provided by NHS England, to become members of ICBs.

Edward Argar:

No assessment has been made as these individuals will not be able to sit on integrated care boards.

■ Kidney Diseases: Dialysis Machines

Chris Green: [\[83403\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent assessment his Department has made of the variation in survival rates for patients receiving dialysis at home compared to those receiving it in-centre.

Chris Green: [\[83404\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many patients from lower socio-economic backgrounds have received kidney dialysis treatment at home in the last five years compared to patients from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

Chris Green: [\[83405\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the variation in access to home kidney dialysis for patients from Black, Asian or minority ethnicity backgrounds compared to patients from other backgrounds; and what assessment he has made of the reasons for that variation.

Edward Argar:

No recent assessment has been made of the variation in survival rates for patients receiving dialysis at home compared to those receiving dialysis in-centre. Data on survival rates between home and in-centre dialysis is currently unsuitable for detailed comparative analysis, as there is a natural patient selection bias.

Information regarding the socio-economic and ethnic background of home dialysis patients is not collected centrally. As such, no specific assessment has been made of any variation in access to home dialysis. NHS England's Renal Services Transformation Programme aims to increase the provision of and equitable access to home therapies for kidney dialysis patients, following the recommendations of the Getting it Right First Time (GiRFT) national report on renal medicine published in September 2021.

■ Members: Correspondence

Robert Largan: [\[93084\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 27 October 2021, reference RL29893.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 16 December 2021.

Robert Largan: [\[93086\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he plans to respond to the enquiry from the hon. Member for High Peak of 13 October 2021, reference RL27492.

Edward Argar:

We replied to the hon. Member on 8 November 2021.

■ Menopause: Drugs**Alberto Costa:****[90895]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to support women with the cost of medication relating to the menopause, who are unable to take HRT and are prescribed alternative medication.

Edward Argar:

We have no plans to change the current arrangements for exemptions to prescription charges to support women with the cost of medication relating to the menopause who are unable to take hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and are prescribed alternative medication.

Extensive arrangements are already in place to help people afford NHS prescriptions, including a broad range of exemptions for which women prescribed alternatives to HRT may already qualify. Approximately 89% of prescriptions are already dispensed free of charge. To support those who do not qualify for an exemption, the cost of prescriptions can be capped by purchasing a prescription pre-payment certificate, which can be paid for in instalments. A holder of a 12-month certificate can get all the prescriptions they need for just over £2 per week.

■ Motor Neurone Disease: Research**Kim Leadbeater:****[92139]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support (a) research into Motor Neurone Disease and (b) funding for that research.

Maria Caulfield:

The Government funds research on motor neurone disease (MND) through the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and UK Research and Innovation via the Medical Research Council (MRC). From 2015/16 to 2019/20, the NIHR and the MRC spent approximately £60 million on MND research. The NIHR funds a range of MND research including clinical trials of potential disease-modifying drugs, studies investigating genetics and biomarkers and work to develop interventions to support people with MND to live well. The MRC is funding experimental medicine research to increase understanding of the causes and genetic mechanisms of MND.

On 14 November 2021, we committed to make £50 million available for MND research over the next five years. New, innovative projects will help researchers to better understand the disease and its related conditions, develop and test treatments and improve care for those living with MND. A new MND Research Unit will be established within the NIHR to coordinate research applications for funding. In addition, a new MND partnership will be formed to pool expertise and resources across the research community to accelerate the delivery of new treatments.

■ NHS: Coronavirus**Jim Shannon:**[\[91964\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will re-evaluate the NHS Long Term plan to take into account the effect of the outbreak of covid-19.

Edward Argar:

The Department will continue to keep how best to deliver the commitments outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan under review.

Rachael Maskell:[\[92028\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to fill vacancies made available through people losing their jobs in the NHS as a result of refusing to have a mandatory covid-19 vaccine.

Edward Argar:

We continue to encourage all health workers to make the positive choice to take up the COVID-19 vaccine to help protect the people they care for, themselves and their colleagues. We have implemented a 12-week grace period, allowing time for both workforce planning and for those who are not yet vaccinated against who may now wish to do so. We have set an enforcement date of 1 April 2022 to assist providers over the winter period and minimise workforce pressures. We are increasing opportunities to receive the vaccine through the booster programme such as walk-in and pop-up sites.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have written to all providers providing early guidance on vaccination as a condition of deployment to ensure smooth implementation and assist preparation and planning. Guidance has also been provided on the use of one to one conversations for all unvaccinated National Health Service staff with line managers. We are also increasing engagement with targeted communities where uptake is the lowest, including ethnic minority and faith networks to encourage healthcare workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Rachael Maskell:[\[92029\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what impact assessment he has undertaken of the potential effect of mandatory covid-19 vaccines on the retention of black and minority ethnic staff in the NHS.

Edward Argar:

An equality impact statement was published alongside the Government's response to the consultation on vaccination as a condition of deployment. This set out that if the policy is implemented and workers do not take up the offer of vaccination, a higher proportion of staff from ethnic minority groups could be unable to satisfy their employers that they can be deployed in accordance with the requirements of the regulations.

The assessment also set out evidence that individuals from minority ethnic groups are at increased risk of mortality from COVID-19. Therefore, making COVID-19

vaccination a condition of deployment is likely to have a particularly beneficial effect on the outcomes of infection in some staff from ethnic groups.

The National Health Service has focused on a targeted approach to improve uptake in hesitant groups, undertaking campaigns directed towards black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in particular, as well as using the booster campaign as an opportunity to re-engage staff.

■ NHS: Pay

Dr Liam Fox:

[87567]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS managers are paid over (a) £80,000, (b) £130,000, (c) £200,000 and (d) £250,000 a year.

Edward Argar:

The following table shows managers with total earnings of over £80,000 in the 12 months to the end of June 2021, headcount. These figures represent payments made using the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) to National Health Service staff employed and directly paid by NHS organisations in the Hospital and Community Health Sector (HCHS). These are total earnings, which include non-basic-pay elements such as overtime, geographic allowances, or on-call payments.

RANGE	HEADCOUNT
£80,000 - £129,999	7,018
£130,000 - £199,999	1,071
£200,000 - £249,999	114
£250,000 and over	36

Source – NHS Digital Earnings Statistics

Notes:

1. Data is sourced from the ESR, which is the Human Resources and Payroll system used throughout secondary care by organisations in the HCHS. It includes staff working for NHS trusts, NHS foundation trusts, clinical commissioning groups and central and support organisations in England.
2. Data covers people in the staff groups of 'managers' and 'senior managers' as defined by their NHS Occupation Code. All managers/senior managers who need to be a qualified doctor, qualified nurse, qualified therapist, qualified scientist, or trained ambulance personnel should be coded in their professional staff group, for example as a nurse and are not included in these figures.
3. If an individual worked in more than one managerial role over the course of the year the earnings are summed to give a person level total. Earnings for roles outside of management are not included.

■ Oxygen: Medical Treatments

Sir Christopher Chope:

[\[86526\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, at what rate per unit of electricity the NHS reimburses patients who need daily air line oxygen provided by an electric generator; when the rates were last changed; and what steps he is taking to increase the rates to current levels of cost.

Edward Argar:

[Holding answer 8 December 2021]: NHS England has contracted with specialist providers of Home Oxygen Service. If a patient is prescribed an oxygen concentrator as part of their home oxygen therapy, the provider will reimburse the patient for any electricity the machine uses at the standard rate for the electricity provider in that region. The reimbursement is based on the actual reading taken from the meter in the concentrator machine and is paid directly to the patient. The home oxygen provider claims this cost back from the relevant clinical commissioning group.

The standard rate paid for electricity usage reimbursement is reviewed annually and calculated based on the figures supplied to Home Oxygen Service providers by patients. The rate of reimbursement is currently being reviewed.

■ Strokes: Health Services

Rachael Maskell:

[\[81049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the number of (a) physiotherapists, (b) occupational therapists, (c) speech and language therapists and (d) psychologists working in stroke services in (i) acute settings, (ii) rehab settings and (iii) community settings.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[81062\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of training more health professionals in thrombectomy treatments.

Rachael Maskell:

[\[81063\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of supporting programmes to train generic therapists working in stroke rehabilitation.

Edward Argar:

No central assessment has been made as it is expected that assessments of staff numbers by profession are undertaken at a local system level. The General Medical Council (GMC) is working with the Royal College of Radiologists to develop a medical credential for doctors in interventional neuroradiology (acute stroke), which addresses mechanical thrombectomy. The GMC and the Royal College are ensuring the credential has the right scope to meet the needs of health services.

Health Education England (HEE) is reviewing the skills and capabilities required for safe stroke care, including those in existing roles and additional roles. HEE is also

working at a local level to address workforce challenges in stroke care through training resources.

■ Surgical Mesh Implants: Compensation

Mrs Sharon Hodgson:

[91874]

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the data provided in NHS Resolution's response to Freedom of Information request 5115 of August 2021 which showed that claimant and defence solicitor fees in cases relating to vaginal mesh implants significantly exceeded the settlement reached, what cost benefit assessment he has made of the potential merits of a financial redress scheme for women affected by vaginal mesh implants.

Maria Caulfield:

We published our response to the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review on 21 July 2021. In this response, the Government did not accept the recommendation to establish separate redress schemes for the three interventions discussed in the report. While the Government is sympathetic to the experiences of those patients who gave evidence to the report, our primary focus is on improving future medicines and medical devices safety. We considered the costs of redress and the existing settlement costs for claims. It is crucial that we focus funds on initiatives that directly improve future safety and we are pursuing this aim.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[90349]

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, if she will make a statement on the Government's ongoing position on the time limited waiver on covid-19 vaccine manufacture in the global south.

Mike Freer:

I shall answer on the assumption that the Hon. Member for Preston is referring to the World Trade Organisation's (WTO's) Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver, proposed by South Africa and India. However, this proposal is not time limited and in scope goes beyond both COVID-19 vaccines and the global south.

As such, I refer the Hon. Member for Preston to the answer given by my Hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, the Minister for International Trade, to the Hon. Member for Sefton Central on 23 November, UIN: [77440](#). I also note the continually increasing number of COVID-19 vaccines manufactured per month. Our challenge now is delivering vaccines and getting jabs administered.

■ UK Trade with EU: Exports

Sir Mark Hendrick:

[\[90347\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what recent assessment she has made of trends in the level of UK exports to the EU.

Mike Freer:

Latest official statistics for October 2021 show that UK goods exports to the EU are now 10% above average levels for 2020, although still below 2019 levels.

UK trade in services with the EU show little growth this year, as COVID continues to impact on the movement of people. Services exports to the EU remain below 2020 and 2019 levels.

On 1st October DIT launched the Export Support Service, which gives businesses across the UK one place to get answers to practical questions about exporting to Europe by using the digital service on GOV.UK or by phoning the helpline.

JUSTICE

■ HM Courts and Tribunals Service: ICT

Grahame Morris:

[\[91925\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to (a) the answers to Questions 100 and 104 of the Justice Select Committee, Oral evidence: The work of the Ministry of Justice, HC 869, 30 November 2021 and (b) the HMCTS weekly operational summary for the week commencing 29 November 2021, if he will make an assessment of the compatibility of his statement that the rollout of the Common Platform is proceeding at pace with his Department's decision to extend the pause to that rollout.

James Cartlidge:

Common Platform is used daily in 101 courts across the country. Over the summer, HMCTS took the decision to pause roll out to accommodate the peak August leave season; however, a decision was taken to continue the pause of the Common Platform roll out for the remainder of the calendar year following some slowness of the system being identified which was having an impact on users. This decision was made to allow the programme to identify, mitigate, and resolve this with further roll out of the Common Platform expected to restart subject to governance approvals, early in 2022.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[91957\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what (a) cost-benefit analysis, (b) organisational risk assessment, and (c) equality impact assessment for users has been made in relation to the Common Platform.

James Cartlidge:

A full cost benefit analysis of Common Platform was undertaken as a component part of the wider portfolio of investment in courts' transformation. This analysis fully

conformed to the Treasury's "Green Book" - which provides detailed guidance in Chapter 6. Treasury guidance was followed and the portfolio level cost benefit analysis was subject to scrutiny and validation by the Government Major Projects Portfolio in February 2021 and approved, having met the required standard of a robust assessment of the costs and benefits.

HMCTS have undertaken a number of assessments for the Common Platform case management system. These were undertaken in 2020 and are currently being reviewed.

The health, safety and wellbeing of all HMCTS colleagues is taken extremely seriously. For our Common Platform programme, we have assessed risk throughout, and continue to keep it under review. At an organisational level, that assessment has been documented through a Change Impact Assessment, Public Sector Equality Analysis and a Workforce Equality Analysis, which remain under regular review. At a local/site level, risk assessments for particular areas of risk are documented using standard organisational templates where required. This meets the obligations we hold and satisfies us that risks are suitably and sufficiently managed.

Alex Cunningham:

[\[91959\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps he is taking to improve industrial relations at HM Courts and Tribunal Service in the context of reported planned industrial action by court staff in relation to the Common Platform.

James Cartlidge:

HMCTS remain committed to resolving the concerns raised by PCS in the context of Common Platform and, as such, we continue to consult with the union, with a view to reaching agreement. We are currently engaged in constructive dialogue addressing a range of matters presented by PCS and we have already introduced a number of strategies to directly mitigate the issues raised. These discussions are ongoing.

■ Ministry of Justice: Theft

Sarah Olney:

[\[89638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many of his Department's (a) laptops, (b) mobile phones, (c) memory sticks and (d) external hard drives have been lost or stolen in each of the last five years.

James Cartlidge:

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) treats all breaches of security very seriously and requires all breaches to be reported regardless of whether there is firm evidence of loss or just an inability to account for some devices. All incidents are subjected to an initial security risk assessment with further action on a proportional basis.

It is MoJ policy that all laptops and removable media are encrypted to minimise the impact if a loss were to occur. All mobile phones are deactivated once reported missing to minimise the impact if a loss was to occur.

For the year 2017, the following figures were reported as unaccounted for due to being lost or stolen:

- 43 Laptops
- 42 Mobiles
- 12 Memory sticks
- 0 External hard drives

For the year 2018, the following figures were reported as unaccounted for due to being lost or stolen:

- 75 Laptops
- 76 Mobiles
- 3 Memory sticks
- 0 External hard drives

For the year 2019, the following figures were reported as unaccounted for due to being lost or stolen:

- 117 Laptops
- 151 Mobiles
- 12 Memory sticks
- 0 External hard drives

For the year 2020, the following figures were reported as unaccounted for due to being lost or stolen:

- 99 Laptops
- 198 Mobiles
- 4 Memory sticks
- 0 External hard drives

For the year 2021, the following figures were reported as unaccounted for due to being lost or stolen:

- 126 Laptops
- 202 Mobiles
- 6 Memory sticks
- 0 External hard drives

This information does not include separately reported losses of National Probation/Community Rehabilitation Services mobile phones which have been allocated during COVID to Probation Service Users.

This amounts to 4140 low cost phones, either lost or stolen from those that were issued since March 2020.

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

■ **Buildings: Insulation**

Marsha De Cordova: [\[90498\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what support his Department is putting in place for leaseholders that have an EWS1 assessment that is under 18 meters and has been classified as a B2 property.

Christopher Pincher:

An EWS1 assessment is a valuation tool and not a safety assessment. Where remediation is recommended supporting material should be transparent and alternatives such as mitigation should have been clearly considered. Leaseholders may seek second opinions if they are concerned about the recommendations. The Government is examining what more can be done to protect leaseholders from unnecessary costs.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[90499\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, whether he is taking steps to regulate EWS1 surveys to prevent erroneous assessment outcomes.

Christopher Pincher:

An EWS1 form is not a statutory requirement nor a safety 'test'. It is not a replacement for a fire risk assessment which is a regulatory requirement, carried out by a competent professional. The Government has provided the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) with nearly £700,000 to develop and deliver training for assessors to carry out external wall system assessments. Additionally, RICS have published a list of professionals suitable to sign an EWS1 form.

Marsha De Cordova: [\[90500\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, what steps he is taking to help ensure that banks are not requesting EWS1 forms for buildings that are under 18 meters.

Christopher Pincher:

An independent expert statement in July this year was clear that there is no systemic risk of fire in residential buildings under 18 metres and that EWS1s should not be required by lenders on buildings under 18 metres. The Government continues to challenge industry on the use of the EWS1 process, as well as pressing for more data in order to understand how the RICS guidance is being applied, and the impact of the process on mortgage applications.

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[91935\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what steps his Department is taking to tackle the legacy of the Troubles.

Conor Burns:

As set out in the Queen's Speech, this Government is committed to bringing forward legislation to address the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

That is why, on 14 July, the Government published a Command Paper setting out its legacy proposals, with a focus on information recovery, reconciliation and delivering for those most directly affected by the Troubles.

The Government has, and continues to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and reflect on what we have heard, and are considering our next steps carefully in advance of introducing legislation.

TRANSPORT

■ Aviation: Coronavirus

Ruth Jones:

[\[93047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing a financial support package for the aviation sector in the context of further covid-19 travel restrictions.

Robert Courts:

The Government recognises the challenging times facing the international travel sectors due to COVID-19. Additional temporary testing measures introduced in response to the Omicron variant remain in place to help prevent additional cases of Omicron from entering the UK, while supporting domestic measures to tackle the spread of the variant in the UK. The Government recognises the impact these temporary health measures have on the travel and aviation industry, and they will be reviewed again in the first week of January.

Since the start of the pandemic, we estimate that the air transport sector (airlines, airport and related services) will have benefitted from around £8bn of government support.

■ Blue Badge Scheme

Richard Thomson:

[\[92111\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress has been made in negotiations with EU countries that have not yet confirmed recognition of the UK Blue Badge Scheme in their jurisdiction; and what estimate he has made of the timescale for the conclusion of those negotiations.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

As per my update to the House on 16 November, the Government remains committed to confirming the status of UK issued Blue Badges for motorists visiting Europe.

Twenty countries have already committed to recognising Blue Badges and are listed on gov.uk: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blue-badge-using-it-in-the-eu/using-a-blue-badge-in-the-european-union>

Discussions continue with a number of countries and I will update the House further when they have concluded.

■ Cycling**Daisy Cooper:****[90950]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what plans his Department has to increase the number of people earning the (a) National Minimum Wage and (b) National Living Wage who can access the Cycle 2 Work scheme.

Chris Heaton-Harris:

In 2019 the Department for Transport revised the guidance on this scheme to make it simpler for employers to offer it to their employees. The guidance makes clear that if a salary sacrifice agreement would put an employee's salary below the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage, there are various options available to the employer. These include offering the employee a longer than usual hire period, or hiring a cycle to them under an employer loan scheme. The Department has no current plans to make any further changes to the Cycle to Work scheme.

■ Public Transport: Midlands**Shabana Mahmood:****[91908]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Integrated Rail Plan, whether the Midlands will receive the same amount of public transport funding per head as London and the South East.

Andrew Stephenson:

To help level-up across the country, we are delivering a step change in investment in public transport focused outside of London and the South East. The recently announced Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands outlined a £96 billion strategy of rail construction and upgrades. This builds on the substantive investment that is targeted outside of London announced at the Budget which included £5.7 billion for our major cities through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements; over £2.7 billion for local road maintenance; and a new, dedicated £1.2 billion programme to improve bus infrastructure, fares and services.

■ Railways: Birmingham and Nottingham

Shabana Mahmood:

[\[91910\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the economic impact of the potential agglomeration of Nottingham and Birmingham, which will be made possible by the introduction of high speed trains.

Andrew Stephenson:

Analysis of IRP options has focused on benefits to transport users (including businesses) alongside some impacts on the wider economy – specifically the productivity improvements associated with reducing journey times between two places. By improving regional connectivity, the Integrated Rail Plan will unify labour markets, so that people can access a much wider range of jobs; effectively bring businesses closer together; and improve access to key international gateways and markets so they become more even more attractive locations for business investment.

■ Railways: Midlands and North of England

Alan Brown:

[\[92002\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Integrated Rail Plan, if he will publish a delivery plan that contains (a) details of next steps, (b) a full list of schemes and (c) planned timescales for delivery.

Andrew Stephenson:

The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) sets out the Government's delivery plan for a core pipeline of rail investment in the North and Midlands and outlines the potential delivery timescales and sequencing for the rail schemes contained within the IRP.

■ Travel Restrictions: Nigeria

Andrew Percy:

[\[91918\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what data informed his Department's decision to place Nigeria on the Government's travel red list.

Robert Courts:

Nigeria was added to the travel red list from 4am on Monday 6 December following 21 cases of Omicron reported in England which were linked to travel from Nigeria. Decisions on red list assignment and associated border measures are taken by ministers, who take into account UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) risk assessments, alongside wider public health factors. A summary of the UKHSA methodology is published on gov.uk, alongside key data that supports Ministers' decisions.

Nigeria was removed from the red list at 4am on Wednesday 15 December. As Omicron cases rise in the UK and in countries around the world, the travel red list is less effective in slowing the incursion of this variant from abroad and managed quarantine measures are no longer proportionate. Additional temporary testing

measures remain in place to help prevent additional cases of Omicron from entering the UK.

TREASURY

■ Business and Self-employed: Coronavirus

Charlotte Nichols:

[90510]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what financial support his Department plans to provide to (a) businesses and (b) the self-employed in the event that they experience financial challenges as a result of covid-19 restrictions announced on 8 December 2021.

Helen Whately:

The Government continues to provide considerable support to the economy as it has done throughout the pandemic, with around £400bn of direct support during this fiscal year and last. As he has done throughout the pandemic, the Chancellor is closely monitoring the impact of the virus on the economy.

As part of this package of support, businesses of all sizes, including the self-employed, will continue to receive considerable support into the spring of next year. Small and medium-sized businesses can access Government-guaranteed finance through the extended Recovery Loans scheme until next June. Businesses will be protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises, thanks to the moratorium in place until March 2022. Where applicable, businesses can continue to apply for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme through their local authority, which is open until March 2022.

For the sectors who were hardest hit by previous restrictions and may need additional support, there is further support in place. Business rates relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England is available until March 2022, and hospitality and tourism businesses will continue to benefit from a VAT reduction – paying only 12.5% until March 2022. The arts and culture sector can still access support from the £2 billion Culture Recovery Fund and Sports Recovery Package, and the Film and TV Production Restart Scheme in place until 30 April 2022. While the £800m Live Events Reinsurance Scheme is giving events across the country the confidence needed for organisers to plan for the future.

The Government is continuing to support small businesses through the VAT threshold, currently higher than any EU member state, which keeps over 3million of the smallest businesses out of VAT altogether. For those self-employed individuals on low incomes whose earnings continue to be affected by Covid-19 restrictions, work coaches will continue to be able to suspend the Universal Credit Minimum Income Floor on an individual basis for up to six months per claimant. Businesses can also access free and impartial advice through the Growth Hub and the Business Support Helpline.

■ Children: Day Care

Bridget Phillipson:

[92910]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the total amount spent on childcare in England (a) from all sources and (b) from the public purse in each of the last five years.

Mr Simon Clarke:

The Government has spent over £4 billion each year for the last five years on childcare in the United Kingdom through childcare offers led by the Department for Education and Tax-Free Childcare and Employer Support Childcare. This £4 billion is on top of support for childcare paid to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits claimants, though these elements are calculated as part of the total Universal Credit and tax credit spend respectively and separate figures are not available.

At SR21, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced an uplift to the hourly rates to be paid to early years providers to deliver the government's free hours offers, and details of the £160 million for 2022 to 2023 have recently been announced by the Department for Education. Additionally, SR21 reaffirmed £150 million to be spent on the training of early years staff to support children's learning and development, as part of the £1.4 billion Education Recovery Programme.

Demonstrating the Government's ongoing commitment to high-quality early years education, childcare and family services.

■ Coronavirus: Government Assistance

Rachael Maskell:

[90903]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of providing additional support to the (a) hospitality, (b) tourism and (c) travel sectors with respect to the Omicron variant.

Helen Whately:

Plan B has been designed to help control the virus's spread while avoiding unduly damaging economic and social restrictions. The Treasury continues to engage with businesses to understand and monitor the impact of the changing nature of the virus.

Impacted businesses can continue to benefit from ongoing economic support, in place through to Spring next year, including the extension of the Recovery Loan Scheme and the Additional Restriction Grants.

Business rates relief for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England is available until March 2022, and hospitality and tourism businesses will continue to benefit from a VAT reduction – paying only 12.5% until March 2022.

At Autumn Budget 2021, the Government also announced a new temporary relief for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in 2022-23 worth almost £1.7 billion. This will support the businesses that make our high streets and town centres successful to evolve and adapt to changing consumer demands until the next revaluation.

Business will also be protected from eviction if they are behind on rent on their premises, thanks to the moratorium in place until March 2022.

Ultimately the best way to support airports and the wider travel sector is through the safe and sustainable recovery of international travel. The measures HMG introduced to slow the import of Omicron cases were precautionary and time-limited, and following the latest review we have now eased some of these restrictions – removing all of the countries from the Red list. The remaining precautionary measures will be reviewed on 5 January.

The aviation and aerospace sectors are being supported with over £12 billion made available through loan guarantees, support for exporters, the Bank of England's Covid Corporate Financing Facility and grants for research and development.

In addition, the renewed Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme that the Chancellor announced at the Autumn Budget provides support for eligible businesses with their fixed costs for a further six months over the Winter period, up to the equivalent of their business rates liabilities for the second half of the 2021-22 financial year, subject to certain conditions and a cap per claimant of £4m.

Where applicable, travel businesses can continue to apply for the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme through their local authority, which is open until March 2022. Throughout the pandemic, over £2 billion of discretionary business grant funding was provided to local authorities via the ARG to support businesses in their local area. Local authorities determine how much funding to provide to businesses and exactly which businesses to target.

■ Fossil Fuels: Taxation

Caroline Lucas: [\[90851\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 23 November 2021 to Question 74952 on Fossil Fuels: Subsidies, if he will make it his policy to include taxation policies in his Department's definition of a fossil fuel subsidy in line with the approach of the World Trade Organization; and if he will make representations to the International Energy Agency to revise their definition of a fossil fuel subsidy in the same way.

Caroline Lucas: [\[90852\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the New Economic Foundation and Common Wealth's report, Fossil fuels support in the UK tax system, if he will make it his policy to align the UK's tax system with the (a) Government's climate and nature goals and (b) Glasgow Climate Pact.

Caroline Lucas: [\[90853\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department has made of the alignment of its fossil fuel taxation policies with the Glasgow Climate Pact.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[90854\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will make it his policy to conduct an assessment of (a) the UK's support for fossil fuels through the tax system and (b) the compatibility of that support with the Glasgow Climate Pact.

Helen Whately:

The UK does not give any subsidies to fossil fuels, and follows the approach of the International Energy Agency, which defines fossil fuel subsidies as measures that reduce the effective price of fossil fuels below world market prices.

The International Energy Agency has a long-standing track record in systematically measuring fossil-fuel subsidies using a commonly applied methodology. This definition was originally developed with the European Commission and G20 EU Member States to respond to the G20 commitment to phase out such subsidies.

The UK has been a longstanding supporter of multilateral efforts to promote fossil fuel subsidy reform since these were first proposed in 2009, including through the G20, and the G7. The UK is a signatory of the Glasgow Climate Pact and is committed to the agreed phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies across the globe that encourage wasteful consumption, and sees clear benefits in doing so.

The government takes its environmental responsibilities seriously, and recently published the Net Zero Strategy on how the UK will deliver on its commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Pricing carbon (including through tax) is one of the most efficient tools for promoting decarbonisation and already plays a key role in helping the UK achieve net zero emissions. There are also a number of taxes, including the Climate Change Levy and Vehicle Excise Duty, that are designed to encourage businesses and consumers to make greener choices. The government also incorporated a climate assessment in all relevant Tax Information and Impact Notes (TIINs) for measures at Autumn Budget and will continue to do so in future TIINs.

The government keeps all taxes under review, and any changes are made in the round at fiscal events.

■ Infrastructure: Climate Change and Nature Conservation

Caroline Lucas:

[\[92862\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment his Department made of the Government funding needed to transform the UK's infrastructure in response to the climate and nature crises when setting the 3 per cent cap on capital investment set out in the Charter for Budget Responsibility, announced in the Autumn 2021 Budget.

Caroline Lucas:

[\[92863\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the Charter for Budget Responsibility: autumn 2021 update, if he will publish calculations made when setting the

3 per cent cap on capital investment set out in that update, announced in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021.

Mr Simon Clarke:

Over the medium term, the new fiscal framework ensures that government borrowing will only be used to fund investment. To ensure that our investment in capital is consistent with plans for debt to fall over the medium term, the framework includes a supplementary target for Public Sector Net Investment (PSNI) to not exceed 3% of GDP a year on average over the rolling forecast period. This will allow the Government to deliver on its ambitious plans for investment over this Parliament, with the highest sustained levels of PSNI as a proportion of GDP since the late 1970s.

Investment to support the transition to net zero is a major part of the Government's plans. The Net Zero Strategy confirmed £26bn of public capital investment since the Ten Point Plan. The Autumn Budget and Spending Review 2021 confirmed that since March 2021, the Government will have committed a total of £30bn of investment for the green industrial revolution in the UK.

Public spending is not the only policy lever available to support the transition to net zero. Our balanced package, with appropriate carbon pricing and regulatory levers among others, will support 440,000 jobs by 2030, and leverage up to £90bn of private investment by 2030. *This investment will keep the UK on track to meet its carbon budgets and Nationally Determined Contribution, and reach net zero by 2050.*

■ **Treasury: Carbon Emissions**

Dr Matthew Offord:

[\[91945\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps his Department is taking to help achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

Helen Whately:

The Net Zero Strategy (NZS) outlined a wide-ranging package of measures to transition to a green and sustainable future, helping businesses and consumers to move to clean power.

The recent Budget and SR confirmed that since March 2021, the government will have committed a total of £30bn of domestic investment for the Green Industrial Revolution, supporting hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs and leveraging up to £90 billion of private investment by 2030.

The independent Committee on Climate Change have confirmed that taken together the strategy will keep the UK on track for its carbon budgets and 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution, and establishes the longer-term pathway towards net zero by 2050.

WALES

■ **Human Rights Act 1998: Wales****Ruth Jones:**[\[93041\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will make an assessment of the effect of the Human Rights Act 1998 on people in (a) Newport West and (b) Wales.

Simon Hart:

The Government fully supports the fundamental rights as set out in the European Convention for Human Rights. The framework for the application of human rights in Wales and across the UK – through the Human Rights Act 1998 – has however proved flawed. We are therefore consulting on proposals for a Bill of Rights that will protect people's fundamental rights whilst safeguarding the broader public interest and respecting the will of elected representatives in Parliament. We are seeking views from across the UK, including on how our reforms can best reflect the different interests, histories and legal traditions of all parts of the UK.

■ **Wales Office: Official Hospitality****Geraint Davies:**[\[90819\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, whether any social events took place between three or more people within his Departmental buildings between (a) 5 November 2020 and 1 December 2020 and (b) 16 December 2020 and 22 February 2021.

Simon Hart:

[Holding answer 15 December 2021]: This information is not collected. At the time, staff were expected to work from home and undertake meetings remotely, wherever possible.

WORK AND PENSIONS

■ **Access to Work Programme****Lilian Greenwood:**[\[91950\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to reduce the time taken for responses to Access to Work applications.

Chloe Smith:

Access to Work (AtW) is currently receiving an increased level of applications for support and we are working through all applications to ensure they are progressed as quickly as possible.

Improvements are already underway to improve clearance times whilst maintaining the same high standard of customer service we aim to provide to all our customers.

We have recruited additional staff who will be joining us in the new year to respond to the increased demand.

■ Large Goods Vehicle Drivers: Health

Mr Barry Sheerman: [\[90341\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on protecting the health of HGV drivers from road air pollution.

Chloe Smith:

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regulates work-related health and safety in Great Britain. Employers, including Local Authorities (LAs), have existing duties under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 to manage health risks where workers may be exposed to hazardous substances as a result of work. The Regulations are supported by Workplace Exposure Limits (WELS) for substances hazardous to health. These will inform an employer's assessment and management of risk from exhaust emissions and pollutants such as Nitrogen Dioxide and Carbon Monoxide that can give rise to Occupational Lung Diseases (OLD).

Tackling OLDs as a result of exposure to hazardous substances at work is one of HSE's health priorities. HSE works with a broad range of stakeholders including trade associations, employers, trade unions, third sector and professional bodies to reduce the incidence rate of OLDs.

■ Social Security Benefits: Disqualification

Kate Osamor: [\[90473\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427, Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, with reference to the 149,057 cases suspended under the Risk Review Process, how many and what proportion (a) remain suspended, (b) have been closed and (c) were reinstated.

Kate Osamor: [\[90474\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many of the 149,057 cases that have been suspended under the Risk Review Process were suspended in each month from May 2020 to December 2021.

Kate Osamor: [\[90476\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, of the 149,057 cases that were suspended under the Risk Review Process how many appeals have been lodged after a decision was issued.

Kate Osamor: [\[90477\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, of the 149,057 cases suspended under the Risk Review Process, what the average time is between (a) the start of the suspension and (b) a decision being issued.

David Rutley:

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Kate Osamor:[\[90475\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, with reference to the 149,057 cases that were suspended under the Risk Review Process, how many were suspended due to (a) suspected fraud and (b) claimant error.

David Rutley:

All claims that have been suspended under the Risk Review Process are done so where there is suspicion of fraud.

■ Social Security Benefits: Fraud**Jim Shannon:**[\[90416\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to tackle benefits fraud.

David Rutley:

The Department takes fraud against the benefits system very seriously and has taken huge steps to reduce and minimise fraud and error, including during the last 18 months, at a time where the Department processed an additional 3 million new Universal Credit claims. In the last 18 months we have:

- Expanded our Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service that coordinate the detection of, and response to, fraud risk from organised crime groups seeking to exploit the benefit system.
- Invested £44m into the Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service to expand the pre-payment 'risking' techniques and maintain the new Enhanced Checking Service for high risk claims.
- Revisited over 900,000 high risk claims paid during the early period of Covid-19, generating potentially £400m in savings.
- Announced £510m investment this month to support a number of new initiatives over the next three years. This will facilitate a targeted review of Universal Credit claims, the development of a new Debt Enforcement Function and further recruitment into the Counter Fraud and Compliance and Debt Directorate so that we can continue to respond quickly and effectively to threats. This includes funding for around 2,000 trained specialists to identify and stop scammers.

We regularly liaise with Northern Ireland counterparts on both a case specific basis and on wider fraud and error issues.

■ Social Security Benefits: Terminal Illnesses

Duncan Baker:

[92099]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to bring forward legislative proposals to amend the Special Rules for Terminal Illness.

Chloe Smith:

The Department is committed to supporting people nearing the end of their lives. We plan to amend legislation to implement changes to the Special Rules for Terminal Illness across five DWP benefits, beginning with Universal Credit alongside Employment and Support Allowance next year. This will be in advance of changes to Primary Legislation for Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment which are dependent on Parliamentary time.

■ State Retirement Pensions

Douglas Chapman:

[91988]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason she has no current plans to include options for receiving the State Pension weekly or bi-weekly on the State Pension claim form.

Guy Opperman:

There are no current plans to include options for receiving State Pension weekly/bi-weekly on the State Pension claim form.

The customer can, however, request a change to another payment frequency if they wish, at any point after the initial claim and award payment is made. A customer may telephone or write to request this change. State Pension systems do have the functionality to provide an alternative payment frequency, at any point after the initial claim and award is made. The easiest way to do this is for the customer to contact Pension Service by telephone and an operational agent can facilitate the change.

■ State Retirement Pensions: Newport West

Ruth Jones:

[93048]

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 in Newport West constituency; 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

■ Unemployment

Feryal Clark:

[90512]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent estimate she has made of the (a) unemployment and (b) youth unemployment rates in Enfield North constituency; what comparative assessment her Department has made of those figures and the equivalent UK rates; what assessment her Department has made of the factors that contribute to geographical disparities in unemployment rates; and what steps she is taking to reduce unemployment in Enfield North constituency.

Mims Davies:

Estimates of (a) unemployment and (b) youth unemployment in the year to Jun 2021 based on the Annual Population Survey are published and available [here](#). Guidance for users can be found [here](#). The sample sizes for Enfield North mean that the youth unemployment rate is suppressed in the latest data, and the overall unemployment rate estimate is unreliable.

This geographical data is published and the Department keeps it regularly under review.

Through our Plan for Jobs, DWP has recruited an additional 13,500 Work Coaches to provide support to unemployed people to find a job. DWP has several targeted schemes to support people of all ages and to help them prepare for and progress into work. These include the Kickstart Scheme which has, so far, seen over 112,000 young people aged 18-24 start new jobs and Restart which provides up to 12 months intensive employment support to Universal Credit claimants who have been unemployed for a year.

The DWP Youth Offer has been extended to 2025 and has expanded eligibility to include 16 and 17-year olds, in addition to 18 to 24-year olds, who are claiming Universal Credit and searching for work through the 150 Youth Hubs across England, Scotland and Wales. DWP is also delivering a comprehensive package of support for young people in collaboration with the Department for Education and National Careers Service in England, the Devolved Administrations, and other partners.

In Enfield North, all customers have access to the Plan for Jobs offer, delivering a comprehensive range of support to help people back into work. We are in the process of establishing two Youth Hubs in Enfield. Mainstream employment support in Enfield is supplemented through DWP's local Flexible Support Funded (FSF) provision, in response to needs identified within the local community, delivering tailored support to enhance employment prospects.

The Jobcentre also works with local employers to deliver Sector Work Based Academy Programmes (SWAPs). These deliver short vocational training linked directly to vacancies within a particular employer or in a particular sector. In Enfield we continue to host a range of employers in various sectors including care, construction, administration and warehouse roles.

■ Universal Credit: Habitual Residence Test

Kate Osamor:

[90478]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims were issued with a negative decision on the grounds that the claimant failed the habitual residence test in each month from January 2015 to December 2021.

David Rutley:

The table attached gives numbers of Universal Credit claims issued with a negative decision on the grounds that the claimant failed the Habitual Residence Test in each month from June 2015 to August 2021.

The Department currently holds information for Habitual Residence Tests failed by Universal Credit claimants from June 2015 to August 2021.

Notes:

1. Numbers failing the Habitual Residence Test are updated monthly and retrospectively as outcomes are resolved. Current numbers may therefore be different from those shared at an earlier time for the same period.
2. The rise in numbers failing the Habitual Residence Test since 2015 reflects the gradual roll out of Universal Credit and the rising caseload.
3. Only single-person claims were included on the early Universal Credit caseload until December 2018 when the Universal Credit full service began rollout.
4. Figures below 100 rounded to the nearest 10.
5. Figures above 100 rounded to the nearest 100.

Attachments:

1. 90478 [\[Table.xlsx\]](#)