



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 10 March 2021 and the information is correct at the time of publication (06:47 P.M., 10 March 2021). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

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**Notes:**

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

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

## ANSWERS

### BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

#### ■ Construction: Materials

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[161754\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to support the construction industry as a result of reported shortages of tiles and timber since the end of the transition period.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The Government is aware that some products including tiles and timber are in short supply nationally. At present, global supply of these products is not keeping pace with demand, and undersupply in 2020 reduced existing stocks.

In light of this, and in view of more local disruptions in the supply of these and other products, the Construction Leadership Council's Coronavirus Task Force has established a Product Availability Working Group, comprised of product manufacturers, builders' merchants and suppliers, contractors of all sizes, and housebuilders. The Task Force continues to monitor the supply and demand of products, and identify those in short supply.

#### ■ Fossil Fuels

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[161735\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the proposals for a Global Registry of Fossil Fuels; published by the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty campaign and being developed by Carbon Tracker and Global Energy Monitor; and if he will make a statement.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We are aware of this proposal and have engaged with the relevant Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on the concept.

For the UK, as of June 2020, the Coal Authority estimates that overall, there are 3,906 million tonnes of coal resources, including prospects.

The Oil and Gas Authority estimate remaining UK Continental Shelf recoverable petroleum resources are in the range of 10 to 20 billion barrels or more of oil equivalent. This includes discovered and undiscovered petroleum resources and takes into account the wide range of possibilities for prospective resources which are not yet discovered. Proposals for a Global Registry will need to address this, given the high degree of uncertainty about recoverable resources.

## ■ Green Homes Grant Scheme

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[161691\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to ensure that all invoices for the Green Homes Grant scheme are paid within two weeks.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

The payment process is a four-step process that requires: the customer to confirm the work has been completed, the installer to record the work on the TrustMark database, the scheme administrator to check the conditions of the voucher issued have been met, and then the scheme administrator to make the payment.

We are working with consumers and installers to ensure they are clear on the information and checks required, so that vouchers can be paid as quickly as possible.

The scheme administrator is prioritising the payment of the vouchers and we are continuing to see an increase in the number of vouchers being paid out to installers once work is complete.

## ■ Hydroelectric Power: Storage

**Alan Brown:**

[\[161808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what discussions his Department has held with Ofgem on the potential merits of (a) pumped hydro storage and (b) other long duration storage technologies.

**Anne-Marie Trevelyan:**

We are working closely with Ofgem to develop the next Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, due for publication in spring this year. This will set out the merits of large scale and longer duration electricity storage as well as the next steps for addressing any barriers to deployment.

## ■ Small Businesses: Closures

**Debbie Abrahams:**

[\[163694\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, how many small businesses closed in each financial year from 2010-11 to date.

**Paul Scully:**

Data on business closures by size of business are not available. The data provided below covers all registered business closures in the UK for the periods specified.

According to the business counts published in 2020 by the Office for National Statistics in [UK business: activity, size and location](#), 98.1% of all registered business are small (0 to 49 employees). Therefore, the vast majority of business closures are very likely to be small businesses.

Data on business closures over the **last 3 financial years** are shown in table 1:

**Table 1: Number of business closures by financial year, all registered businesses**

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER OF BUSINESS CLOSURES
2019/2020	383,000
2018/2019	348,000
2017/2018	351,000

Source: Office for National Statistics: [Business Demography, quarterly experimental statistics, UK](#)

Prior to 2017 data are only available for calendar years, rather than financial years. The number of closures in each **calendar year** is shown in table 2:

**Table 2: Number of business closures by calendar year, all registered businesses**

CALENDAR YEAR	NUMBER OF BUSINESS CLOSURES
2019	336,000
2018	311,000
2017	346,000
2016	281,000
2015	282,000
2014	246,000
2013	238,000
2012	252,000
2011	230,000
2010	277,000

Source: Office for National Statistics: [Business demography, UK statistical bulletin](#)

## ■ Unite: Annual Reports

**John Spellar:**

**[163630]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2021 to Question 160530, on what date the 2019 return for Unite was received by the Certification Office.



**Paul Scully:**

The Certification Officer received the 2019 annual return for Unite on 18 December 2020. This annual return has now been published on GOV.UK by the Certification Officer.

**■ Weddings: Coronavirus****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[161683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what economic impact assessment his Department has made of the cap on guests at weddings until 21 June 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

BEIS officials and I meet regularly with the industry-led Weddings Taskforce established to represent all parts of the Weddings sector [in England], to understand the impact of the pandemic on jobs and businesses. On 22 February, my Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister published the Government's 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021'. The roadmap is a step-by-step plan to ease restrictions in England cautiously, starting with education. Across the four steps, the roadmap sets out the sequencing and indicative timing for easing restrictions, including those on the wedding sector.

Over the course of the pandemic, the Government has provided an unprecedented package of financial support to businesses, which we keep under regular review.

**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[161684\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what recent assessment his Department has made of the transmission levels of covid-19 at (a) indoor and (b) outdoor weddings.

**Paul Scully:**

The Government's approach to reopening the wedding sector is detailed in "COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021".

At step 2, weddings receptions will be able to take place with up to 15 attendees (in premises that are permitted to open). At step 3, weddings receptions can proceed with up to 30 attendees. With appropriate mitigations in place, by Step 4, the Government aims to remove all limits on weddings and other life events, subject to the outcome of the scientific Events Research Programme.

**Dr Dan Poulter:**[\[161737\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, whether wedding (a) caterers and (b) venues will be legally permitted to cater for a wedding reception held indoors from 12 April 2021.

**Paul Scully:**

As detailed in the Government's "COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021", from no earlier than 12 April, weddings and receptions are permitted for up to 15 people. Further guidance will be published ahead of step 2 of reopening.

**CABINET OFFICE****■ Election Offences**

**Stella Creasy:** [\[163215\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the timeframe is for the Government to bring forward legislative proposals to introduce a new electoral sanction of intimidation.

**Chloe Smith:**

The Government will legislate for a new electoral sanction against intimidation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

The new electoral sanction is one part of the Government's wider programme of work to address intimidation in public life. More details on this programme are set out in Written Ministerial Statement [HCWS833](#) 'Update on Tackling Intimidation in Public Life' made on 09 March 2021.

**■ Foreign Investment in UK: Data Protection**

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[163179\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, what the stock of outward foreign direct investment from the UK was in (a) Cameroon, (b) Egypt, (c) Iraq, (d) Libya and (e) Yemen in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[163180\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, what the stock of inward foreign direct investment in the UK was from (a) Cameroon, (b) Colombia, (c) Israel, (d) Mexico and (e) Venezuela in each of the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[163181\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, what his Department's policy is on how few individuals or companies must be responsible for the aggregate total of inward foreign direct investment for that total to not be subject to disclosure on data protection grounds.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[163182\]](#)

To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, what his Department's policy is on how few individuals or companies must be responsible for the aggregate total of outward foreign direct investment for that total to not be subject to disclosure on data protection grounds.

**Chloe Smith:**

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

**Attachments:**

1. UKSA response PQ163179-82 [UKSA's final response to PQ163179\_163180\_163181\_163182.pdf]

## ■ Government Departments: Billing

**Debbie Abrahams:**

[\[161763\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what estimate he has made of the amount Government departments owe in late payments to small businesses since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Julia Lopez:**

Government does not maintain a central estimate of late payments owed to small businesses.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic the Government has issued a number of procurement policy notes with the goal of supporting cash flow to suppliers by accelerating payment. These have included a range of approaches such as forward ordering, payment in advance/prepayment, interim payments and payment on order (not receipt).

## ■ Members: Correspondence

**Mr John Baron:**

[\[157017\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he plans to respond to the correspondence from the hon. Member for Basildon and Billericay of 1 December 2020, 6 January 2021 and 9 February 2021 on a constituency case, reference JB30241 MC2020/20662.

**Julia Lopez:**

I apologise for the delay in considering and responding to the issues the hon. Member has raised. The response to this correspondence will be issued shortly.

## ■ PA Consulting Group: Coronavirus

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[\[155474\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, if he will publish the attendees at negotiations for the contracts awarded to PA Consulting to help deliver the Government's covid-19 response.

**Alex Davies-Jones:**

[\[155475\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, what the total value of contracts awarded to PA Consulting in 2020 was to help the Government's response to covid-19.

**Julia Lopez:**

As has been the case under successive administrations, details of meetings with external contractors are not usually disclosed. Details of ministers' meetings with external organisations and individuals are published on gov.uk periodically.

Details of Government contracts above £10,000 are published on Contracts Finder: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Search>

**■ Queen's Consent****Zarah Sultana:** [\[163728\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, whether the Government plans to review the operation of Queen's consent.

**Chloe Smith:**

Queen's Consent is a longstanding convention and a requirement of the Parliamentary process. The Government does not plan to review its operation.

**COP26****■ Food: Sustainable Development****Neil Parish:** [\[156368\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what progress he is making with international partners to (a) ensure that local and international supply chains for foodstuffs and key commodities are environmentally responsible, and (b) increase the alignment of financial flows with net-zero and the Paris Agreement objectives.

**Alok Sharma:**

As part of the COP26 nature campaign, the UK Government has established the Forests, Agriculture and Commodity Trade (FACT) dialogues to bring together producer and consumer countries to agree collaborative actions which reduce the impact of commodity supply chains on forests and other critical ecosystems.

Increasing the alignment of finance with net zero targets and the Paris Climate Agreement is a core part of our COP26 strategy. I have been engaging with a wide range of international partners to seek increased climate finance commitments from donor countries to meet the critical \$100bn goal. We have published our priorities for public finance. Mark Carney is implementing a framework for embedding climate into every financial decision and creating a more sustainable financial system to support the path to net zero. We have seen significant progress so far across financial institutions, central banks, regulators and Multilateral Development Banks.

**■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Small Businesses****Jane Hunt:** [\[155460\]](#)

To ask the President of COP26, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that SMEs are represented at COP26.

**Alok Sharma:**

The UK is committed to hosting an inclusive COP, recognising the importance of showcasing our partners from across the UK, including SMEs.

There was an Expression of Interest application for organisations to submit their proposals to be involved in the UK Government managed spaces of COP26. We encouraged a collaborative approach to applications, and set up a group on the

COP26 LinkedIn platform to enable organisations, including SMEs, to find potential collaborators. The deadline for responses was 17:00 GMT on Friday 5 March 2021.

As Presidency, we are keen to showcase businesses and organisations which have set ambitious net zero commitments by 2050 or earlier, with a credible short term action plan, and are encouraging organisations to demonstrate their commitment by joining the Race to Zero campaign, which SMEs can do via the SME Climate Hub.

## DEFENCE

### ■ Army: Training

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[163270\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how many recruits at the Army Foundation College have been unable to complete their training during the covid-19 outbreak; and whether any recruits have been dismissed from the army as a result of not being able to take up training.

**James Heapey:**

The full training programme at the Army Foundation College (Harrogate) (AFC(H)) continued throughout the pandemic, implementing the necessary Force Health Protection measures as outlined by Public Health England.

A small number of junior soldiers, (less than ten) have experienced delays to their training due to the COVID-19 outbreak. No recruits have been dismissed or have been unable to take up their training at the ACF(H).

## DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

### ■ Football: Females

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[163699\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what plans he has to allocate specific funding from the public purse to female grassroots football teams.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

I am committed to encouraging more women and girls to get active and helping women's sport come out of the current crisis stronger than ever. Over the last year I have met with a range of sports organisations to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on women's sport and how together we can address these challenges going forward. I have made clear in these discussions that I expect women's sport to be protected through the pandemic and prioritised as we emerge on the other side.

Through our national sports council, Sport England, the government is investing £24.6m in The Football Association over the course of 2016-21 for its work on grassroots participation, the football talent pathway, and coaching programmes. Within this, there is no specific ring-fencing of funding between men's and women's

programmes, apart from £2.6m which is specifically reserved for women and girls talent programmes.

Sport England has also awarded The FA £1m to date to deliver The FA FIVES national promotion programme, a mass participation five a side football competition linked to EURO 2021 & EURO 2022. Its aim is to provide opportunities throughout England for men and women to take part in a fun, friendly football event. In addition, they have awarded £987,000 towards the Women's Euro 2022 Host City Legacy Impact intended to increase activity levels in football amongst women aged 16+.

Sport England has also provided £220m directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic, via a range of funds including their £35m Community Emergency Fund. £2.25m of this funding has been awarded to the FA to support a safe restart of football. This funding will prioritise groups most impacted by Covid-19, including Women's National League. This sector support was recently boosted by an extra £50m to help grassroots sports clubs and organisations as part of Sport England's new strategy Uniting the Movement.

On 19 February, it was announced that women's sport would also receive multi-million pound support through the Sport Winter Survival Package including £2.25m for the Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship.

#### ■ **Gymnastics: Disability**

**Justin Madders:**

**[162638]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what assessment he has made of the level of disabled access and opportunities in British Gymnastics at (a) youth and (b) adult level.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

Sport England's Active Lives Adult and Children surveys provide information on activity levels across a variety of sports, including gymnastics, and include data on participation by disabled people. The latest reports can be found [here](#).

Government recognises the importance of ensuring disabled access to sports facilities. Our sport strategy, Sporting Future, sets out a clear ambition to increase levels of physical activity, particularly amongst under-represented groups, including disabled people.

This is reinforced in Sport England's new strategy Uniting the Movement, which sets out their 10 year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. The strategy seeks to tackle the inequalities seen in sport and physical activity and provide opportunities to people that have traditionally been left behind, including those with a disability, helping to remove barriers to activity.

Government is also currently in the process of recruiting a new cohort of Disability and Access Ambassadors, one of whom will focus on the Sport and Physical Activity sector. The ambassador will help to drive improvements in the accessibility and

quality of services and facilities in the sector for disabled people, as consumers and employees.

## ■ National Lottery: Football

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

**[161661]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what discussions he has had with representatives of (a) the Football Association and (b) Camelot regarding the method of allocation used by the National League to determine the amount of money received by football clubs from the funding provided by the National Lottery's promotional fund.

**Nigel Huddleston:**

In October 2020, the government was able to play a role in supporting the National League to start its season through brokering the unique £10 million promotional deal with The National Lottery.

Whilst the distribution of National Lottery support is a matter for the National League, the government was clear in supporting the deal that it expected the proceeds to be allocated sensibly.

## ■ Television Licences: Older People

**Jim Shannon:**

**[162603]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, what recent discussions he has had with stakeholders on (a) providing a free TV licence for people aged over 75 and (b) decriminalising licence evasion for people aged over 75.

**Mr John Whittingdale:**

The Secretary of State meets regularly with a range of stakeholders, including the BBC. All DCMS ministerial meetings are disclosed on gov.uk, and the most recent can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-ministerial-gifts-hospitality-travel-and-meetings-1-july-to-30-september-2020>.

The government remains deeply disappointed with the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. However, the Digital Economy Act 2017 provides that the future of the over-75s concession is the responsibility of the BBC, not the government. The BBC is also responsible for the collection and enforcement of the TV licence fee.

The government has said that the BBC must look at how it uses its substantial licence fee income to support older people. As part of the 2022 licence fee settlement negotiations, the Secretary of State has asked the BBC to set out any further plans it has to support those in vulnerable groups, including the elderly.

The government also remains concerned that a criminal sanction for TV licence evasion is increasingly disproportionate and unfair in a modern public service broadcasting system, and will keep the issue under active consideration while more work is done to understand the impact of alternative enforcement schemes.



**EDUCATION****■ Boarding Schools: Coronavirus**

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[159047\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking ensure the return of international boarders to boarding school during the covid-19 outbreak before 8 March 2021.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[159048\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of quarantining boarding school pupils who have returned from abroad in boarding accommodation that is operated by the school during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[159049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether safeguarding measures have been considered and implemented for those returning international boarding school pupils made to quarantine in hotels.

**Fleur Anderson:** [\[159050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether safeguarding measures have been implemented for pupils returning from international boarding school who have been required to quarantine in hotels during the covid-19 lockdown.

**Nick Gibb:**

Arrangements for the quarantine of international boarders attending schools in England should be in place before boarding school pupils travel. Pupils can serve their quarantine within their boarding school (although different arrangements apply depending on whether they have travelled from a 'red list' country or not). Boarding school pupils have been able to return to the UK early so that they could serve the required quarantine period before school started on 8 March 2021.

Arrangement for boarders arriving from non-red list countries are laid out in the schools' COVID-19 operational guidance published by the Department. This guidance is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964351/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf).

Arrangements for boarders that meet the relevant UK entry requirements and will arrive from 'red list' countries (or having travelled through a 'red list' country in the 10 days prior to arrival) must be in line with the guidance available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarantine-arrangements-for-boarding-school-students-from-red-list-countries>.



## ■ Business: Education

**Jo Gideon:**

[\[155449\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment his Department has made of the adequacy of resources available to (a) primary and (b) secondary schools in England to support enterprise and entrepreneurship education.

**Nick Gibb:**

Entrepreneurship education is an important component of high quality careers provision. The careers statutory guidance, updated in 2018, requires secondary schools in England to provide opportunities for pupils to develop entrepreneurial knowledge relevant for self-employment.

The Department provides resources and support to secondary schools through the Careers & Enterprise Company's Enterprise Adviser Network, Careers Hubs and online resources, to make links to employers and increase young people's exposure to the world of work. The Department also funds training for Careers Leaders to develop the knowledge they need to embed and deliver a successful careers programme in their secondary school.

There are now more than 4,000 schools and colleges in the Careers & Enterprise Company's Enterprise Adviser Network working with business volunteers to strengthen employer links. Careers Hubs now include 45% of all state-funded schools and colleges across England and funding has been provided for 1,950 Careers Leaders training bursaries.

The result is that 3.3 million young people now have regular encounters with employers, including entrepreneurs and 84% of secondary schools and colleges are satisfied with the support they receive from their Enterprise Adviser. 92% of Careers Leaders state they have become more effective as a result of the training. The Department will continue national roll-out of this support as announced in the Skills for Jobs White Paper published in January 2021:

[https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1244\\_careers\\_ed\\_2020\\_report18\\_0.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploaded/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf).

Over the last 18 months, the Department has focused on testing what works at a primary level. In partnership with the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Department has developed and launched an online Primary Careers Resources platform which includes free to use tools and resources from 15 organisations, including Primary Futures.

Financial capability is a key component of successful entrepreneurship and in 2014 financial literacy was made statutory within the Citizenship National Curriculum. Pupils are taught the functions and uses of money, the importance of personal budgeting, money management and the need to understand financial risk. The computing curriculum prepares pupils to apply existing digital technologies confidently and effectively but will also provide them with the fundamental knowledge

needed to create new digital technology products and to create their own tech start-ups.

Schools can also cover enterprise and entrepreneurship within their personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education. Teachers have the freedom to design lessons and resources in PSHE that meet their pupils' needs, and they are encouraged to develop their practice with the support of specialist organisations, such as the PSHE Association.

### ■ **Childminding: Coronavirus**

**Richard Fuller:** [158896]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 5 February 2021 to Question 147056, on Childminding: Coronavirus, how he plans to prioritise the steps outlined; and if he will set out a timetable for taking those steps.

**Richard Fuller:** [158897]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he plans to take to provide asymptomatic covid-19 testing to all Ofsted registered childminders.

**Nick Gibb:**

Childminders currently have access to community testing and should continue to use local community testing programmes for regular asymptomatic testing until further notice. More information on where and how these can be accessed is found here: <https://www.gov.uk/find-covid-19-lateral-flow-test-site>. The Department is continuing to work closely with colleagues in local authorities and across Government to explore the most effective approach for testing childminders.

### ■ **Children: Education and Social Services**

**Daisy Cooper:** [163313]

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the reorganisation of local government on the provision of (a) children's care and (b) education services.

**Vicky Ford:**

In October 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) invited local areas to submit proposals for reorganising local government in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset. In December 2020, MHCLG received four proposals for Cumbria, two for North Yorkshire and two for Somerset. These proposals are currently being consulted on, and MHCLG are planning for a decision on the final outcome of the proposals received to be made by summer 2021.

The government will assess each proposal on its respective merits and the Department for Education will be contributing its assessment of the impact on children's services and education to MHCLG's overall assessment. Each proposal will be assessed against three criteria, which are: whether the proposal would improve local government and service delivery across the area of the proposal; how

much local support it commands across the area of the proposal; and whether the area of any new unitary council would cover a credible geography. All of these proposals will be considered after the consultation and before a decision is made on which option, if any, to implement. The eventual decision would also be subject to Parliamentary approval.

## ■ Coronavirus Catch-up Premium

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[158128\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish covid-19 catch up premium funding allocations for each school by (a) constituency and (b) local authority area.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has published funding allocations for the catch-up premium which include a breakdown by local authority. We will provide details of funding arrangements for the recovery premium announced on 24 February in due course.

## ■ Coronavirus: Disease Control

**Chi Onwurah:**

[\[160656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 restrictions on the ability of students to return home for the Easter break.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The welfare of students, staff and the communities around higher education (HE) providers remain our top priority. To help providers make informed decisions about their provision, the government has issued guidance on the return of students in spring term, which is based on the latest public health advice. From 8 March, we have advised HE providers to resume in-person teaching for students on practical or practice-based (including creative arts) courses, in addition to courses in priority subjects which resumed in January.

Once students have returned to their term-time accommodation they must remain living there unless an exemption to the national restrictions on leaving home and gatherings applies. They must only travel home where they have a legally permitted reason to do so. If students rely on an exemption to travel home (for example if they need to move home temporarily because of illness or mental ill-health), they should ensure that they test as soon as possible on their return to university. In addition, students will be able to return home for their Easter break, if they choose to do so. However, in order to minimise transmission, we strongly advise that students remain in their term time accommodation where possible. Where students do travel home for their Easter break, they should get tested before they travel. Students are also encouraged to test before they travel back to university, where community testing facilities are available. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-testing-explainer/community-testing-programme-areas>. If they test positive, they will be legally required to self-isolate for ten days and should not travel. All HE providers should set an expectation

that students should test as soon as possible upon their return to/arrival at university, and twice weekly thereafter.

We know that many providers are planning to continue teaching and provide access to facilities over the Easter break. We encourage students to use this provision where it available.

## ■ Eleven Plus: Coronavirus

**Ian Mearns:**

[\[159291\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of (a) school closures during the covid-19 outbreak, (b) access to good quality teaching and (c) internet access and appropriate IT equipment on pupils from all backgrounds preparing to take the 11-plus exam in the 2021-22 academic year; and what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the disruption to education as a result of the covid-19 outbreak does not disproportionately affect pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds sitting and passing that exam.

**Nick Gibb:**

We know that receiving face-to-face education is best for children's mental health and educational achievement. We have resisted restrictions on attendance at schools since the first lockdown, but in the face of the rapidly rising numbers of cases across the country and intense pressure on the NHS we needed to use every lever at our disposal to reduce all our social contacts wherever possible.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, we have expected schools to remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers, whilst limiting attendance for the majority of children to help slow the spread of the virus. Schools have also been offering wraparound provision, such as breakfast and afterschool clubs, for those children eligible to attend. The system of controls set out in our guidance provides a set of principles for infection control. The guidance is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>. We expect schools to follow this advice and maximise the use of these control measures, so that they will effectively minimise risks of viral transmission.

Where it is needed, schools are expected to offer pupils in Key Stage 2 a minimum of 4 hours of remote education that includes either recorded or live direct teaching alongside time for pupils to work independently to complete assignments that have been set.

There is a wide range of resources available to support schools to meet the expectations we have set. The Get Help with Remote Education page on gov.uk provides a one-stop-shop for teachers, signposting the support package available: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-with-remote-education>. This includes helping schools to access technology that supports remote education, as well as peer-to-peer training and guidance on how to use technology effectively. We have also updated the remote education guidance to clarify and strengthen expectations in cases where

on-site attendance is restricted: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice/remote-education-good-practice>.

To make up for lost teaching time and to stop pupils falling behind, our £1 billion catch up package remains in place, including the £650 million catch-up premium and in-school support through the National Tutoring Programme for the most disadvantaged. We are also looking ahead to the arrangements for the 2021 exam series and how, working closely Sir Kevan Collins, our new Education Recovery Commissioner, we can support catch-up and make up for lost learning over the summer: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-commissioner-appointed-to-oversee-education-catch-up>.

The Government is investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care services, including securing 1.3 million laptops and tablets for disadvantaged children and young people. As of Monday 8 March 2021, over 1.2 million laptops and tablets have been delivered to schools, academy trusts, local authorities and further education colleges. The Department has based allocations on estimates of the need of disadvantaged children in Years 3 to 13. We have partnered with the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free data to help disadvantaged children get online as well as delivering over 70,000 4G wireless routers for pupils without connection at home.

Last year, we strongly advised admission authorities to test in October or November 2020 rather than in the first weeks of September, as is the normal practice, to give all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the chance to get back into the routine of education before being tested:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-assessment-processes-for-selective-school-admissions>. We will consider whether guidance is needed for the 2022 testing round, which will take place in autumn 2021.

If a child is refused admission their parent has a right of appeal, even if they have failed the selection test. The Appeals Code then says that the panel can look at other evidence of a child's ability, for example, SATS or report from the primary school, to establish whether they are of the required standard. Parents who consider their child did not perform to their utmost ability because of disruption can appeal on this basis. Please see the relevant sections of the Appeals Code:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/275897/school\\_admission\\_appeals\\_code\\_1\\_february\\_2012.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275897/school_admission_appeals_code_1_february_2012.pdf).

## ■ Extended Services: Coronavirus

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

**[161662]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of a potential reduction of providers in the wraparound childcare and holiday club sector on the UK's economic recovery from the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[161663\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will allocate funding to wraparound care providers to ensure that they continue to provide support to key workers, vulnerable children and working families during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[161664\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will allocate funding from the public purse to wraparound and holiday childcare services.

**Vicky Ford:**

The department does not currently hold a central register of wraparound providers. Therefore we are unable to make an accurate assessment of the effect of a potential reduction of providers. However, we understand and recognise that the wraparound childcare sector, like many sectors, is facing unprecedented financial pressures as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We also recognise the value this sector offers to our children and young people, in terms of the enriching activities they provide and, in particular, the valuable support they provide to our working parents and carers, and to vulnerable children.

Ensuring working parents and carers have access to the childcare they need remains a priority for the government. We acknowledge that this childcare will be crucial in the UK's economic recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak. That is why we have ensured that all before and after-school clubs, holiday clubs, and other out-of-school settings have been able to continue to stay open for children eligible to attend school on-site (i.e. for critical worker children, and vulnerable children and young people), for the duration of the recent national lockdown. From 8 March wraparound childcare and other children's activities have been able to open for all other children, where their parents/carers need the provision to support them to work, attend education, seek medical care or attend a support group, as well as for other essential purposes. Vulnerable children can attend childcare and other children's activities in all circumstances.

The government has made a range of financial packages of support available for businesses to access throughout the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes tax relief, business loans or cash grants through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, as well as a £594 million discretionary fund for councils and the devolved administrations to support local businesses that may not be eligible for other support, during the current national lockdown.

We are also still encouraging all local authorities to consider using local grants that have been made available to them during the COVID-19 outbreak, to support the wraparound childcare sector in their areas, and to safeguard sufficient childcare provision for all families. This includes the expanded Holiday Activities and Food Programme which comprises a £220 million fund to be delivered through grants to local authorities. This programme will give children eligible for free school meals the option to join a free holiday-time programme that provides healthy food and enriching activities during the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021.



## ■ Home Education: Coronavirus

**Dawn Butler:**

[\[154845\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what support his Department is providing to the families of home schooled children during the covid-19 outbreak; and what steps he is taking to help home schooled children receive predicted grades for examinations.

**Nick Gibb:**

It is the Government's aim to ensure all young people receive a world-class education which allows them to reach their potential and live a fulfilled life. In turn, we support the right of parents to educate children at home when they wish to do so and can provide a suitable education.

On 25 February, the Department announced proposals to fairly award all pupils a grade that supports them to progress to the next stage of their lives. These proposals include a clear and accessible route for private candidates to work with a centre to receive a grade this year, at the same time as other candidates. Exam boards will provide centres with clear guidance on the evidence they can use to assess a private candidate. A list of available centres will be published shortly, and we are working with the sector to ensure there are sufficient centres available and at a similar cost to a normal year.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Children

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[161829\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the importance of the wraparound childcare sector to supporting children's mental health during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Vicky Ford:**

The government recognises the important role wraparound childcare and other out-of-school activities play in providing enriching activities which support children's physical and mental health, as well as the development of skills and attitudes which promote their wellbeing. That is why we have ensured that all before and after-school clubs, holiday clubs, and other out-of-school settings have been able to continue to stay open for those children that need or rely on these settings most, for the duration of the national lockdown.

Until 8 March 2021, providers could open for all vulnerable children and young people regardless of circumstance, and children of critical workers where the provision was reasonably necessary to support their parents to work, undertake education or training, or access medical care, in line with those children eligible to attend school on site. From 8 March, these providers have been able to open their doors for all children, where the provision supports certain essential purposes, with vulnerable children and young people able to continue accessing provision under any circumstance. We have updated our protective measures guidance for the sector to support them to open for more children as safely as possible, which can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after->

[school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak.](#)

Given the importance of supporting children's mental health and wellbeing throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, Dr Alex George has been appointed as a Youth Mental Health Ambassador to advise the government and raise the profile of mental health education and wellbeing in schools. He will play an important role in shaping children's mental health education and support in schools as part of our plans to ensure all children and young people are supported with their mental health and wellbeing.

The Department for Education also launched in September its £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return programme. It has supported education staff to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a result of COVID-19. In addition, the Department for Health and Social Care also launched a campaign in September through the Every Mind Matters website to raise awareness of the guidance and tools available to support children and young people's mental wellbeing. Public Health England continues to update and promote the Every Mind Matters website, available here: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>. The government has also provided over £10 million of additional funding to mental health charities to support adults and children.

## ■ National Tutoring Programme

**Dame Diana Johnson:**

**[158888]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the provision of tutors reaches all pupils that require additional tuition due to the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) has been developed to support some of our most disadvantaged children and young people who are at risk of falling further behind due to lost time in education.

Our delivery partner, the Education Endowment Foundation, has approved 33 Tuition Partners who offer high-quality, subsidised tuition to schools. There is a good blend of both national and regional providers that can offer support to schools across all regions in England and 16 of the Tuition Partners are national providers. The Tuition Partners offer a variety of tuition models for schools to choose from, including online, face-to-face, small-group and one-to-one tuition.

Schools in the most disadvantaged areas of England have also been supported by Teach First to employ in-house Academic Mentors to provide intensive small group and one-to-one tuition.

The Department has undergone an extensive communications and engagement process with schools to ensure that as many as possible know about the programme and understand how to apply.



Tuition has continued throughout the national lockdown, with the majority of Tuition Partners offering online tuition at home. Academic Mentors have also continued to work with pupils in line with their individual school policy. Where it has been appropriate to do so, support has also continued for vulnerable and critical worker children at the school.

## ■ National Tutoring Programme: Harlow

**Robert Halfon:** [\[163206\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many children in Harlow are involved in the National Tutoring Programme.

**Robert Halfon:** [\[163207\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to ensure every school in Harlow is aware of the National Tutoring Programme.

**Nick Gibb:**

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) provides additional, targeted support to disadvantaged pupils. The NTP is being delivered for the Department by the Education Endowment Foundation and Teach First.

The Department does not hold the information requested on the number of pupils in Harlow who receive support from the NTP.

We are committed to ensuring that there is a strong take-up of the NTP and we are working to ensure that there is a high level of awareness amongst schools of the support available, particularly in areas with high numbers of disadvantaged pupils.

We have undertaken a range of communications and engagement activities to ensure that schools are aware of the support offered by the NTP. Our activities include offering school-focused webinars throughout the academic year and working with a range of key stakeholders to increase awareness and interest in the programme in areas that need it most (for example, through Opportunity Areas, multi-academy trusts and Regional Schools Commissioners). In addition, we have also been communicating with local authority groups, networks and teaching unions.

The NTP provides regular newsletters and blogs directly to schools, alongside targeted social media activity. Since the NTP went live in November 2020, we have continued to share case studies and good practice to show how tuition can support pupils effectively, including a guide of how to make the most out of tutoring during the most recent lockdown period. We will continue to monitor take-up of the NTP throughout the course of this academic year and ensure further communication is directed towards areas of lower take-up.

## ■ Primary Education: Assessments

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[158901\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he plans to ensure that data collected from the Reception Baseline Assessment will be adjusted to allow for children's

differing learning experiences in pre-school settings as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, as well as for the individual rates at which they may catch up; and if he will make a statement.

**Nick Gibb:**

The purpose of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is to act as the starting point to enable the Department to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. The assessment will assess all children on-entry, accounting for any impact on their education up to this point. This is important so that we can acknowledge and give credit to schools that have successfully helped their pupils to catch up, and it would therefore be inappropriate to adjust these scores.

The Department believes that it is important to have an accountability system that is fair, inclusive, and properly reflects the work done by teachers to ensure all pupils fulfil their potential, including those with additional needs. The new progress measure ensures schools are recognised for the work they do with their pupils, in particular for those with a challenging intake and those who have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Department is planning for a full programme of primary assessments to take place in the 2021/22 academic year, including the introduction of the statutory RBA as previously announced. We will confirm full details for 2021/22 primary assessments in due course.

■ **Pupils: Coronavirus**

**Robert Halfon:**

[\[154635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department plans to take with the new Education Recovery Commissioner to address the non-academic factors to support children's attainment.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is committed to helping children and young people make up for lost education as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Department has provided £1.7 billion to give early years, schools, and colleges support to help pupils get back on track, including additional funding for tutoring, early language support and summer schools. This support sits alongside the holiday activities and food programme available across the country.

The Department has appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on our recovery plan, with academic and non-academic factors in supporting attainment forming part of this work.

**Thangam Debonnaire:**

[\[159325\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of an educational recovery plan to support all pupils that have had their education disrupted as a result of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Government is committed to helping all children and young people make up learning lost as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In January 2021, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, committed to work with parents, teachers and pupils to develop a long-term plan to help pupils make up their learning over the course of this Parliament. As an immediate step to support early years settings, schools and colleges, on 24 February, we committed an additional £700 million to support summer schools, tutoring, early language interventions and additional support to schools to help pupils make up their learning. This builds on the £1 billion from last year and brings the total available to £1.7 billion.

We have also appointed Sir Kevan Collins as the Education Recovery Commissioner to advise on this broader plan. The objectives of the Education Recovery Commissioner as outlined in the terms of reference are to advise on the design and implementation of potential interventions that will help students catch up learning lost due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The terms of reference for the Education Recovery Commissioner is published here: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/960070/Terms\\_of\\_reference.pdf#:~:text=Education%20Recovery%20Commissioner%3A%20role%20specification%20and%20terms%20of,approach%20for%20education%20recovery%2C%20with%20a%20particular%20focus.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960070/Terms_of_reference.pdf#:~:text=Education%20Recovery%20Commissioner%3A%20role%20specification%20and%20terms%20of,approach%20for%20education%20recovery%2C%20with%20a%20particular%20focus.)

The Department will continue to assess the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on pupils and their catch-up needs to help target support across the system effectively.

**Philip Davies:****[160586]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps he is taking in response to the World Health Organisation's guidance on the requirement for children to wear face masks in schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

On 21 August 2020, the World Health Organisation published a statement advising that children aged 12 and over should wear a face covering “under the same conditions as adults, in particular when they cannot guarantee at least a 1-metre distance from others and there is widespread transmission in the area.” Therefore, since September 2020, face coverings have been included as an element of the system of controls that schools are putting in place to reduce risk.

The Department has recently published updated guidance to support the full opening to education from 8 March 2021, which includes updated advice on face coverings which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964351/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf).

The Department has also published its evidence summary, ‘COVID-19 – children, young people and education settings’, which can be found here:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm>

[ent\\_data/file/963639/DfE\\_Evidence\\_summary\\_COVID-19 -  
\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_education\\_settings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf).

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

In addition, from 8 March 2021, the Department now also recommends that in schools where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained.

In primary schools, the Department recommends that face coverings should be worn by staff and adult visitors in situations where social distancing between adults is not possible (for example, when moving around in corridors and communal areas). Children in primary school do not need to wear a face covering.

The Department is recommending these additional precautionary measures for a limited period until Easter. As with all measures, the Department will keep this under review and update guidance as necessary.

**Philip Davies:**

**[160587]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he made of the benefits and risks of face masks for children before recommending face masks be worn by students in secondary schools.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department continues to work closely with other Government departments throughout its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care, as well as stakeholders across the sector. The Department continues to work to ensure that policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the results and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

The Department has recently published updated guidance to support the full opening to education from 8 March 2021, which includes updated advice on face coverings.

The guidance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm  
ent\\_data/file/964351/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf).

The Department has also published its evidence summary, 'COVID-19 – children, young people and education settings', which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachm  
ent\\_data/file/963639/DfE\\_Evidence\\_summary\\_COVID-19 -  
\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_education\\_settings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf).

As the guidance outlines, where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated, the Department recommends that face coverings should be worn by adults and pupils

when moving around the premises, outside of classrooms, such as in corridors and communal areas where social distancing cannot easily be maintained.

In addition, from 8 March 2021, the Department now also recommends that in schools where pupils in Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained.

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

The Department recognises that the wearing of face coverings may impact communication. However, on balance, increased use of face coverings will strengthen the current safety measures in place in schools and colleges and support the return to face-to-face education.

The Department is recommending these additional precautionary measures for a limited period until Easter. As with all measures, the Department will keep this under review and update guidance as necessary.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[161727\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish his assessment of the predictive (a) value and (b) accuracy of lateral flow tests in English (i) school and (ii) college pupil and student populations.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[161728\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish his estimate of the number of family members required to self-isolate in England as a result of lateral flow test results in English school and college pupil and student populations.

**Philip Davies:**

[\[161729\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, if he will publish advice that received by his Department from the DHSC Moral and Ethical Advisory Group on the ethics of mass screening in children.

**Nick Gibb:**

Lateral flow device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect asymptomatic COVID-19 cases. The speed and convenience of the tests supports the detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals, who would not otherwise have been tested. LFD tests are approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency for home use. The tests are highly specific, with low chances of false positives. For this reason, we have confidence in the value and accuracy of lateral flow tests.

Those who test positive using an LFD test at home are being asked to self-isolate and take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to confirm the positive result. This is a further measure designed to minimise the chance of false positives. We are asking that the family members and close contacts self-isolate to help break the chains of transmission.

Regarding ethics, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) have discussed ethical considerations with regard to testing in a number of forums. The Department for Education has not received separate advice from the DHSC Moral and Ethical Advisory Group, with minutes of meetings of this group found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/moral-and-ethical-advisory-group>.

**Lisa Nandy:**

**[163684]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what plans he has to help current Year 10 pupils catch up on learning time lost as a result of recent school closures.

**Nick Gibb:**

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

We appointed Sir Kevan Collins as Education Recovery Commissioner to oversee the long-term plan to help schools support pupils make up their education over the course of this Parliament. Sir Kevan will engage with parents, pupils, and teachers in the development of this broader approach and review how evidence-based interventions can be used to address the impact the COVID-19 outbreak has had. We will share further details in due course.

As an immediate step, on the 24 February, we committed an additional £700 million to support summer schools, tutoring, early language interventions and additional support to schools to help pupils make up their education. This builds on the £1 billion catch-up package announced in June 2020, which included a catch-up premium, shared across state primary and secondary schools to support schools to make up for lost teaching time over this academic year. It also includes the National Tutoring Programme which provides schools with access to high-quality, subsidised tuition in this academic year and next.

Within the £700 million catch-up package, £200 million will be available to secondary schools to deliver a two-week summer school. Although we recommend a focus on incoming year 7 pupils, schools are also free to engage pupils in other years, should they identify a particular need.

A new one-off £302 million recovery premium will also be available for state primary and secondary schools, which includes £22 million to scale up evidenced approaches, building on the pupil premium, to further support pupils who need it most.

In addition, an expansion of the National Tutoring Programme for 5-16 year olds will ensure we can support even more pupils in 2021/22. The programme will support schools by providing approved tuition partners that offer subsidised tuition to schools and schools in some of the most disadvantaged areas will be supported to employ in-house academic mentors to provide tuition to their pupils.

## ■ Pupils: Hearing Impairment

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**

**[163312]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, when he plans to update guidance for schools and colleges on the use of clear face coverings to meet the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has published updated guidance for schools to support the return to full attendance from 8 March, which includes updated advice on face coverings. The guidance can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/964351/Schools\\_coronavirus\\_operational\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/964351/Schools_coronavirus_operational_guidance.pdf)

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

From 8 March, the Department recommends that in schools and colleges where pupils and students in Year 7 and above are educated, face coverings should be worn in classrooms unless social distancing can be maintained.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. This includes people who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability, or if you are speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate. The same legal exemptions that apply to the wearing of face coverings in shops and on public transport also apply in schools and colleges.

Transparent face coverings, which may assist communication with someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expression to communicate, can also be worn. There is currently very limited evidence regarding the effectiveness or safety of transparent face coverings, but they may be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The Department is recommending these additional precautionary measures for a limited period until Easter. As with all measures, they will be under review and guidance will be updated, as necessary.

## ■ Remote Education: Computer Software

**Chi Onwurah:**

**[160652]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 29 January 2021 to Question 142923, what the cost to the public purse has been of funding technical support to help schools set up accounts for Google and Microsoft during the January 2021 covid-19 lockdown period to date; to whom that funding been awarded; how much of that funding remains to be allocated for that purpose; and whether that remaining funding will be carried over to the next financial year.



**Nick Gibb:**

From January 2021 to date, £1.8 million has been spent to fund the technical support to set up Google and Microsoft accounts for schools. This funding has been awarded to state-funded primary and secondary schools, further education colleges and virtual schools. Schools are continuing to submit claims throughout March 2021 as their platforms are set-up. The full allocation of funding against the programme budget of £14.2 million will be verified at the end of the financial year. There will be no roll-over of this year's current budget. A new budget will be set for the 2021-22 financial year.

**Schools: Admissions****Andrew Rosindell:**[\[161687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is planning to take to ensure that the children of Hongkongers coming to the UK under the BN(O) visa and other routes are promptly enrolled in local schools.

**Andrew Rosindell:**[\[161688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what guidance his Department has provided to local education authorities in relation to school admissions for the children of Hongkongers coming to the UK under the BN(O) visa and other routes.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department has published guidance for schools and local authorities on the rights of foreign national children to access schools in England and this has been updated to include the rights of the dependent children of British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) families settling here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children>.

Guidance for parents on applying for a school place, which will be relevant for BN(O) families, already exists and can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions>.

Any child resident in the country should be treated equally in terms of access to a school. The Department consulted on changes to the School Admissions Code during the summer and autumn of 2020 to ensure the in-year admissions process is more efficient and consistent so that children can be placed quickly. Subject to parliamentary approval, these changes will come into force in September 2021. Further details on the School Admissions Code can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-school-admissions-code--4>.

The Department is working across the Government with stakeholders and local authorities, in planning for the impact of BN(O) migration on local services, including school places.



## ■ Schools: Governing Bodies

**Afzal Khan:** [\[155371\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 9 February 2021 to Question 147045, what period does the data relating to the Inspiring Governance governor recruitment programme come from.

**Nick Gibb:**

The data referred to in Questions [147045](#) and [147046](#) was from January 2018 to the present day.

## ■ Special Educational Needs: Coronavirus

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[156322\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what estimate the Government has made of the rate of transmission of covid-19 in SEND schools in England; what steps his Department is taking to support SEND schools in Bolton to reduce covid-19 transmission; and what assessment he has made of the potential merits of prioritising SEND school staff in the covid-19 vaccination rollout.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Department continues to work closely with other government departments throughout its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care, as well as stakeholders across the sector. We continue to work to ensure that our policy is based on the latest scientific and medical advice, to continue to develop comprehensive guidance based on the PHE-endorsed 'system of controls' and to understand the impact and effectiveness of these measures on staff, pupils and parents.

The Department has recently published updated guidance for special schools and other specialist settings, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings>.

The Department has also published its evidence summary on COVID-19 – children, young people and education settings, which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/963639/DfE\\_Evidence\\_summary\\_COVID-19\\_-\\_children\\_young\\_people\\_and\\_education\\_settings.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/963639/DfE_Evidence_summary_COVID-19_-_children_young_people_and_education_settings.pdf)

The system of control measures as outlined in our guidance create an environment for staff, children, and young people where the risk of transmission of the infection is substantially reduced. Schools, colleges and nurseries, therefore, need to continue to implement these controls to the fullest extent possible.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are the independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccine/s the UK should use and provide advice on who should be offered them. The JCVI have advised that the second phase of vaccine prioritisation should continue to be based on age. They

advise that an age-based approach remains the most effective way of reducing death and hospitalisation from COVID-19 and will ensure more people are protected more quickly. The second phase of the vaccine rollout will begin from mid-April and will aim to offer every adult aged 18 and over a first dose of the vaccine by 31 July.

## ■ Supply Teachers: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

**Kim Johnson:**

**[160851]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of requiring teacher supply agencies to sign up to the flexible furlough scheme in order for supply teachers to have access to financial support during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021.

**Nick Gibb:**

The decision to furlough an employee, fully or flexibly, is entirely at the employer's discretion as it is dependent on a range of factors that the employer is best placed to determine, for example, the amount of work available for the employee.

Employers can flexibly furlough their employees, including supply staff employed via employment agencies, for the hours the employee would usually have worked in that period, whilst also being able to work outside of the hours they are furloughed:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#flexible-furlough-agreements>. Employees can work for any amount of time and any work pattern, but they cannot do any work for their employer during hours that employers record them as being on furlough.

The Department published additional guidance for schools on how they can support temporary staff and suppliers during the period of restricted pupil attendance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care/coronavirus-covid-19-financial-support-for-education-early-years-and-childrens-social-care>.

## ■ Teachers: Coronavirus

**Daisy Cooper:**

**[156588]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, with reference to the Government's roadmap on easing lockdown restrictions announced on 22 February 2021, what steps his Department plans to take to help protect vulnerable teachers who haven't yet received covid-19 vaccinations.

**Nick Gibb:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) are independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccines the UK should use and who should be offered them. JCVI advises that the first priorities for the COVID-19 vaccination should be the prevention of mortality and the maintenance of the health and social care systems. As the risk of mortality from COVID-19 increases with age, prioritisation is primarily based on age.

For phase 1, this will capture all those over 50 years of age, and all those 16 years of age and over who are clinically extremely vulnerable or have certain underlying health conditions. This captures almost all preventable deaths from COVID-19 and will include thousands of staff in the education, childcare and children's social care workforce.

For phase 2, the JCVI have advised that prioritisation should continue to be based on age. They advise that an age-based approach remains the most effective way of reducing death and hospitalisation from COVID-19 and will ensure more people are protected more quickly. The second phase of the vaccine rollout will begin from mid-April and will aim to offer every adult aged 18 and over a first dose of the vaccine by 31 July.

### ■ **Turing Scheme: Youth Services**

**Meg Hillier:**

[\[163655\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what provisions in the Turing scheme are accessible for youth groups.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The Turing Scheme is backed by £110 million, providing funding for around 35,000 students in universities, colleges and schools to go on placements and exchanges overseas, starting in September 2021.

The Turing Scheme is an education mobility scheme. International opportunities for young people outside of formal education settings, such as youth groups, are being considered as part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport-led Youth Review, which was commissioned by Her Majesty's Treasury at the 2020 Spending Review.

### ■ **Universities: Antisemitism**

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[161675\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, how many English universities have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism; and if he will list the universities that have not yet done so.

**Michelle Donelan:**

The government has asked all English higher education (HE) providers registered with the Office for Students (OfS) to adopt the working definition of antisemitism of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The IHRA definition is an important tool in tackling antisemitism. Adopting this widely recognised definition sends a strong signal that HE providers take these issues seriously. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education, wrote to HE leaders most recently in October 2020 to reiterate the importance of the definition and to urge all providers to consider adopting it.

The government is pleased to report that at least 91 providers have now adopted the definition, with many more preparing to adopt it. We know that other providers are in the process of considering adoption.

The decision on adoption of the definition rests with individual providers, but the government will continue to urge them to adopt the definition and ensure that HE is a genuinely fulfilling and welcoming experience for everyone.

I am proud that so many providers have taken a positive step towards eradicating antisemitism by adopting the definition since the Secretary of State for Education's letter, but further progress is still needed to stamp it out. This is why, in the Secretary of State for Education's most recent strategic guidance letter, the government asked the OfS to undertake a scoping exercise, to identify providers which are reluctant to adopt the definition. The letter asked them to consider introducing mandatory reporting of antisemitic incident numbers by providers, with the aim of ensuring a robust evidence base, which the OfS can then use to effectively regulate in this area.

The Secretary of State for Education also asked the OfS to ensure that, if antisemitic incidents do occur at a provider, they should consider if it is relevant in a particular case whether the provider has adopted the IHRA definition when considering what sanctions, including monetary penalties, would be appropriate to apply.

We will continue to work across the government to ensure that racism and religious hatred of any kind is not tolerated anywhere, including in our world-leading universities.

## ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

### ■ Bridleways

**Ruth Jones:**

[\[160808\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many publicly accessible bridleways there are in England.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Most recent figures estimate that there are in the region of 32,000km of bridleway in England although horse riders can also use over 6,000km of byways (restricted byways and Byways Open to All Traffic). These figures are not fully confirmed by the Government.

Local authorities are responsible for the management and maintenance of public rights of way. They are required to keep a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to plan improvements to the rights of way network in their area to provide a better experience for a range of users including horse riders.

Consideration is being given to how the Environmental Land Management scheme could fund the creation of new paths, such as footpaths and bridleways, providing greater access for horse riders.

**■ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Staff****Luke Pollard:**[\[161865\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 2 March 2021 to Question 158199, how many of the 97.9 full time equivalent staff recruited on fixed term or temporary appointment to work on EU exit preparation work will leave his Department in each month of 2021-22.

**Victoria Prentis:**

The breakdown of the 97.99 full-time equivalent recruited on fixed term or temporary appointments and working on EU exit preparation work leaving the department in 2021/22 is shown below.

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>FTE</b>
<b>April 2021</b>	4.70
<b>May 2021</b>	7.60
<b>June 2021</b>	5.35
<b>July 2021</b>	5.85
<b>August 2021</b>	8.10
<b>September 2021</b>	12.05
<b>October 2021</b>	10.70
<b>November 2021</b>	9.45
<b>December 2021</b>	4.70
<b>January 2022</b>	8.95
<b>February 2022</b>	10.15
<b>March 2022</b>	10.39
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97.99</b>

This is based on “planned termination dates” as at 31 January 2021. Contracts can be extended, or appointments converted to permanent contracts (subject to the appropriate recruitment processes).

**■ Furs: Sales****Emily Thornberry:**[\[161722\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of how much domestic sales of fur contributed to the UK economy in 2019-20.

**Victoria Prentis:**

HMRC data for 2019 indicates approximate values of £52,911,000 gross imports, £32,713,000 gross exports, and £20,198,000 net imports. This covers raw furskins, tanned or dressed furskins, and articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other furskin articles.

		<b>2019</b>	
4301 Raw furskins	Imports	Value (£)	£962,216
4301 Raw furskins	Exports	Value (£)	£536,654
<i>4301 Raw furskins</i>	<i>Net Imports</i>	Value (£)	£425,562
4302 Tanned or dressed furskins	Imports	Value (£)	£7,773,470
4302 Tanned or dressed furskins	Exports	Value (£)	£7,012,555
<i>4302 Tanned or dressed furskins</i>	<i>Net Imports</i>	Value (£)	£760,915
4303 Articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other furskin articles	Imports	Value (£)	£44,174,922
4303 Articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other furskin articles	Exports	Value (£)	£25,163,877
<i>4303 Articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other furskin articles</i>	<i>Net Imports</i>	Value (£)	£19,011,045
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Imports</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>£52,910,608</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Exports</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>£32,713,086</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>Net Imports</b>	<b>Value (£)</b>	<b>£20,197,522</b>

Sourced from <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/trade-data/ots-custom-table/>

## ■ Glass: Recycling

**Yvette Cooper:** [\[163633\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what modelling his Department is using to assess the effect of including glass in a deposit return scheme on existing recycling rates.

**Yvette Cooper:** [\[163634\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has modelled the effect of including glass in the proposed deposit return scheme on existing kerbside recycling rates.

**Yvette Cooper:** [\[163635\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what economic impact assessments the Government has undertaken in relation to the proposed deposit return scheme for England and Wales.

**Yvette Cooper:** [\[163637\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his department has made an assessment of the carbon impacts of including glass in a future deposit return scheme for single use packaging.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra has been developing proposals for a deposit return scheme (DRS) for drinks containers using further evidence and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. As part of this work, we have conducted further cost benefit analysis on the inclusion of glass in a DRS. The interim findings demonstrate that the inclusion of glass in the long term has a higher value than not including glass, given the potential for increased collection and recycling rates and the resulting greater reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Officials have also continued to meet with the glass industry on several occasions to discuss the inclusion of glass in a DRS. British Glass is a member of our DRS Industry Working Group and sits on Defra's Packaging and Collections Working Group which provides input on the department's collections and packaging reforms.

An Impact Assessment will be published alongside the second consultation which is due to be published shortly, which assesses the costs and benefits of a DRS, including the costs to business and the expected impact a DRS will have on recycling rates.

The Government's commitment to introducing a DRS is part of its commitments to reform producer responsibility systems to incentivise producers to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products.

**■ Heather Burning: Licensing****Olivia Blake:** [\[162720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many licences for heather burning have been granted by Natural England in each of the last five years, by region.

**Rebecca Pow:**

The Heather and Grass etc Burning (England) Regulations 2007 set out the rules for heather burning. The Regulations allow most burning to be carried out without a licence but in certain specified situations a licence is required from Natural England. In the period 2016 -2020 Natural England issued 27 licences under the Regulations, none of which covered the burning of heathland or heather.

People wishing to burn heather on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) need a consent from Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. We do not have a systematic process for collecting information on the habitats that we have consented operations on. We cannot therefore provide figures for the numbers of consents that we have issued for the burning of heathland or heather. We are currently investing to improve our records of consents.

**■ Hospitality Industry: Veganism and Vegetarianism****Stuart Anderson:** [\[158216\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what plans his Department has to encourage the growth of local hospitality-based businesses that specialise in healthy vegan and vegetarian eating options.

**Victoria Prentis:**

We are keen to ensure we have a vibrant and diverse hospitality sector.

As such, we are continuing to work across the entire hospitality sector with the aim of ensuring it is in a strong position to restart as soon as the conditions are right to ease restrictions.

**■ Local Government: Recycling****Elliot Colburn:** [\[R\] \[161872\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, how many and what proportion of local authorities with responsibility for waste recycling centres have introduced charges for the use of waste recycling services; and if he will provide details of (a) which local authorities have introduced those charges and (b) how much each of those local authorities is charging for those services.

**Rebecca Pow:**

Defra does not hold records on which household and waste recycling centres (HWRCs) charge for the disposal of waste. The Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 set out charging arrangements for different categories of waste, including waste



delivered to HWRCs. Charges made by local authorities to dispose of DIY waste vary and some do not charge for this service.

In our Resources and Waste Strategy we committed to ensuring that charging arrangements in the Controlled Waste Regulations are clear, especially in relation to waste arising from small scale DIY construction activities carried out by ordinary householders with no specialist skills, which the government has been clear should not be charged for. We will review the Household Waste Recycling Centre services and the Controlled Waste Regulations and, subject to consultation, will amend them to ensure they remain fit for purpose, charges are fairly applied, and that services are accessible, support high levels of recycling and deliver value for money.

### ■ **Pigs: Animal Welfare**

**Claire Hanna:**

[\[163744\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with representatives of the farming industry on the use of farrowing crates for pigs.

**Victoria Prentis:**

As part of a series of meetings Lord Goldsmith had with key stakeholders last autumn to discuss farm animal welfare reform priorities, he met with the pig sector and discussed the use of farrowing crates for sows.

As stated in Defra's new pig welfare code of practice, which came into force in March last year, our aim is for farrowing crates no longer to be necessary and for any new system to protect the welfare of the sow, as well as her piglets. Any change also has to be done in a way which is sustainable for the industry and we are exploring the options.

### ■ **Recycling: Scotland**

**Yvette Cooper:**

[\[163636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to what extent the proposed deposit return scheme for England and Wales will mirror the Scottish Government's scheme.

**Rebecca Pow:**

We will continue to work closely with the devolved administrations as we develop proposals for a deposit return scheme in England. This also includes engaging with Scotland to learn from the earlier introduction of a Scottish deposit return scheme and to ensure that a deposit return scheme in the rest of the UK can work coherently alongside a Scottish scheme. We want to design and implement a deposit return scheme that will be most effective in helping achieve our policy goals.

## FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

■ **Bahrain: Detainees****Alyn Smith:**[\[163724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what representations he plans to make to the Government of Bahrain regarding reports that at least 15 children have been detained in that country in recent weeks.

**James Cleverly:**

We understand that ten juveniles had been detained by the authorities in Bahrain for crimes ranging from obstructing traffic to preparing and possessing Molotov cocktails. The Government of Bahrain has since confirmed that seven 13 and 14-year-olds have since been released into the custody of their legal guardians. We understand that the remaining juveniles are awaiting legal proceedings, . We understand that they have access to medical care and that their cases are supervised by social work specialists. We will continue to monitor and raise these cases if and when appropriate. We encourage the Government of Bahrain to follow due process in all cases and meet its international and domestic human rights commitments, including in the case of juveniles.

■ **Bangladesh: Rohingya****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[163666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department is working with the (a) Government of Bangladesh and (b) other donors to make long term plans to improve conditions for Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, in the context of the effect of the military coup in that country on the safety of refugees.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* The UK Government remains clear that any returns of Rohingya refugees to Rakhine state must be voluntary, safe, dignified, and in line with UNHCR principles. At present, conditions in Myanmar preclude this possibility. The UK is a leading donor to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, having committed £293.5 million since August 2017. UK aid has been instrumental in improving the lives of the 890,000 refugees and the vulnerable local Bangladeshi communities in Cox's Bazar. Our funding provides lifesaving support including food, healthcare, nutrition, education, clean water and sanitation and targeted support for women and girls. We continue to work closely with the Government of Bangladesh, the UN and other donors to improve conditions for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and the surrounding host communities.

## ■ Belarus

**Tony Lloyd:**

[\[162520\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he has taken to pursue the ambition of free and fair elections in Belarus since November 2020; and what assessment he has made of the effect of controls on the capacity of the Government in Belarus to raise capital using (a) the London Stock Exchange and (b) other UK financial institutions.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK is working with our international partners to promote a political settlement in Belarus, which is acceptable to the Belarusian people. We continue to put pressure on the regime through sanctions, including on economic actors, and raising our concerns in international fora, including the OSCE, the UN Human Rights Council and informal Arria-formula meetings of the UN Security Council. We are supporting and promoting the democratic and political rights of the Belarusian people, through increased funding to civil society organisations, including independent media. On 1 February, the Foreign Secretary expressed the UK's support for new elections in his call with the opposition leader, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya. The UK is one of the largest shareholders in the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The Bank has announced it will not support further Belarusian sovereign projects. Like the EBRD, we remain committed to supporting investment into the Belarusian economy where it supports the Belarusian people. Controls on the UK financial markets and institutions falls within the mandate of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).

## ■ Belarus: Sanctions

**Ed Davey:**

[\[163629\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will impose Magnitsky-style sanctions on people based in the UK who are alleged sponsors of the Belarusian senior leadership.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response towards the fraudulent election and human rights violations in Belarus. Alongside Canada, we led on implementing sanctions against Lukashenko and his inner circle under the UK's Global Human Rights Regime. We have also carried over the EU's Belarus sanctions regime into UK law. To preserve the integrity of the sanctions process, it would be inappropriate to speculate publicly on future designations.

## ■ Developing Countries: Nutrition

**David Mundell:**

[\[162531\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what plans he has to implement the OECD policy marker for nutrition in his Department's internal reporting systems.

**Wendy Morton:**

The FCDO will apply the OECD nutrition policy marker to the spend data we publish through the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System. The UK's 2019 aid spending data published recently by the OECD DAC included the policy marker for nutrition for the first time. The application of this new policy marker presents a significant improvement in the accountability of aid spending on nutrition.

**Famagusta: Beaches****Dr Matthew Offord:**[\[162577\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions his Department had with representatives of the Government of Turkey to secure its compliance with UN resolutions on Varosha in Cyprus.

**Wendy Morton:**

The UK continues to follow the situation in Varosha with concern. UK Government officials raised the issue with Ankara both before and after the action taken by Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots to open up the shoreline of the fenced-off area in October 2020. The Foreign Secretary raised the issue of Varosha during his call with the Turkish Foreign Minister Cavusoglu on 19 November. Additionally, during his trip to Cyprus on 4 February, he raised it with the Turkish Cypriot leader Tatar.

The UK strongly supports the numerous Security Council Resolutions covering the issue of Varosha, notably 550 (1984) and 789 (1992). The issue underlines the importance of the sides engaging flexibly at forthcoming informal UN talks and reaching a comprehensive Cyprus Settlement as a matter of urgency.

**Kashmir: Coronavirus****Debbie Abrahams:**[\[163692\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) speed of the covid-19 vaccination roll out in India to Indian-administered Kashmir.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* The UK continues to monitor the response to Covid-19 globally, including in Kashmir. The FCDO is working with global institutions, including the World Health Organisation, to ensure supplies are directed to those in greatest need. We are monitoring information on supplies in both India-administered and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

**Debbie Abrahams:**[\[163693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the (a) adequacy and (b) speed of the covid-19 vaccination roll out in Pakistan to Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* The UK continues to monitor the response to Covid-19 globally, including in Kashmir. The FCDO is working with global institutions, including the World Health Organisation, to ensure supplies are directed to those in greatest need. We are monitoring information on supplies in both India-administered and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

**■ Myanmar: Homicide and Human Rights****Mr Gregory Campbell:**[\[163645\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking with (a) United Nations and (b) other international partners to help ensure that the activities of the military in Myanmar are subjected to (i) worldwide scrutiny and (ii) diplomatic pressure to tackle human rights abuses and the killing of demonstrators on the streets.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* We urgently convened the UN Security Council following the coup and secured a unanimous statement expressing concern at the situation. We convened the UN Security Council again on 5 March. We welcome the strong statements from the UN Secretary General in response to the coup and subsequent violence. We are working with his office, and with partners, to explore all options to seek a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

As a champion of the rules based international order, we are working closely with partners to deliver a strong international response, including in our role as President of the G7. We secured G7 statements on 3 and 23 February, which condemned the coup and the violent response unleashed on peaceful protestors. Working with partners, including the US and Canada, we have sanctioned 9 military officers, including the Commander-in-Chief, for their role in the coup. We are working with partners to consider further action to apply pressure on the military.

**■ Myanmar: Overseas Aid****Ms Lyn Brown:**[\[163185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to increase aid to (a) internally displaced people in Myanmar and (b) refugees from Myanmar living in neighbouring countries following the military coup in Myanmar.

**Nigel Adams:**

Supporting displaced people and refugees is a priority for the UK. We provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to around 460,000 conflict-affected and displaced people in Myanmar and on the Thai border, and to the 890,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

We are working with the UN, the international community and national and local NGOs to assess impact of the coup on displaced populations, refugees and host

communities and other vulnerable populations. We have reviewed our aid programme in Myanmar to ensure that we focus on the most vulnerable people.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[163667\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether his Department has repurposed UK aid already disbursed to civil society organisations in Myanmar to support staff members of those organisations who potentially face arrest by the military.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* The safety and security of our implementing partners in Myanmar is of great importance to us. We are in close contact with the NGOs, the UN, Red Cross, and civil society organisations we support and we are ensuring as much flexibility as we can in their use of UK aid to help ensure their ability to continue to operate safely. We are working with partners to understand their specific needs and how the coup is impacting on their activities and staff.

We conducted a review of the UK aid programme in Myanmar following the coup. As part of the review the UK is committed to continuing funding that strengthens the foundations for a deeper and more inclusive democracy, including support for civil society.

**Yasmin Qureshi:** [\[163668\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to reduce UK aid to Myanmar in the context of the review he has announced into aid to that country.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* Following the coup, we have reviewed our aid programme in Myanmar to ensure that we focus on the most vulnerable people. Following a review of all UK aid programme in Myanmar all work with the government has now been suspended unless there is an exceptional humanitarian reason.

## ■ Overseas Aid

**Lloyd Russell-Moyle:** [\[161841\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, in developing the Strategic Framework for ODA, whether the Government plans to develop a needs-based approach to aid allocation that considers a range of (a) financial indicators and (b) social and political measures.

**Nigel Adams:**

*[Holding answer 10 March 2021]:* The Foreign Secretary has set out seven core priorities for the UK's aid budget in the overarching pursuit of poverty reduction: climate and biodiversity; Covid and global health security; girls' education; science and research; defending open societies and resolving conflict; humanitarian assistance; and promoting trade and economic growth. This will also take into account considerations of need, including levels of poverty, ability of countries to self-

finance poverty reduction and the UK's comparative advantage, to ensure that every penny we spend on ODA goes as far as possible and has the greatest impact the UK could help achieve.

#### ■ Overseas Aid: Nutrition

**David Mundell:**

[\[163175\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether he plans to renew his Department's commitment to reach 50 million people with nutrition interventions over the next four years.

**Wendy Morton:**

The Department is undertaking a rigorous internal prioritisation process in response to the spending review announcement. We will update on the implications of this for any new commitment to nutrition in due course.

#### ■ Sayed Hasan Ameen

**Alyn Smith:**

[\[163723\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, with reference to the request for urgent action by Amnesty International dated 3 March 2021, which reports that Bahrain is in violation of its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child following the arrest, interrogation and detention of four minors and due process violations in at least two of those minors' cases, and to 16-year old Sayed Hasan Ameen who is severely unwell and suffers from sickle cell anaemia, what urgent representations the Government plans to make to secure the immediate release of Sayed Hasan Ameen.

**James Cleverly:**

We are following the detention of a number of juveniles including Sayed Hasan Ameen, who were arrested for arson, endangering the lives and property of others, and preparing and possessing Molotov cocktails. We understand these cases are pending legal proceedings, and are being supervised by social work specialists. We will continue to monitor and raise these cases if and when appropriate. The Government of Bahrain has been clear that access to medical care for those in detention is provided in line with the constitution of Bahrain.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Alzheimer's Disease: Obesity

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[161755\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the effect of a person's weight on the level of risk for Alzheimer's disease.



**Helen Whately:**

Around a third of dementia cases are thought to be attributable to potentially modifiable risk factors. To reduce the risk of dementia the Government recommends eating a healthy diet as depicted in the Eatwell Guide; maintaining a healthy weight; exercising regularly; not drinking too much alcohol; stopping smoking; and keeping blood pressure at a healthy level.

The Challenge on Dementia 2020 commitments included action on risk reduction and messaging has been incorporated in the National Health Service Health Check for all eligible adults in England aged 40-74 years old to increase dementia awareness and motivate people in midlife to make positive changes to reduce the risks.

**■ Baby Care Units: Coronavirus****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[126073\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether parents of babies in neonatal units will be given priority access to a covid-19 vaccination.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) consists of independent experts who advise the Government on which vaccine/s the United Kingdom should use and provide advice on prioritisation at a population level. They advised that phase one of the vaccination programme should have the prevention of mortality at the forefront of its objectives, as well as supporting the National Health Service and social care system.

Parents of babies in neonatal units who are aged over 50 years old or who have underlying health conditions which make them clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 are being given priority access to a COVID-19 vaccination in the first phase, which we are aiming to complete by the middle of April. All other parents of babies in neonatal units will be offered the vaccine in priority order, with a target date of the end of July, in line with advice from the JCVI.

The JCVI has recommended that access to the COVID-19 vaccines should continue to be prioritised by age as this is the biggest determining factor to increased mortality from the disease.

**■ Cancer: Health Services****Luke Pollard:**[\[161863\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the 14 per cent fall in patients treated within 62 days of an urgent GP referral for suspect cancer at Devon CCG between September and November 2020 compared to the previous year, what steps the Government is taking to ensure that (a) people are presenting with cancer symptoms to their GP and (b) 62-day targets from GP referral to definitive cancer treatment are met during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's 'Help Us, Help You' campaign seeks to address the barriers deterring patients from accessing the National Health Service due to the pandemic.

The third phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 is to reduce the number of patients who have waited longer than 62 days from urgent referral to starting cancer treatment. Key actions to reduce long waits include expanding the capacity of COVID-19 secure cancer hubs, prioritising people for surgery on the basis of clinical need and drawing on the independent sector to increase capacity.

**■ Care Homes: Coronavirus****Layla Moran:**[\[103615\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of weekly testing for (a) domiciliary care workers and (b) nominated external visitors within care home settings.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 19 October 2020]:* Since 23 November 2020, domiciliary care organisations have been able to access regular weekly COVID-19 testing for their staff. Those working for Care Quality Commission registered organisations are able to access weekly polymerase chain reaction tests to undertake at home, which will help to identify more asymptomatic cases and protect people receiving care and support.

From 8 March, every care home resident will be able to nominate a single named visitor who will be able to enter the care home for regular visits. These visitors should be tested using the supplied rapid lateral flow tests at every visit. Those residents with the highest care needs can nominate an 'essential care giver' who will be supported to follow the same testing arrangements and personal protective equipment and infection control arrangements as care home staff. Visits in exceptional circumstances including end of life should always be supported and enabled.

**■ Care Homes: Staff****Sir Mark Hendrick:**[\[154775\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what long-term assessment he has made of the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on the recruitment of care workers.

**Helen Whately:**

The flow of European Union workers into the sector annually is small comparable to the size of the workforce. Fewer than 5% of all workers joining the sector in a direct care role in 2019/20 had arrived from the EU in the previous 12 months. Therefore, we do not anticipate that the end-of-transition will have an immediate impact on

workforce supply. However, we will monitor its impact closely as more data becomes available over the coming months.

## ■ Care Homes: Visits

**Stephen Timms:**

[\[113468\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to designate Anna Chaplains for Older People as key workers for the purposes of visiting residential care homes; and if he will make a statement.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 16 November 2020]:* We recognise how important visits from chaplains and others who provide religious and spiritual support are for some residents. We have published visiting guidance setting the next step in our cautious opening up of visiting in line with the roadmap, enabling indoor visiting supported by lateral flow device (LFD) testing.

Care home managers are best placed to decide how their care home can deliver the visiting outlined in the guidance in a way that meets the needs of their residents. There is nothing to stop chaplains, ministers of religion or others making visits where residents would like to see them and where the care home manager is content this is in line with the home's visiting policy based on a dynamic risk assessment.

All visitors must follow infection control measures to keep residents and staff safe. To this end, personal protective equipment is being provided for free until the end of June and care homes have been provided with sufficient LFD tests to ensure that visitors can take a test each time they visit.

On that basis, visits of this type are already enabled.

**Chris Evans:**

[\[152513\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to enable the re-introduction of close contact care home visits in England.

**Helen Whately:**

New visiting arrangements have started on 8 March. Every care home should ensure that each resident can nominate one named person who can have regular, indoor visits.

Those residents with the highest care needs can also receive visits from a family member or friend who is an 'essential care giver'. Following agreement between the care home, resident and their family or friends, these visitors will be able to visit more often in order to provide care that is critical to the resident's immediate health and wellbeing. They will have the same testing and personal protective equipment arrangements as care home staff so that they can also provide extra support, such as help with washing and dressing or eating well.

We will assess the data and take a decision on opening up further opportunities for visiting, setting out a plan for the next phase of visits for people in residential care.

**Marsha De Cordova:**

[\[156550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will set out a timetable for re-introducing close contact care home visits in England.

**Helen Whately:**

New visiting arrangements began on 8 March. Every care home should ensure that each resident can nominate one named person who can have regular, indoor visits.

Those residents with the highest care needs can also receive visits from a family member or friend who is an 'essential care giver'. Following agreement between the care home, resident and their family or friends, these visitors will be able to visit more often in order to provide care that is critical to the resident's immediate health and wellbeing. They will have the same testing and personal protective equipment arrangements as care home staff so that they can also provide extra support, like help with washing and dressing or eating well.

We will assess the data and take a decision on opening up further opportunities for visiting, setting out a plan for the next phase of visits for people in residential care.

## ■ Carers

**Kerry McCarthy:**

[\[161693\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department has issued for people who are living with and caring for someone who is clinically extremely vulnerable.

**Jo Churchill:**

Guidance about living in a household with someone who is considered clinically extremely vulnerable is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/guidance-for-households-with-grandparents-parents-and-children-living-together-where-someone-is-at-increased-risk-or-has-symptoms-of-coronavirus-cov>

## ■ Carers: Young People

**Ed Davey:**

[\[110724\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that local authorities meet their duties under the Care Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014 to provide support to young carers.

**Ed Davey:**

[\[110725\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many young carers in England have received needs assessments in the last 12 month period for which data is available.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 November 2020]:* During the COVID-19 outbreak adult social care providers and services should still be maintaining their responsibilities under the Care

Act 2014 and Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure young carers are identified and referred to appropriate support if needed.

The Government has published guidance for both schools and local authorities on how best to support to families and protect vulnerable children during COVID-19. This is available on GOV. UK. Local authority duties to assess the needs of young carers, under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, are unchanged.

The total number of young carers in England having received needs assessments in the last 12-month period is not available. However, as identified in the Characteristics of Children in Need: 2018 to 2019 statistics, there were 16,520 episodes of need assessments during the year ending 31 March 2019 where being a young carer was identified.

## ■ Clinics: Coronavirus

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[159370\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the difficulties that (a) medical and (b) dental clinics are facing due to (i) staff shortages and (ii) reduced patient numbers during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 3 March 2021]:* Arrangements have been put in place to protect general practitioner (GP) practices' income during the pandemic, while freeing up their capacity to deliver essential services and the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Any GP practices facing difficulties should raise this with their local clinical commissioning group who will be able to provide support.

National Health Service dental practice remuneration, minus agreed deductions, has been protected throughout the pandemic, providing practices have complied with requirements set by NHS England and Improvement. The Department is working with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Chief Dental Officer for England to increase levels of dental service, as fast as is safely possible.

## ■ Continuing Care

**Sir Mike Penning:**

[\[157980\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if his Department will collate and maintain records of the number of people who (a) apply and (b) are rejected at the initial checklist assessment stage for NHS Continuing Healthcare.

**Sir Mike Penning:**

[\[157981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, for what reason there has been a decline in the NHS Continuing Healthcare referral conversion rate in each year since 2017-18; and if he will make a statement.

**Sir Mike Penning:****[158884]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he publish the number of applications for Continuing Healthcare in (a) England and (b) Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group area that were successful at (i) first review and (ii) on appeal in each year since 2017-18.

**Helen Whately:**

Data on NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) eligibility rates is published quarterly by NHS England at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-chc-fnc/>

Data on the number of people who apply and are found ineligible at the initial checklist assessment stage for CHC is not currently collected. NHS England will collect and manage CHC checklist data as part of an upcoming patient level data set. Data on the CHC referral conversion rate is available since 2017-18. However, as the 2019-20 data has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 we do not consider there to be sufficient data points to undertake meaningful trend analysis.

We have interpreted 'first review' to mean how many people are found to be eligible following a review at the local resolution stage. Prior to 2018-19 this data was not collected. We have interpreted 'on appeal' to mean how many people are found to be eligible in full or partially following a request for an independent review. Data on the number of people found to be partially or fully eligible in England and Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is shown in the following tables:

## England

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER FOUND PARTIALLY	
	ELIGIBLE	NUMBER FOUND FULLY ELIGIBLE
2017-18	51	90
2018-19	94	100
2019-20	196	222

## Herts Valley CCG

FINANCIAL YEAR	NUMBER FOUND PARTIALLY	
	ELIGIBLE	NUMBER FOUND FULLY ELIGIBLE
2017-18	1	1
2018-19	2	2
2019-20	6	5

**■ Coronavirus: Contact Tracing**

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[125981\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 6 December 2020 to Question 106293 on Coronavirus: Contact Tracing, in what format his Department holds the data or related data requested; and if he will publish that data.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 10 December 2020]:* The data for void/unknown results 28 May 2020 to 17 February 2021 is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-england-statistics-11-february-to-17-february-2021>

**Zarah Sultana:** [\[130853\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the locations of the 15,841 positive covid-19 cases that were not referred to NHS Test and Trace in October 2020 by (a) region, (b) upper tier local authorities and (c) lower tier local authorities.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* A technical issue was identified on 2 October 2020 in the process which transfers the uploading of positive test results on to the NHS Test and Trace system. By 1am on 3 October 2020 all 15,841 positive COVID-19 cases were subsequently referred to the NHS Test and Trace contact tracing system.

**■ Coronavirus: Disease Control**

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[123661\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many cases of people becoming infected with covid-19 at (a) walk-in and (b) drive through covid-19 testing centres have been recorded in each month since those centres were established.

**Helen Whately:**

We do not hold the information requested. Positive COVID-19 tests are not associated to any location.

**Alexander Stafford:** [\[161888\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the Government's roadmap is out of covid-19 lockdown for clinically vulnerable children who have been advised to shield but have yet to receive a covid-19 vaccine.

**Jo Churchill:**

Doctors have been reviewing all children and young people who were initially identified as clinically extremely vulnerable to confirm whether they are still thought to be at highest risk. In addition, for the vast majority of children and young people identified as clinically extremely vulnerable, a vaccination is not currently advised. However, for a very small number of children, the independent expert Joint



Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) have advised that vaccination may be appropriate. If a vaccination has been deemed to be necessary they should receive an offer to be vaccinated as part of the JCVI's priority group four.

Whilst shielding advice remains in place until 31 March, clinically extremely vulnerable children and young people are advised to follow the guidance available at the following link:

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

Further information will be provided to all clinically extremely vulnerable people, including children and young people, outlining the guidance that they should follow beyond this date.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Funerals**

**Sir John Hayes:**

**[161673]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether covid-19 restrictions on funeral services will be eased before workers operating within that sector have been offered a covid-19 vaccine.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Funeral staff are eligible for prioritisation if they carry out functions requiring contact with multiple vulnerable patients in a healthcare setting and are at a high risk of exposure to COVID-19. Such funeral operatives were being offered vaccinations by 15 February.

The COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021 published on 22 February provides a roadmap, with four steps, to ease out of the current lockdown in England. Rules around funerals will not change; these can proceed with 30 attendees during the first three steps, with the aim to remove all restrictions by step four. The roadmap is available at the following link:

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

## ■ **Coronavirus: Herefordshire**

**Bill Wiggin:**

**[121180]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the covid-19 case rate in Herefordshire being listed as 160.3 per 100,000 in his oral contribution of 26 November 2020, Official Report, Column 999 and that rate being given as 145.2 on gov.uk for the week leading up to 20 November 2020, for what reason the county's infection rate was described as falling in his oral contribution of 26 November 2020 and on the gov.uk website.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 1 December 2020]:* The data referenced from 'Coronavirus cases in England: 26 November 2020' shows Hereford's case rate from 13 to 19 November 2020 as 160.3 per 100,000. This data also shows that for the previous week, 6 to 12

November 2020, the case rate was 163.4 per 100,000. This is a rate change or decrease of -3.1 from the previous week. The data is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-cases-in-england-26-november-2020>

## ■ Coronavirus: Key Workers

**Tulip Siddiq:** [\[159339\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of launching a compensation scheme for frontline staff and key workers suffering from long covid.

**Helen Whately:**

In the NHS, staff on national terms and conditions benefit from up to 6 months of full salary when off sick.

## ■ Coronavirus: Protective Clothing

**Philip Davies:** [\[157044\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy on the compulsory wearing of face masks of the November 2020 Danish study on such coverings.

**Jo Churchill:**

In January 2021, Public Health England (PHE) updated their rapid evidence review of the international literature on the effectiveness of face coverings for reducing community transmission of COVID-19. This review concluded that the use of face coverings in the community can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community when used as part of a range of mitigations (including social distancing). PHE continues to monitor the evidence on the use of face coverings, including the DANMASK study, which reported inconclusive results.

**Dr Philippa Whitford:** [\[160685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions Public Health England has had with the Health and Safety Executive on development of its guidance on personal protective equipment for healthcare workers.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 4 March 2021]:* Public Health England discusses the personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance for healthcare workers with the Health and Safety Executive and other committee members as part of the decision making committee for PPE, chaired by Department. Advice has been sought from and agreed with the Health and Safety Executive in relation to type and specification for PPE required during the pandemic. These discussions are fed back to the UK-wide Infection Prevention Control Cell, who develop the PPE guidance for healthcare workers.

## ■ Coronavirus: Quarantine

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[158049\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many people in (a) the UK and (b) Yorkshire and Humber have been removed from the Shielded Patient List since March 2020.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 March 2021]:* We do not hold information relating to the devolved administrations.

NHS Digital does not hold information on deductions to the list at a regional or clinical commissioning group level.

## ■ Coronavirus: Rotherham

**Sarah Champion:**

[\[132927\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans he has to roll out mass lateral flow testing to Rotherham.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* Community testing using lateral flow devices commenced in Rotherham on 18 January 2021.

## ■ Coronavirus: Screening

**Helen Hayes:**

[\[118040\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the (a) average and (b) maximum distance people are expected to travel for walk-in covid-19 testing.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 24 November 2020]:* The median distance travelled for a test is 1.9 miles. We have recently increased the radius search on the portal for local testing sites (LTS) from 10 miles to 25 miles, to help ensure that people who live in sparsely populated areas are able to book appointments at their local LTS without driving a further distance to a regional test site.

**Tulip Siddiq:**

[\[123660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 outbreaks have been recorded at (a) walk-in and (b) drive through covid-19 testing centres in each month since they were established.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 7 December 2020]:* Since October 2020 when the collection of data commenced, there have been 55 instances of closures at walk-in sites and 18 instances of closures at drive-through sites due to COVID-19 outbreaks.

**Neale Hanvey:** [\[133242\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of purchasing Innova lateral flow tests in 2021.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* We are unable to provide information on the purchasing of Innova Lateral Flow Tests in 2021 as this is commercially sensitive.

**Scott Benton:** [\[133246\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to assist private hospitals and health care providers to acquire covid-19 testing kits for patients and staff.

**Helen Whately:**

Private hospitals settings providing National Health Service commissioned care can access testing through their commissioning body, normally their local commissioning NHS trust or clinical commissioning group. Private hospitals who do not provide NHS-commissioned care may access publicly funded asymptomatic testing through National Workplace Testing which is accessible to organisations who are registered in England, employ 50 people or more and whose employees cannot work from home. Tests are currently being provided free to both public and private sector employers until at least 31 March 2021. The Government's support will be kept under review and will engage with employers before any changes to the support offer are made.

Organisations who do not meet the criteria for National Workplace Testing can contact their local authority to gain information on their local asymptomatic testing offer.

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[133889\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many covid-19 tests were declared void in (a) December 2020, (b) November 2020, (c) October 2020 and (d) September 2020.

**Helen Whately:**

We do not publish data in the format requested.

Weekly data on the number of results unsuccessfully or not yet communicated after repeat attempts is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-england-statistics-4-february-to-10-february-2021>

**Mr Virendra Sharma:** [\[137169\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to his Answer to Question 106294 of 20th October 2020, on Coronavirus: screening, in what format data relating to lost and compromised tests is held; and if he will publish it.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 18 January 2021]:* The latest data for void/unknown results on tests conducted between 28 May 2020 to 17 February 2021 is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-test-and-trace-england-statistics-11-february-to-17-february-2021>

**Chi Onwurah:****[160651]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the maximum daily covid-19 testing capacity was in (a) November 2020 and (b) February 2021; and what estimate he has made of what the maximum testing capacity will be on 12 April 2021.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 4 March 2021]:* The maximum daily COVID-19 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing capacity in November 2020 was 574,395. The maximum daily COVID-19 PCR testing capacity in February 2021 was 789,705.

For April 2021, we have approximate capacity of 800,000 which will be maintained over the coming months.

**■ Coronavirus: Staffordshire****Jonathan Gullis:****[133259]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to open additional covid-19 testing sites in (a) Stoke-on-Trent and (b) Staffordshire.

**Helen Whately:**

We have opened regional test sites at the Bet365 Stadium in Stoke and at Stafford Education and Enterprise Park. We have also opened local test sites at Ryecroft Car Park in Newcastle Under Lyme, Cannock Chase Council Car Park, Keele University, Burton Town Hall, Fenton Manor Car Park, Synectics Solutions Car Park in Burslem, Hagley Park School in Burnt Hill Lane and in the Spinning School Lane Car Park in Tamworth.

**■ Coronavirus: Vaccination****Sir John Hayes:****[129959]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the UK-wide daily target is for the administration of covid-19 vaccines.

**Sir John Hayes:****[129962]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to increase transparency and accountability on covid-19 vaccine rollout targets.

**Caroline Ansell:****[130161]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the estimated timeline is for the covid-19 vaccination programme to work through each priority level; and if he will make a statement.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

To increase transparency and accountability on vaccine targets, comprehensive data is published daily and weekly to track progress with the vaccination roll out. This data is available at the following link:

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/vaccinations>

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

On 20 February we set new targets for the acceleration of the vaccination programme to offer all adults over 50 years old a first dose by mid-April, covering priority cohorts one to nine and the rest of the adult population by the end of July. We are on track to meet those targets.

There is no specific daily United Kingdom wide daily target for the administration of COVID-19 vaccines. The UK COVID 19 Delivery Plan includes an estimate of the population numbers who need to be vaccinated by mid-April and the end of July and is available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-covid-19-vaccines-delivery-plan/uk-covid-19-vaccines-delivery-plan>

**Andrew Rosindell:****[131186]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of publishing daily figures for covid-19 vaccinations.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement publish daily data for vaccinations in England, showing the total first and second doses given to date, by region. This data is available at the following link:

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

**Grahame Morris:****[131236]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish the data his Department holds on the number of covid-19 vaccines administered by region.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* Since 20 December, weekly data for vaccinations by region has been published at the following link:

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

**Rachael Maskell:****[133048]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will review the priority for vaccination of people with learning difficulties.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

On 24 February, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) published a clarification of their advice on vaccinating people with learning disabilities. They confirmed their advice that priority should be given to those with a

severe and profound learning disability. The JCVI recognised concerns about coding of learning disability on general practitioner (GP) systems and supported a practical approach of inviting everyone who is on the GP Learning Disability Register for vaccination as part of cohort six.

**Taiwo Owatemi:**

[\[133226\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of covid-19 vaccines on the mutated second covid strain.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is effective against the COVID-19 variants that are dominant in the United Kingdom. There are 147 confirmed and probable cases of the South African variant in the UK, which is a small proportion of total cases. So far, we understand this vaccine should be effective against severe disease and death for other variants. We continue to consider a range of evidence and advice, with research and evaluation ongoing.

On 5 February, we announced a new vaccines partnership with CureVac, which will enable us to respond rapidly to develop additional vaccines for COVID-19 variants if needed. The UK has placed an initial order for 50 million doses of new vaccines that can protect against these variants, which will be delivered later this year if they are required. This is in addition to the broader portfolio of 407 million doses we have already secured to date.

**Fleur Anderson:**

[\[134220\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of placing people with learning disabilities in a higher covid-19 vaccination priority category.

**Nadhim Zahawi:**

*[Holding answer 11 January 2021]:* The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that those with severe and profound learning disabilities and those with learning disabilities residing in residential care, should be offered the vaccine as part of priority group six. Those with a wide range of neurological conditions have also been advised to be vaccinated in this group.

In addition, on 24 February, it was clarified that everyone on their general practitioner's learning disability register will be invited for vaccination as part of priority group six.

## ■ **Coronavirus: Ventilation**

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[103471\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what discussions he has had with (a) the Secretary of State for Transport and (b) his German counterpart on promoting ventilation as a means of reducing the transmission of covid-19.



**Helen Whately:**

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of matters related to the COVID-19 response. No specific discussions have taken place with his German counterpart.

**■ Dementia: Drugs****Debbie Abrahams:**[\[163230\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what representations he has received on the increase in prescribing of anti-psychotics to people with dementia during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 March 2021]:* Stakeholders have made representations about an increase in the prescribing of anti-psychotic drugs to people with dementia during our regular discussions about the impact of the pandemic on people living with dementia and their carers.

NHS England and NHS Improvement continue to monitor the monthly data published by NHS Digital on the prescribing of anti-psychotic medication for people diagnosed with dementia and continue to have regular conversations with regional clinical network leads and local services to understand the patterns in prescribing and potential reasons for trends being seen.

**■ Dentistry: Qualifications****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[162550\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of recognising dental qualifications of dental schools outside the EU.

**Jo Churchill:**

The Department is working with the General Dental Council on legislative proposals which will allow it greater flexibility to expand and improve on the registration options open to international applicants. We aim to launch a public consultation on these proposals later this year

**■ Dentistry: Training****Yasmin Qureshi:**[\[162551\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of increasing the number of places available on dentistry courses in UK dental schools.

**Jo Churchill:**

We have record numbers of dental students in training. As at November 2020 there were 2,667 dental students - 28.9% more since 2010. In addition, in England, the Government temporarily lifted the cap on dental school places for students who

completed A-Levels in 2020 and who had an offer from a university in England to study dentistry, subject to their grades. This ensured a place in 2020 or 2021 for every eligible student and meant that the overall number of domestic training places available for those applying to a dental school for the 2021/22 academic year remains unchanged.

The Government currently has no plans to increase the number of funded dental school places beyond this. However, we are committed to ensuring that the number of places reflect England's workforce requirements and continues to monitor current arrangements. The provision of dentistry training places in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is a matter for each devolved administration.

#### ■ Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

**Derek Twigg:** [\[163638\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he intends to answer Question 144935 tabled by the hon. Member for Halton on 28 January 2021.

**Derek Twigg:** [\[163639\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, when he intends to answer Question 148707 tabled by the hon. Member for Halton on 3 February 2021.

**Edward Argar:**

We take parliamentary scrutiny incredibly seriously and it is fundamentally important that hon. Members are provided with accurate and timely information to enable them to hold the Government to account. We are working rapidly to provide all Members with accurate answers to their questions, as well as supporting the Government's response to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The hon. Member's questions will be answered as soon as possible.

#### ■ Disability: Children

**Dr Lisa Cameron:** [\[160697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that disabled children who are at home are able to receive (a) physiotherapy, (b) respite care and (c) other required therapies.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England and NHS Improvement's guidance 'COVID-19 restoration of community health services for children and young people: second phase of NHS response in the community health restoration' makes clear that community services, such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, must be prioritised for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged up to 25 years and who have an Education Health and Care Plan in place or who are going through an assessment for one. With respect to access to respite care, we have encouraged local authorities to adopt a flexible approach where

possible, to ensure that as many families as possible can continue to access these services.

## ■ Disability: Health Services

**Navendu Mishra:**

[\[160838\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department has taken to improve access to medical care for disabled people during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Helen Whately:**

NHS England and Improvement published guidance regarding the restoration of NHS services 'Third phase of NHS response to COVID-19' on 31 July 2020. On 7 August 2020 they published further guidance 'Implementing phase 3 of the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic'. The guidance makes clear that a central part of responding to COVID-19 and restoring services must be to address inequalities in National Health Service provision, including improving access for disabled people. NHS England and NHS Improvement have commissioned a national advisory group of leaders from within and beyond the NHS to advise on how to achieve these aims in the coming months. This group has identified eight urgent actions, two of which are to protect the most vulnerable from COVID-19 and to restore NHS services inclusively.

## ■ Eating Disorders: Mental Health Services

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[161676\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the availability of NHS treatment for binge eating disorder.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

No such assessment has been made.

For children and young people, there is a programme in place to promote early access to effective, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence-approved treatments for all eating disorders, including binge eating disorder, working in partnership with children, young people and their families. Information on the eating disorders programme is available at the following link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/cyp/eating-disorders/>

For adults, the Adult Eating Disorders: Community, Inpatient and Intensive Day Patient Care guidance published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in August 2019, emphasises that eating disorder services should provide evidence-based treatment, care and support for a range of eating disorder diagnoses, including binge eating disorder.

**Dr Rupa Huq:**

[\[163717\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Government's commitment to investing £70 million into weight management services,

what assessment he has made of potential merits of offering specialist, evidence-based support for people living with a binge-eating disorder.

**Jo Churchill:**

We recognise that specialist weight management services provide a critical part of the weight management pathway, in accordance with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance. The £70 million investment in weight management services will enable up to 700,000 adults to have access to support that can help them to achieve a healthy weight, including specialist clinical support.

For children and young people, there is a programme in place to promote early access to effective, NICE approved treatments for eating disorders, working in partnership with children, young people and their families. For adults, the 'Adult Eating Disorders: Community, Inpatient and Intensive Day Patient Care' guidance was published in August 2019, emphasising that eating disorder services should provide evidence-based treatment, care and support for the full range of eating disorder diagnoses, including binge eating disorder.

■ **General Practitioners: Newham**

**Ms Lyn Brown:**

[\[154911\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many GP surgeries in Newham are owned by UK subsidiaries of (a) for-profit and (b) other private healthcare companies based in the US.

**Jo Churchill:**

All general practitioner (GP) practices are private businesses that are paid by the National Health Service to provide a health service to their registered patients. Newham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) holds details of the type of each GP contract holder in Newham, but not details of the full cooperate structure of the limited companies that hold contracts. Newham CCG does not directly contract with any private healthcare companies based in the United States.

■ **Home Care Services: Coronavirus**

**Thangam Debonnaire:**

[\[142982\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to his Department's guidance, updated on 6 January 2021, A testing service for homecare workers in England, for what reason personal assistants were excluded from the guidance on regular testing for care workers.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 28 January 2021]:* On 23 November, we extended asymptomatic testing to all registered domiciliary care workers to help protect staff and people who receive care. Offering routine asymptomatic testing to directly employed or self-employed individual staff, such as personal assistants, presented additional logistical challenges which we worked to overcome.

Regular weekly polymerase chain reaction testing for personal assistants launched on 17 February 2021. Personal assistants can order four test kits every 28 days from the Government's test portal.

### ■ Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Coronavirus

**Andrew Bridgen:** **[158047]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps have been taken to ensure that specialists regularly update the Shielded Patient List in respect of clinically extremely vulnerable people during the covid-19 outbreak for people with inflammatory bowel disease.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 1 March 2021]:* Inflammatory bowel disease is not a condition that automatically identifies someone as clinically extremely vulnerable. However, there may be individuals with inflammatory bowel disease who are classed as clinically extremely vulnerable because of other clinical conditions, or as a result of the findings of the QCOVID predictive risk model.

Guidance on how clinicians can update the Shielded Patient List is regularly issued to the National Health Service and is available at the following link:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/shielded-patient-list>

### ■ Influenza: Protective Clothing

**Geraint Davies:** **[160510]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Independent High Risk AGP Panel Summary of recommendations arising from evidence reviews to date, published on 11 January 2021, what consideration did that Panel give to the Health and Safety Executive's 2008 report, RR619 Evaluating the protection afforded by surgical masks against influenza bioaerosols in arriving at its conclusions.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 4 March 2021]:* The Independent High Risk AGP Panel was set up to provide practical and scientific advice to the Chief Medical Officers for the four United Kingdom nations on specific high risk aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is outside the scope of the panel to make recommendations about personal protective equipment use in the context of AGPs. For this reason, the Health and Safety Executive's 2008 report RR619 was not formally considered in producing the recommendations. These recommendations focussed on specific medical procedures of concern and took into account only peer reviewed publications, as detailed in the systematic review protocol.

## ■ Loneliness: Young People

**Caroline Lucas:**

[\[161734\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport on steps that Department is taking to alleviate loneliness and isolation in young people during the covid-19 lockdown announced in January 2021; whether his Department is taking steps in that matter in addition to those funded by that Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

Officials at the Department of Health and Social Care regularly engage with officials at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to co-ordinate our COVID-19 response and to ensure we support everyone experiencing loneliness during the pandemic, including young people. The Government has invested over £31.5 million in organisations supporting those experiencing loneliness, including young people. We refreshed our 'Let's Talk Loneliness' campaign, and brought together a new Tackling Loneliness Network made up of private, public and charity sector organisations.

## ■ Mental Health Services: Parents

**Dr Rosena Allin-Khan:**

[\[161830\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the importance of the wraparound childcare sector to supporting the mental health of parents.

**Ms Nadine Dorries:**

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Streatham (Bell Ribeiro Addy MP) on 10 February 2021 to Question [147071](#)

## ■ Midwives: Age and Nationality

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[163272\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the age profile is of NHS midwives; and how many NHS midwives in each age category are (a) UK nationals, (b) nationals of an EU member state, (c) nationals of other states and (d) midwives for whom nationality is not recorded.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 March 2021]:*

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS) workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), but not staff working in primary care, general practice surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the age profile and nationality of National Health Service midwives by age band and nationality group, in NHS trusts and CCGs in England, as at 30 November 2020, headcount.

Age band	United Kingdom	European Union	European Economic Area	Rest of world	Unknown
Under 25 years old	1,811	56	2	6	20
25 to 34 years old	6,980	561	3	44	97
35 to 44 years old	6,193	329	4	108	172
45 to 54 years old	5,739	202	4	172	258
55 to 64 years old	3,934	141	-	105	195
65 years old and over	233	19	-	22	8

As nationality is self-reported the value entered by an individual may reflect their cultural heritage rather than their country of birth. Therefore, these figures do not necessarily equate to migrants from other countries.

### ■ Midwives: Older People

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[163273\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many NHS midwives there were aged 70 or older in each of the last 10 years.



**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 March 2021]:* NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), but not staff working in primary care, general practice surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

The following table shows the number of National Health Service.

Midwives aged 70 years old and over in NHS trusts and CCGs in England, as at 30 November each year, 2010 to 2020, headcount.

DATE	MIDWIVES AGED 70 YEARS OLD AND OVER
November 2010	10
November 2011	6
November 2012	9
November 2013	12
November 2014	15
November 2015	15
November 2016	17
November 2017	19
November 2018	24
November 2019	21
November 2020	28

**■ NHS Test and Trace: Pupils****Ellie Reeves:**[\[130185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the ability of NHS Test and Trace to monitor self-isolating pupils.

**Helen Whately:**

No such assessment has been made. Contact tracing in schools is carried out by schools.

Any positive case identified should be reported to the school. The school should then use their risk assessment to identify close contacts of the index case and report cases via the Department for Education's helpline. Advisors will inform them of any further action that may be required in response to the positive case.

**■ Overseas Workers: Quarantine****Alex Sobel:**[\[157265\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has issued guidance to UK nationals working overseas who have lost their job during the covid-19 pandemic and who cannot afford the cost of covid-19 quarantine.

**Jo Churchill:**

For those facing significant financial hardship as a result of the managed quarantine charge, there is an opportunity to apply for a deferred repayment plan when booking. This is available for individuals who receive income-related benefits and they will be required to pay back the charge in 12 monthly instalments.

**■ Phenzine****Tulip Siddiq:**[\[159340\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of supplies of the anti-depressant Nardil (phenelzine); and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 3 March 2021]:* The Department is aware of an ongoing supply issue affecting licensed phenelzine 15 milligram tablets (Nardil) due to manufacturing issues. Although the supply of licensed phenelzine is affected, unlicensed phenelzine 15 milligram tablets imported from abroad by specialist importer companies in addition to phenelzine 15 milligram capsules (specials) are available.

We continue to work closely with the affected supplier to resolve the issue as quickly as possible and specialist importer companies to maintain access to supplies of phenelzine products during this time.

**■ Protective Clothing: Litter****Philip Davies:**[\[157050\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the risk to public health of face coverings being discarded as litter.

**Jo Churchill:**

COVID-19 is known to spread primarily through respiratory particles and the advice of our scientific experts has been that the risk of transmission is greater in enclosed, indoor spaces. Therefore, we do not expect face coverings that are incorrectly discarded as litter to pose a major source of transmission and hence a risk to public health.

## ■ Respiratory System: Coronavirus

**Jim Shannon:**

[\[161756\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of the number of missed diagnoses of (a) asthma, (b) COPD, (c) interstitial lung disease and (d) other respiratory diseases since the start of the covid-19 outbreak.

**Jo Churchill:**

No such estimate has been made.

## ■ Sage Nursing Home: Cleaning Services and Staff

**Patrick Grady:**

[\[147903\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will publish a response to Early Day Motion 1314 on Sage care workers and cleaners.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 8 February 2021]:* All social care workers are entitled to be paid at least the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage. The National Living Wage is currently £8.72 an hour and applies to all workers aged 25 years old or over.

Our guidance has been clear that care workers should be paid their normal wages to self-isolate. The Infection Control Fund has given over £1.1 billion to support social care providers with the cost of infection control measures, including self-isolation pay. The Fund also supports providers with extra costs related to other infection prevention measures such as avoiding using public transport. In all other cases of illness other than COVID-19, eligible employees remain entitled to at least Statutory Sick Pay from the fourth qualifying day of sickness, paid by their employer.

Individual social care providers set the pay and terms and conditions for their staff. Since the introduction of the National Living Wage in 2016, care worker pay has increased at a faster rate than before.

Health and safety concerns in the care sector are a matter for the Health and Safety Executive or relevant local authority and should be reported as appropriate.

Employees are able to seek independent advice on matters of concern relating to their employment.

## ■ Social Services

**John Spellar:**

[\[158851\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what restrictions he will put on support to the care sector to ensure it does not benefit (a) companies located in tax havens and (b) people who have loaded companies with excessive debt or extracted excessive dividends.

**Helen Whately:**

Funding provided for adult social care to support the pandemic response has conditions attached to ensure they are used for their intended purpose, including

reporting on use. If the Department finds evidence of grants being misused, we will recover the funding in accordance with those conditions.

**Anne Marie Morris:** [\[163234\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to publish a social care Green Paper in 2021.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 9 March 2021]:* The Government is committed to the improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals later this year.

#### ■ Test and Trace Support Payment

**Caroline Lucas:** [\[136480\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2021 to Question 109278, for what reasons parents or guardians who are unable to work from home and will lose income as a result of the requirement for their children or dependents to self-isolate because of contact with someone outside their household who has tested positive for covid-19 are not eligible for the support payment of £500 to support people on low incomes.

**Helen Whately:**

The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme will continue into the summer and will be expanded to cover parents who are unable to work because they are caring for a child who is self-isolating. The funding made available for local authorities as part of this to make discretionary support payments will be increased to £20 million per month.

#### ■ Test and Trace Support Payment: Parents

**Seema Malhotra:** [\[162617\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, from what date parents who have to stay at home as a result of their children being required to self-isolate are able to receive the Test and Trace Support Payment.

**Helen Whately:**

*[Holding answer 8 March 2021]:* Parents and guardians will be able to make an application if their child's first day of self-isolation is 8 March or later. Applicants in areas that do not have an application process for parents and guardians in place from 8 March will be able to make a backdated application.

#### ■ Tobacco

**Sir Charles Walker:** [\[163652\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the role that heated tobacco products have to play in helping to achieve England's 2030 smoke-free target; and if he will make a statement.

**Jo Churchill:**

The latest evidence to the Government, published by the Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food on the 12 December 2017, show that although products still pose harm to users, they are likely to be less harmful than conventional cigarette smoking. Data on the impacts to human health are very limited, and it is recommended that smokers quit completely rather than move to these products. Use of these products has remained low at less than 1% of the adult population in England.

The Government will be publishing a new Tobacco Control Plan for England to outline our Smokefree 2030 vision later this summer.

**Travel: Quarantine****Andrew Bridgen:**[\[155034\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to offer people who have received the full course of covid-19 vaccines abroad the option of not having to quarantine on arrival to the UK.

**Jo Churchill:**

*[Holding answer 24 February 2021]:* We currently have no plans to do so.

**Bell Ribeiro-Addy:**[\[157303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that inbound passengers on indirect flights out of red-list countries are not able to evade having to quarantine in a Government-approved hotel for 10 days.

**Jo Churchill:**

Border Force will use all the information available to them to identify those who may have travelled to the United Kingdom indirectly from countries where a travel ban has been imposed and will stop them at the border wherever possible. All arriving passengers must complete a passenger locator form that will detail their travel before they arrived in the UK and whether they have been in a 'red list' country in the 10 days before their arrival in the UK.

**Vitamin D****Justin Madders:**[\[162636\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the provision of Vitamin D supplements which ended on 21 February 2021 will be extended to people who have recently been added to the clinically vulnerable list.

**Jo Churchill:**

There are no current plans to extend the registration period for free vitamin D supplements for those on the clinically extremely vulnerable list beyond the winter months. The longstanding Government advice is that between October and early March everyone is advised to take a supplement containing 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day. The free vitamin D supplement scheme was introduced to benefit those

asked to stay indoors more than usual over the spring and summer 2020 due to national restrictions.

## HOME OFFICE

### ■ Asylum: Housing

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[163327\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on what basis her Department determines the number of asylum seekers housed within each parliamentary constituency.

**Chris Philp:**

Asylum seekers are housed across the UK under agreements made between national government and local authorities, rather than constituencies, that have been in place since the introduction of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

The amount of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area is limited to 0.5% of the 2011 census population or, a ratio of 1:200 of supported asylum seekers to overall population of the area. The majority of local authorities who accommodate asylum seekers are not in close proximity to this limit. We would not normally go beyond that ratio without the agreement of the relevant local authority.

### ■ Asylum: Wakefield

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

[\[163326\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many asylum seekers were placed into initial accommodation within Wakefield in 2020.

**Chris Philp:**

The latest published Immigration Statistics detail the number of asylum seekers accommodated in each local authority area. These statistics can be found at [https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support\(opens in a new tab\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#asylum-support(opens%20in%20a%20new%20tab))

Data is published on a quarterly basis, with the latest information published 25 February 2021. The next quarterly figures are due to be released in May 2021.

The Home Office does not publish a breakdown of these statistics which disaggregates the number of asylum seekers accommodated in dispersal accommodation for the first time in each quarter in each of the last two years, by local authority. These figures are not available in a reportable format and to provide the information could only be done at disproportionate cost.

## ■ Coronavirus: Fines

**Zarah Sultana:**

[\[163730\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what steps she is taking to monitor the use of police powers introduced in the Coronavirus Act 2020 in respect of imposing fines on members of the public.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Health Protection regulations are kept under continuous review to ensure that measures are proportionate and appropriate in addressing the threat to public health posed by Covid-19.

The Government moved quickly to give the police the powers and guidance they need to support compliance with essential social distancing measures. Officials have worked closely with operational partners to ensure that new changes are understood by police forces around the country and will continue to do so as we move through the stages of the roadmap.

Throughout the pandemic the police have continued to use the 4Es approach: engaging with individuals who are not following the rules, explaining the rules to them and encouraging them to comply before moving on to enforce the law. The Government works closely with the police to ensure that enforcement of the rules is both proportionate and legal. Police officers have received clear guidance that they should use their common sense, discretion and experience in enforcing coronavirus regulations.

## ■ Detention Centres: Females

**Holly Lynch:**

[\[162658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what plans her Department has to establish smaller capacity immigration detention units for women located in existing male detention facilities.

**Chris Philp:**

There are no plans to expand immigration detention capacity for women.

The Home Office has acquired the former Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham and will open it as an immigration removal centre (IRC) for around 80 women by the autumn. We plan to supplement the new Hassockfield IRC by continuing to provide some detention capacity for women at Colnbrook, Dungavel and Yarl's Wood IRCs, in order to provide flexibility in placement and shorter escorting journeys for those in detention.

The immigration removal estate is kept under ongoing review, to ensure that the Home Office has sufficient capacity for men and women it proves necessary to detain for the purposes of removal, and to protect the public; and to provide value for money.



**■ Extradition Act 2003: Arrests****Meg Hillier:**[\[163656\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the Answer of 25 February 2021 to Question 156290, on Extradition Act 2003: Arrests, for what reason her Department does not hold the information requested; and if she will request that information from the National Crime Agency.

**Kevin Foster:**

The National Crime Agency is the competent authority for cases which fall under Part 1 of the Extradition Act 2003 and, as such, is the holder of all data relating to arrests under the power provided by that legislation.

Data in relation to extradition under Part 1 of the Extradition Act 2003 will be published by the National Crime Agency in due course in the usual way.

**■ Funerals: Coronavirus****Sir John Hayes:**[\[161671\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what notice period will be given to the funeral and death care sector for guidance on the relaxation of rules limiting the number of attendees at funeral services during the covid-19 outbreak.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The Government's [guidance for those managing funerals](#) is available through the Deceased Management Advisory Group website. This guidance details the actions funeral directors and others managing funerals should take to ensure funerals take place in a COVID-19 safe and secure way. This includes ensuring a COVID-19 risk assessment is in place and that all reasonable steps are taken to limit the risk of transmission, taking into account the risk assessment and relevant legislation including around attendance.

Ahead of Step 4 of the 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' roadmap (no earlier than 21 June), the Government will launch the Events Research Programme, to consider how and when restrictions can be lifted from large events including funerals and wakes. Subject to the outcomes of the review at each stage, the forward plan will be included in the Roadmap for when limits on funeral attendance might be lifted and the relevant guidance will be updated accordingly.

**Sir John Hayes:**[\[161672\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether covid-19 regulations pertaining to funeral services will be eased before 21 June 2021.

**Kit Malthouse:**

The 'COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021' provides a roadmap out of the current lockdown in England. The design of the roadmap has been informed by the latest scientific evidence and seeks a balance between our key social and economic priorities, whilst preserving the health and safety of the country. The scientific evidence shows that opening too early or too quickly risks a further lockdown. The

approach focuses on data, not dates. Each step has a “no earlier than” date, five weeks later than the previous step, to allow time to assess the impact of the previous step and provide a week’s notice before changes occur.

Funerals can continue to take place with up to 30 mourners in attendance. Anyone working is not included. People should socially distance themselves from others outside their household or support bubble (if eligible). Religious, belief-based or commemorative events linked to a person’s death, such as stone setting ceremonies, the scattering of ashes or a wake, can also continue with up to 6 people in attendance.

At Step 2 (no earlier than 12 April), wakes will be permitted for up to 15 people.

From Step 3 (no earlier than 17 May), 30 people can attend a wake in line with all life events at this stage.

Ahead of Step 4 (no earlier than 21 June), the Government will launch the Events Research Programme, to consider how and when restrictions can be lifted from large events including funerals and wakes. Subject to the outcomes of the review, we hope to be able to lift restrictions.

## ■ Immigration: Hong Kong

**Andrew Rosindell:**

[\[161685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what guidance her Department has issued to the UK Border Agency on applications for (a) BN(O) visas and (b) asylum from Hongkongers who have been convicted of offences under the National Security Law or other legislation applicable in Hong Kong.

**Kevin Foster:**

On 31 January the new Hong Kong BN(O) route launched. The route will enable BN(O) status holders and their eligible family members to come to the UK to live, work and study. This new route reflects the UK’s historic and moral commitment to those people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the UK by taking up BN(O) status at the point of Hong Kong’s handover to China in 1997.

In line with standard operational procedures, all Border Force staff were informed of the opening of the new route. Detailed guidance and training for processing applications for the BN(O) route were also provided to relevant caseworking teams in UKVI.

The UK has a proud history of providing protection to those who need it, in accordance with our international obligations. All asylum claims are assessed on their individual merits on a case-by-case basis. We would not automatically refuse asylum applications from those with criminal convictions.

## ■ Refugees: Resettlement

**Mick Whitley:** [\[163311\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what progress the Government has made in meeting commitments under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the last 12 months.

**Chris Philp:**

As of December 2020, a total of 19,776 people had been resettled to the UK through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) since it was expanded in September 2015. This is in addition to the thousands of people resettled through our other refugee resettlement schemes.

In the year to December 2020, a total of 662 people were resettled to the UK through the VPRS. During this time, resettlement activity was necessarily paused, between March 2020 and December 2020, due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Home Office is committed to publishing data in an orderly way as part of the regular quarterly Immigration Statistics, in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. These can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/migration-statistics)

To access the number of refugees resettled, access the latest statistical release using the link above, then “data tables”, “asylum and resettlement” and select either the summary or detailed resettlement tables. The latest set of figures were released on 25 February 2021.

## ■ Visas: Families

**Afzal Khan:** [\[161859\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for visas under the adult dependent relative rule were (a) received, (b) granted and (c) rejected in (i) 2017, (ii) 2018, (iii) 2019 and (iv) 2020.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[161860\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for visas subject to the adult dependent relative rule were granted visas on first application in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[161861\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applications for visas subject to the adult dependent relative rule were granted a visa on appeal in (a) 2017, (b) 2018, (c) 2019 and (d) 2020.

**Afzal Khan:** [\[161862\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, how many applicants were granted a visa via the adult dependency rule in each year since 2017.

**Kevin Foster:**

Home Office Migration Statistics do not capture the number applications received, granted and rejected for visas under the adult dependent relative rule. To capture these numbers would require a manual trawl of data and to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

The number and outcome of visa applications for the adult dependant relative rule are grouped with other categories to make up the Family: Other (for immediate settlement) in our published statistics:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/962146/entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2020.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962146/entry-clearance-visa-outcomes-datasets-dec-2020.xlsx)

Her Majesty's Courts & Tribunals Service data relating to appeal outcomes is published here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-july-to-september-2020>

The data required for this question in terms of how many were granted through appeal cannot be produced through normal data cycles and would involve manual reconciliation which would incur disproportionate cost.

**HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****■ Buildings: Fire Prevention**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

**[163707]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the consultation Fire safety: risk prioritisation in existing buildings which concluded on 17 February 2020.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We are considering the information provided by respondents to the call for evidence, and will be publishing a response.

**■ Churches: Coronavirus**

**Jonathan Edwards:**

**[163670]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, with reference to the Covid-19 Response, Spring 2021 roadmap, published on 22 February 2021, when Welsh language chapels in England will be able to host gatherings for the singing of hymns, cymanfa ganu.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Places of Worship have remained open for communal worship throughout the current Covid-19 restrictions. Singing during this period has been limited to one person, exceptionally three to minimise the risks around aerosol transmission of the virus. From 29 March this guidance will be amended to allow larger numbers to perform,

though numbers should still be limited to the minimum necessary and the principles of safe singing must be observed. There are currently no plans to allow communal singing to resume before Step 4 of the roadmap, which would be no earlier than 21 June.

## ■ Coronavirus: Vaccination

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[161788\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to provide additional financial support for work on the covid-19 vaccination roll-out to local authorities that did not receive funding under the community champions scheme.

**Eddie Hughes:**

All English local authorities will be reimbursed via local NHS partners (or by DHSC) for unfunded and additional costs needed to support Covid vaccination, including those related to increasing uptake in the BAME or other low uptake cohorts.

**Ruth Cadbury:** [\[161790\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he plans to take to support local authorities who did not receive funding through the Community Champions scheme to support the rollout of the covid-19 vaccine to BAME people in those boroughs.

**Eddie Hughes:**

All English local authorities will be reimbursed via local NHS partners (or by DHSC) for unfunded and additional costs needed to support Covid vaccination, including those related to increasing uptake in the BAME or other low uptake cohorts.

## ■ Council Tax Reduction Schemes

**Navendu Mishra:** [\[162710\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the effect of the number of households receiving Council Tax Support on the income of local authorities in (a) England, (b) the Northwest and (c) Stockport in the last five years.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Local authorities are responsible for the design of their council tax support schemes, including eligibility for help with bills. The Government recognises the importance of local council tax support for those in financial need, and that caseloads have increased as a result of the pandemic. It was announced at the Spending Review that local authorities in England would be provided with £670 million of additional grant funding to enable them to continue to provide support to households that require it.

## ■ Housing: Insulation

**Andrew Gwynne:**

[\[163654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 4 March 2021 to Question 160570, whether his Department has made an assessment of the number of leaseholders likely to (a) lose their home and (b) declare bankruptcy as a result of the costs of resolving fire safety issues relating to (i) cladding removal, (ii) balcony remediation, (iii) replacing combustible insulation, (iv) replacing missing fire breaks, (v) increased insurance premiums and (vi) waking watches.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The information requested is not held.

The Government has announced over £5 billion in grant funding towards the removal of unsafe cladding on buildings over 18 metres in height. This unprecedented investment in building safety will help hundreds of thousands of leaseholders, who will be protected from the cost of replacing unsafe cladding on their homes. Alongside this a generous finance scheme will also provide for remediation of unsafe cladding on buildings of 11-18 metres in height. Leaseholders will pay no more than £50 a month towards this scheme. We will publish more details on how these schemes will work soon.

These schemes will also ultimately help to end interim measures and reduce building insurance costs. They build on steps already taken to support leaseholders, including the £30 million Waking Watch Relief Fund to incentivise the purchase of alarm systems in buildings where there is currently a waking watch in place and there is no common alarm system.

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[163711\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if the £3.5bn in additional funding for the removal of dangerous cladding announced on 10 February 2021 will be available in 2021-22.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We will be publishing more details on the additional funding for the removal of unsafe cladding announced on 10 February.

## ■ Leeds-Bradford Airport: Planning Permission

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[161674\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will call in planning application number 20/02559/FU by Leeds Bradford Airport for the construction of a new terminal building and associated modifications.

**Christopher Pincher:**

If Leeds City Council are minded to approve the application, the application will be referred to the Secretary of State under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009, due to its scale and green belt location.

Once the referral has been received by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Direction provides that the local planning authority shall not grant permission until the expiry of 21 days, unless the Secretary of State has notified within that time that he does not intend to call-in the application.

## ■ Letting Agents

**Gill Furniss:** [\[163718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, when he plans to respond to the recommendations of the Regulation of Property Agents Working Group published in July 2019.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Government is considering the recommendations in the report received from the independent working group on the regulation of property agents chaired by Lord Best. The Government is committed to ensuring that those living in the leasehold sector are protected from abuse and poor service. We believe very strongly that any fees and charges should be justifiable, transparent, and communicated effectively and that there should be a clear route to redress if things go wrong.

## ■ Local Government: Meetings

**Nickie Aiken:** [\[162702\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2021 to Question 152648 and 152649, what plans his Department has to bring forward additional primary legislation to extend remote or hybrid meetings for local councils when current provisions expire on 7 May 2021.

**Nickie Aiken:** [\[162703\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2021 to Questions 152648 and 152649, when his Department plans to set out its approach to local authorities when current provisions for remote or hybrid meetings for local councils expire on 7 May 2021.

**Nickie Aiken:** [\[162704\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, pursuant to the Answer of 24 February 2021 to Questions 152648 and 152649, what assessment his Department has made of the potential merits of extending remote or hybrid meetings for local councils beyond 7 May 2021.

**Eddie Hughes:**

The Government keeps all policy under review. To extend the facility for all local authorities to continue to meet remotely or in hybrid form after 7 May 2021 would require primary legislation. We have received representations from local authorities and sector representative organisations making the case for the continuation of remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021 and we are carefully considering next steps in this area.



## ■ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Finance

**Kate Hollern:**

[161777]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, how many funds his Department is responsible for; how many funds shared with other departments his Department is responsible for; and if he will provide a list of each of those funds and provide details of whether each those funds is allocated (a) competitively or (b) on the basis of need.

**Eddie Hughes:**

*[Holding answer 8 March 2021]:* All the details of the Department's funding programmes are set out in the Explanatory Memoranda on our Estimates. The most recent memoranda for our Supplementary Estimate 2020-21 will be published shortly.

The Department's Main Estimate Explanatory Memorandum for 2020-21 is available here: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/931/documents/7131/default/>.

## ■ Planning Permission

**Jim Shannon:**

[162606]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, whether his Department's plans to accelerate planning permission have taken into account any of the unintended consequences caused by relaxing permitted development rights for the indoor and outdoor built environment; and what assessment he has made of the effect of those changes to planning permission on people's health and wellbeing.

**Christopher Pincher:**

We recently consulted on proposals for a new permitted development right which will allow more premises to change from a commercial, business or service use to residential use, so that more much needed new homes can be created. Other proposals would provide for the larger extension of schools and hospitals. The consultation closed on 28 January and we are currently considering the responses received.

In response to concerns raised in respect of the quality of some of the homes delivered through permitted development rights for change of use, we now require that adequate natural light be provided in all habitable rooms, and we have legislated to ensure that in future all new homes delivered through permitted development rights will meet Nationally Described Space Standards. We have also introduced temporary flexibilities enabling local authorities to hold outdoor markets, granting communities access to food and goods outdoors.

## ■ Regional Planning and Development: Finance

**Dan Jarvis:**

[R] [163695]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the methodology used to calculate the local authority priority categories for the Levelling Up Fund.

**Dan Jarvis:**

[R] [\[163697\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of not including (a) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and (b) Sheffield City Council in the priority category 1 of the Levelling Up Fund on the economy of each of those areas.

**Eddie Hughes:**

As set out in the prospectus published at Budget, the index used for the Levelling Up Fund places areas into category one, two or three based on the local area's need for economic recovery and growth, improved transport connectivity, and regeneration. We will shortly publish further detail on the methodology used to calculate the index.

## ■ Rents: Arrears

**Debbie Abrahams:**

[\[161767\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the number and proportion of (a) private (b) social renters in rent arrears during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Christopher Pincher:**

Data from the English Housing Survey (EHS) Household Resilience Study for June-July 2020 details rental arrears during the pandemic. It says that 7% of private rented households and 11% of social rented households were in rent arrears in June/July. The English Housing Survey Headline Report 2019-20 details rent arrears in the year before pandemic, finding that 3% of private renters and 11% of social renters were in arrears at time of survey.

## ■ Retail Trade: Urban Areas

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[163151\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what plans he has to increase support to high street redevelopment organisations.

**Eddie Hughes:**

Government recognises that this is a challenging time for everyone in the country and COVID-19 is having a significant impact on our communities, businesses and town centres.

Government is making longer-term structural interventions to support high streets and town centres to redevelop, including:

- The Towns Fund is helping level up the country, driving economic regeneration, productivity and growth. Through the Towns Fund we will invest up to £25 million in each town, or more in exceptional cases, to drive the economic regeneration of towns to deliver long-term economic and productivity growth. We have now committed over £1.28 billion under the Towns Fund, offering Town Deals to 52 places across England. This includes the accelerated funding provided to places

last year. Announcements for the remaining Town Deals will be made in due course.

- Even more towns will be able to benefit from the Levelling Up Fund, which will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery. The Fund will be open to all local areas and allocated competitively. We have published a prospectus for the fund and launched the first round of competitions at Budget.
- On 26 December 2020, the Communities Secretary announced that up to £830 million has been allocated from the Future High Streets Fund. 15 areas have been awarded £255 million, with a further 57 areas to receive provisional funding of £576 million. The investment will support areas to recover from the pandemic and help transform underused town centres into vibrant places to live, work and shop.
- The Government is also providing support to local leadership with the High Streets Task Force, giving high streets and town centres expert advice to adapt and thrive. Over five years this is providing hands-on support to local areas to develop data-driven innovative strategies and connect local areas to relevant experts. The High Street Task Force is rolling out its expert, training and data offer across the country, and has launched a range of online support.
- The Government also paid £5.8 million of support to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) via local authorities in 2020, to help them continue their work supporting high streets and town centres.

#### ■ **Right to Buy Scheme: Females**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[163709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what estimate he has made of the proportion of women who used the right to buy scheme to purchase their council home in each (a) region and (b) year since 2010.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department does not collect information on the personal characteristics of tenants using the Right to Buy scheme to buy local authority owned properties.

#### ■ **Shared Ownership: Females**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[163708\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what proportion of shared owners are women in each region, for each year since 2010.

**Christopher Pincher:**

The Department does not collect information on the personal characteristics of existing shared ownership households.

## ■ Sleeping Rough: Redbridge

### Wes Streeting:

[163716]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps he will take to support the London Borough of Redbridge in tackling rough sleeping beyond April 2021.

### Eddie Hughes:

The Government has made clear that no one should be without a roof over their head, which is why we have committed to end rough sleeping. In total, we are spending over £700 million in 2020/21 on homelessness and rough sleeping.

We are also putting in place an unprecedented level of support to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over 2021/22. This includes £676 million in resource funding, a 60% increase compared to the Spending Review in 2019.

The Government will also commit £87 million of capital funding in 2021/22, primarily to support the delivery of long-term accommodation for rough sleepers as announced at Budget 2020. This means the Government will be spending over £750m to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping next year.

Redbridge has had significant investment as part of this and has been receiving Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding since the launch of the programme in 2018, including £625,000 for 2020/21. The MHCLG adviser teams are currently working closely with Redbridge to develop interventions for the next RSI bidding round in 2021/22.

Redbridge also received £216,000 in funding through the Protect Programme this winter which has enabled them to support their most vulnerable and longer-term rough sleepers, as well as £140,000 through the Cold Weather Fund. They received £5,257,937 for 2021/22 through the Homelessness Prevention Grant. They were also successful in the last Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) bidding round and are currently working on mobilising these units.

## ■ Towns Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund

### Dan Jarvis:

[R] [163696]

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish details of the method used by his Department to select the successful areas for the (a) Towns Fund and (b) UK Community Renewal Fund.

### Eddie Hughes:

In selecting towns for the Towns Fund, Ministers considered levels of deprivation alongside other factors including skills, employment levels and exposure to economic shocks. The Government has published details of the selection process here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-selection-summary-of-accounting-officer-advice/towns-fund-selection-process-summary-of-accounting-officer-ao-advice>

With regards to the UK Community Renewal Fund, as set out in the prospectus published on 3 March, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. We are committed to transparency and a methodological note will be published explaining how the index of economic resilience was developed.

## ■ UK Community Renewal Fund: Kingston upon Hull

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[163657\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the equity of not including Hull in the 100 priority places for the Community Renewal Fund.

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[163658\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what comparative assessment his Department made of the adequacy of community funding in (a) Richmond and (b) Hull before deciding their respective places in the priority list for the Renewal Community Fund.

**Dame Diana Johnson:** [\[163660\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish (a) the index of economic resilience used to determine the 100 priority places for the UK Community Renewal Fund and (b) the score awarded to the city of Hull on that index.

**Eddie Hughes:**

At Budget 2021, the UK Government published a prospectus for the UK Community Renewal Fund: an additional £220 million funding for 2021/22 to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

The UK Community Renewal Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches. It will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.

As set out in the prospectus published on 3 March, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. We are committed to transparency and a methodological note will be published explaining how the index of economic resilience was developed.

## ■ UK Shared Prosperity Fund

**Steve Reed:** [\[163700\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if he will publish the methodology to determine which (a) places and (b) lead authorities were prioritised for capacity funding to help prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**Eddie Hughes:**

At Budget 2021, the UK Government published a prospectus for the UK Community Renewal Fund: an additional £220 million funding for 2021/22 to help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2022.

The UK Community Renewal Fund aims to support people and communities most in need across the UK to pilot programmes and new approaches. It will invest in skills, community and place, local business, and supporting people into employment.

As set out in the prospectus published on 3 March, we have identified 100 priority places based on an index of economic resilience across Great Britain which measures productivity, household income, unemployment, skills and population density. We are committed to transparency and a methodological note will be published explaining how the index of economic resilience was developed.

**JUSTICE**■ **Bankruptcy****Hilary Benn:**[\[163632\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether guidance has been issued to courts on hearing bankruptcy proceedings in the absence of the individual concerned; and if he will make a statement.

**Chris Philp:**

The listing of court cases, including the method by which they will take place, is a matter for the judiciary. Should there be non-attendance of the individual at the hearing, whether it is being held in person or remotely, the judge will determine whether the hearing will proceed.

HMCTS provide court staff with guidance to assist in the facilitation of remote hearings where the judge deems this method as appropriate for a particular case.

Public guidance on the use of remote hearings is available

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-telephone-and-video-hearings-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

■ **Courts and Tribunals: Coronavirus****Alex Cunningham:**[\[163685\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 12 February 2021 to Question 148977, Courts: Coronavirus, what limits have been placed on the number of people allowed in (a) courts and (b) tribunals, broken down by building.

**Chris Philp:**

The safety of those using our buildings is paramount. We continue to work with public health organisations to develop, review and entrench our safeguards, and we have a transparent framework in place to ensure these safeguards are followed.

The hands/face/space measures are crucial. Insofar as 'space' is concerned, social distancing is the central control. In order to ensure that social distancing protocols are being adhered to within our buildings, HMCTS has in place measures to limit the flow of people into (and within) buildings at any one time. This is to ensure both the safety and appropriate use of buildings whilst continuing to enable access to justice, for those who need it. There is no maximum numeric occupancy 'cap' for particular buildings, as such. Court and tribunal buildings are complex structures, with various component sections, each able to accommodate safely different numbers at different times. A numeric cap would be an unduly simplistic instrument to control something which is necessarily more complicated. It would do nothing, for example, to mitigate the risk of individuals congregating or converging in a particular area of the building which could breach social distancing protocol but within the notional building limit.

Since the way we use our buildings varies from site to site, and each building is unique in its layout, structure and size, occupancy levels are managed and determined locally. This is achieved through continuous dynamic assessments by local managers in consultation with the site security supervisor and Court/Tribunal Security Officers (C/TSOs).

Limiting the number of people entering buildings at any one time is a control deployed as necessary. We have also introduced one way systems, within our buildings, to limit footfall; as well as measures such as occupancy limits for particular rooms or areas. This is monitored throughout each day, including through the deployment of marshals.

## ■ Courts: Coronavirus

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[163686\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many Nightingale (a) courts and (b) courtrooms are operating by region.

**Chris Philp:**

As at 8 March, there are 24 Nightingale venues in operation, providing a total of 49 hearing rooms. The table below provides a breakdown by region.

HMCTS REGION	NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL NIGHTINGALE COURT VENUES	COURTROOMS PROVIDED
London	3	9
Midlands	4	11
North East	5	6
North West	6	13
South East	1	1
South West	4	8



HMCTS REGION	NUMBER OF OPERATIONAL NIGHTINGALE COURT VENUES	COURTROOMS PROVIDED
Wales	1	1

We are opening more Nightingale courtrooms and are on track to provide a total of 60 courtrooms by the end of March.

Recovering from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is our top priority. Nightingale courts have opened in every HMCTS region, capable of hearing a range of case types, including trials, for defendants who are on bail. These venues help to free up more room in existing courts to hear other cases, such as custodial jury trials, which require cells and secure dock facilities to keep the public, victims and witnesses safe.

We will continue to keep our recovery plans under close review to ensure that the geographic distribution of Nightingale courts meets our operational requirements.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[163687\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of courts are currently working to full capacity.

**Chris Philp:**

HMCTS has implemented measures which mean that all of our courts and tribunals buildings have lower footfall than before the pandemic and are therefore operating at less than full capacity.

Our [Organisational Risk Assessment](#) sets out the suite of measures put in place to ensure our buildings remain safe for those who use them, and these measures have been developed with the endorsement of public health agencies. Key to these measures is social distancing which has been embedded across the HMCTS estate since the onset of COVID-19.

Adhering to social distancing has, necessarily, reduced the capacity in our court and tribunal buildings to manage and hear cases, because it inevitably restricts the number of people who can be safely accommodated across the various parts of each site. HMCTS has taken a number steps to minimise the impact of this on our ability to service access to justice needs, including the introduction of additional 'Nightingale' court venues to provide increased accommodation. They are used on a temporary basis to ensure as many hearings as possible can continue to take place during the COVID-19 outbreak.

As at 4<sup>th</sup> March, courtroom availability, split by HMCTS Region, is as follows

REGION	NOT OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (%)	GRAND TOTAL
London	196	509	72%	705
Midlands	103	339	76%	442

REGION	NOT OPEN	OPEN	OPEN (%)	GRAND TOTAL
North East	98	313	76%	411
North West	64	334	83%	398
Scotland	33	35	51%	68
South East	37	404	91%	441
South West	18	238	92%	256
Wales	9	141	94%	150
Grand Total	558	2313	80%	2871

### ■ Courts: Young Offenders

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[163688\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many and what proportion of young adults who become involved in the criminal justice system as defendants have their maturity assessed by Liaison and Diversion services.

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[163689\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the level of (a) awareness and (b) understanding among magistrates of the effect of maturity on offending behaviour.

**Alex Chalk:**

Although maturity is not assessed by Liaison and Diversion services, the National Probation Service (NPS) views maturity assessments as a critical component of an offender assessment within a Pre Sentence Report (PSR) as articulated in Probation Instruction 04/2016: Determining PSR.

In addition, the NPS are working with the Magistrates' Association to develop a suite of short videos regarding the need to consider maturity at each step in the Criminal Justice System to raise sentencers awareness and understanding of the effect of maturity on offending. This is targeted at the Judiciary, Crown Prosecution Service, Defence and Probation staff in Court.

The NPS has also produced guidance to support court report writers, which highlights how to make more effective sentencing proposals to support those with low maturity to engage more effectively in community disposals.

Sentencing guidelines developed by the independent Sentencing Council also list 'age and/or lack of maturity' as a mitigating factor which sentencers can take into account when deciding on an appropriate sentence. This is also reflected in the Equal Treatment Bench Book (published February 2021) the main source of guidance for sentencers for dealing with individuals with protected characteristics. The Judicial

College also provides magistrates with training on offender maturity as part of its modules on sentencing guidelines.

The NPS are also working to ensure that court staff have a clear understanding of both the impact of low maturity on offending behaviour and the consequences of disrupted maturity on recidivism. A training video has been produced by the Evidence Based Practice Team in the NPS, outlining the indicators and the means of assessment of maturity for those aged 18 – 25.

## ■ Ivory: Smuggling

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[161718\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many people have been prosecuted for ivory smuggling in each of the last five years; and how many of those prosecutions have resulted in (a) convictions, (b) custodial sentences, and (c) non-custodial sentences.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[161719\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average length of sentence was for people receiving a custodial sentence for ivory smuggling in the last five years.

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[161720\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average fine was for people receiving a non-custodial sentence for ivory smuggling in the last five years.

**Chris Philp:**

It is not possible to identify prosecutions and outcomes for the specific offence of ivory smuggling. This information under the Ivory Act 2018 legislation is not centrally held in the Court Proceedings Database by the MoJ.

## ■ Legal Aid Scheme

**Stuart Anderson:** [\[161871\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps he has taken to help ensure the accessibility of affordable civil legal aid.

**Alex Chalk:**

We have already made a number of changes to ensure that civil legal aid remains accessible to those who need it. For example, in May last year we removed the mandatory element of the Civil Legal Advice telephone gateway.

In addition, in December last year we brought forward legislation improving financial eligibility for civil legal aid. We laid legislation which removed the £100,000 cap on the amount of mortgage debt that can be deducted from the value of a person's property in the means test. This means all mortgage debt will be deducted from a property's value when assessing eligibility for civil legal aid. This legislation also enables the Legal Aid Agency to disregard some compensation and ex-gratia payments for the purposes of assessing legal aid eligibility. These changes will widen access to civil legal aid.

We announced a comprehensive review of the means test for legal aid in the Legal Support Action Plan in 2019. The review is assessing the effectiveness with which the means test protects access to justice, particularly for those who are vulnerable. As part of the review, we are considering the full range of means-testing criteria, including the income and capital thresholds for civil legal aid. We plan to conclude the review in late Spring 2021, at which point we will publish a full consultation paper setting out our future policy proposals in this area. We will seek to implement any final recommendations as soon as practicable following public consultation.

## ■ Prisoners: Coronavirus

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[161665\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment his Department has made of the effect of the January 2021 covid-19 restrictions on the mental and emotional wellbeing of (a) new fathers in the prison system, (b) new mothers in the prison system and (c) the prison population.

**Ms Harriet Harman:**

[\[161666\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment he has made of the effect of the January 2021 covid-19 restrictions on the mental and emotional wellbeing of children with (a) mothers and (b) fathers in the prison system.

**Alex Chalk:**

NHS England & Improvement and NHS Wales are responsible for the assessment of the mental health needs of those in prison. Whilst regime restrictions introduced to control the spread of COVID-19 have saved lives, we recognise that these measures may exacerbate the mental health needs of those in our care. It is therefore vital that these restrictions are proportionate.

Family contact provides a crucial lifeline for those in our care. It is important that those in prison are actively able to maintain outside contacts and meaningful family ties, especially with their children. Being able to communicate with those outside is part of providing a safe and decent environment for prisoners and contributes to a reduction in self-harm and suicide. In response to the initial lockdown, we acted quickly to ensure that prisoners could stay in touch with their loved ones, providing 1,500 secure mobile handsets, every prisoner with at least £5 PIN credit per week and introduced secure video calls which are now available in all prisons at no cost to families.

Mother and Baby Units have operated in women's prisons for a number of years, they enable mothers to have their children with them in prison during an important period of bonding. The units are often praised in HMIP reports. There are also many ad hoc provisions such as Storybook Dads which help to maintain contact with younger children.

HMPPS continues to balance the delivery of activities and time out of cell that is both decent and COVID-safe, striving for as generous as possible regime offer with necessary restrictions in place focusing on protecting the health and lives of staff and

residents. The lifting of some restrictions within our establishments will be done carefully and gradually, and only when it is judged to be appropriate for each individual site, noting the risks that the prison estate continues to manage.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the regime restrictions introduced in response to it have brought new and different challenges, but maintaining safety, mental health and wellbeing of prisoners remains a priority. We have produced a range of products to support Governors in devising and implementing local safety and welfare plans designed to mitigate risks. This has included resources for staff assisting prison residents who might be struggling, such as guidance on understanding and supporting someone who is self-harming.

To support wellbeing and address anxiety and boredom, we have developed distraction packs, in cell activities and a range of self-help materials, including a Wellbeing Plan, created with input from mental health charity Mind. The Samaritans phone service has remained available and we are working with them to ensure their Listener scheme continues to facilitate peer support between prisoners.

## PRIME MINISTER

### ■ Members: Correspondence

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[163631\]](#)

To ask the Prime Minister, when he plans to reply to the letter from the Rt. hon. Member for Leeds Central of 15 January 2021 on his appearance before the Liaison Committee.

**Boris Johnson:**

I sent a letter to the Chair of the Liaison Committee relating to my appearance before the Committee on 13 January 2021, including follow-up letters from members, on 1 February 2021. A copy is available on the Committee's website.

## SCOTLAND

### ■ Arts: Scotland

**Alex Cunningham:**

[\[913097\]](#)

What assessment he has made with Cabinet colleagues of the effect on creative workers in Scotland of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

**Iain Stewart:**

This Government understands that the cultural and creative sectors rely on the ability to move people across borders quickly, simply, and with minimal cost and administration.

We are now working urgently across Government and in collaboration with the music and wider creative industries, including through a new working group which includes the devolved administrations, to help address these issues.

## ■ Broadcasting: Scotland

**Cat Smith:**

[\[913105\]](#)

If he will have discussions with the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on ensuring that public sector broadcasters uphold obligations on impartiality during election periods in Scotland.

**Iain Stewart:**

The Secretary of State for Scotland has raised concerns previously about BBC Scotland broadcasting the First Minister's daily press briefing, which so frequently is about SNP politics rather than public health information. In the run-up to the Holyrood elections, BBC Scotland must look carefully at its legal requirement for impartiality.

## ■ Hospitality Industry: Scotland

**Jeff Smith:**

[\[913101\]](#)

What recent steps his Department has taken to support the Scottish hospitality sector.

**Iain Stewart:**

We are continuing to support the Scottish hospitality sector through a combination of UK Government initiatives.

This includes the now extended VAT reduction for the sector and support for businesses, such as business loans, which includes the new Recovery Loan Scheme.

This is in addition to the extended furlough scheme and grants for the self-employed.

## ■ Overseas Trade: Scotland

**Wes Streeting:**

[\[913109\]](#)

What recent discussions he has had with Scottish exporters on the effect of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on their ability to trade.

**David Duguid:**

This year my Ministerial colleagues and I have had an unprecedented number of meetings with Scottish exporters and their sectoral representative organisations.

On issues like supporting seafood, this Government has held extensive consultations with the industry.

We have been working tirelessly to resolve issues around the new arrangements for getting our world class seafood to customers in Europe.

## ■ Telecommunications: Scotland

**Jamie Stone:**

[\[913089\]](#)

What steps he is taking with Cabinet colleagues to ensure the adequacy of telecommunications infrastructure in rural areas of Scotland.

**Iain Stewart:**

The Scottish economy continues to gain hugely from the UK Government's ambitious investments in data connectivity.

I want to see every area of Scotland, including the constituency of Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross, be able to take full advantage of the digital technology available.

**■ UN Climate Conference 2021: Scotland****Andrew Gwynne:**[\[913107\]](#)

What discussions he has had with (a) Cabinet colleagues and (b) the Scottish Government on preparations for COP26 in Glasgow.

**Mr Alister Jack:**

The Scotland Office has regular discussions with other UK Government Departments and the Scottish Government regarding COP26 and I am confident that preparations are in good shape.

**SPEAKER'S COMMITTEE ON THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION****■ Electoral Register****Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi:**[\[164608\]](#)

To ask the hon. Member for City of Chester, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, what recent assessment he has made of the potential merits of introducing automatic voter registration.

**Christian Matheson:**

The Commission supports electoral registration reforms that would make it easier for people to register or to update their details throughout the year. This might include adding people automatically from other datasets, or other automated solutions which still require confirmatory action by the voter.

In 2019, the Commission investigated the feasibility of such reforms. It found these were possible from a technical perspective and could be implemented without radically altering the structure of the electoral registration system in the UK.

The Commission's view is that this could help improve registration levels among some under-registered groups, including the youngest part of the franchise. This would ensure that as many people as possible are able to participate in our democracy.



**TRANSPORT****■ Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme****Clive Lewis:**[\[161813\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 22 January 2021 to Question 140207 on the Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme, what conditions are in place to access support from that scheme; which companies are to receive support from that scheme; how much those companies will each receive; and what the cost to the public purse is of that scheme.

**Robert Courts:**

The Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme opened for applications on 29 January to provide support for eligible businesses, covering the equivalent of their business rates liabilities or COVID-19 losses – whichever is lower – in the 2020/21 financial year, subject to certain conditions and a cap per claimant of £8m. On 3 March a six month extension to the scheme from 1 April 2021 was announced. It will cover the equivalent of their business rates liabilities or COVID-19 losses for the first 6 months of the 2021/22 financial year, subject to certain conditions and a cap per claimant of £4m.

The Airport and Ground Operations Support Scheme will support airports and ground handlers that have been severely impacted by the pandemic while retaining relatively high fixed costs, including business rates liabilities. We are currently considering applications to ensure payments are made to successful applicants by the end of the financial year and cannot comment on an ongoing process.

**■ Clean Air Zones: Fees and Charges****Shabana Mahmood:**[\[163191\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what estimate he has made of the effect of the £2 charge for access to the central services unit for clean air zones on local authority budgets.

**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[163192\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussion he has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the effect of the £2 charge for access to the central services unit for clean air zones on local authority budgets.

**Shabana Mahmood:**[\[163193\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, which councils currently access the central services unit for clean air zones; and what the cost applied to each council using the central services unit for clean air zones has been to date.

**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[163194\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what discussions he has had with Birmingham City Council on the £2 charge for using the central services unit for clean air zones.

**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[163195\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what impact assessments have been undertaken by his Department on the effect of costs associated with accessing the Department for Transport's central services unit for clean air zones on local authority budgets.

**Shabana Mahmood:** [\[163196\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether additional financial support will be made available to local authorities in response to the £2 charge levied by the Department for Transport on access to the central services unit for clean air zones.

**Rachel Maclean:**

There will be no impact on local authority budgets. All implementation and operational costs are either covered by central Government funding or from revenues raised from the charges that local authorities collect from customers that pay to drive in the clean air zone.

## ■ Driving Tests: Coronavirus

**Dave Doogan:** [\[163302\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the Covid-19 Response, Spring 2021 roadmap, published in February 2021, CP 398, when (a) bookings for driving theory tests and (b) driving theory test centres will be permitted to reopen.

**Dave Doogan:** [\[163303\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has made of the potential merits of prioritising people who require a specific type of driving licence for employment for bookings for practical driving tests when they resume as covid-19 restrictions are eased; and if he will make a statement.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency is now planning to resume driver training and testing in line with the Prime Minister's road map announcement. In England, this will be no earlier than 12 April 2021, providing the data shows it is safe to move on to this next step.

Dates for Scotland and Wales remain subject to agreement with the devolved administrations.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) does not hold data on a candidate's occupation, or reason for taking a test, when they apply for a routine theory or practical test. The DVSA will be making tests available in all licence categories when it is safe to do so.

## ■ Fishing Vessels: Coronavirus

**Luke Pollard:**

[\[161864\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, when he plans to publish guidance on the covid-19 secure operation of charter boats for recreational fishing

**Robert Courts:**

The Department for Transport has published Safer Transport Guidance on the GOV.UK website, which is regularly updated. This guidance provides advice for operators on measures to assess and address the risks of coronavirus (COVID-19), ensuring safer workplaces and services for themselves, their workers and passengers.

Government works closely with industry stakeholders including charter and leisure vessel operators, to ensure there is a clear, shared understanding of Government guidance. This approach enables operators to rapidly put in place their own bespoke guidance to meet their specific needs.

## ■ Leamside Railway Line

**Bridget Phillipson:**

[\[163683\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the timescale for opening the proposed Leamside South line.

**Chris Heaton-Harris:**

I understand that the Hon Member has supported a well-supported bid to the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund for the reinstatement of the Leamside South railway line. The bid is currently being assessed and we expect to announce the outcomes in the summer.

## ■ Motor Vehicles: Biofuels

**Huw Merriman:**

[\[162653\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on the (a) safety and (b) operation of classic cars of the introduction of E10 petrol at UK petrol stations in September 2021.

**Huw Merriman:**

[\[162654\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent assessment he has made of the potential effect on the economic viability of businesses that hire out classic cars of the introduction of E10 petrol at UK petrol stations in September 2021.

**Rachel Maclean:**

On the 25th of February we published the Government response to the consultation paper "Introducing E10 petrol". This paper both announces the introduction of E10 petrol in the standard 95-octane petrol grade by 1 September 2021 and reaffirms our commitment to ensure E5 remains available for owners of older vehicles that are not compatible with E10. To further mitigate concerns around vehicle compatibility, and to

aid the public in adjusting to this change, we have also published guidance for motorists on E10 petrol and developed an online E10 vehicle compatibility tool.

Further to extensive consultation, E5 will remain available at the higher-octane super grade. The Department has taken the needs and concerns of classic car users into consideration in developing these policy proposals and understands that many owners of classic cars already use the higher-octane option. It would also remain open to fuel retailers to sell ethanol free super grade petrol; whether they choose to do so is a commercial decision. As such the introduction of E10 should not affect the economic viability of businesses that hire out classic cars, nor given the continued availability of E5 will this change impact the operation or safety of classic cars.

### ■ Passenger Ships: Coronavirus

**Steve Double:**

[\[161807\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether the scope of the Global Travel Taskforce's report due to be published on 12 April 2021 on the reopening of international travel will include the cruise sector; and if he will make a statement.

**Robert Courts:**

The successor to the Global Travel Taskforce report will consider a safe and sustainable return to international travel. It will include the cruise sector and will determine the timelines for international cruise restart.

The report's recommendations will be aimed at facilitating a return to international travel as soon as is possible, while still managing risk from imported cases and variants of concern. The Taskforce will report on 12 April to the Prime Minister and will work with UK representatives of the travel sector, including cruise operators and trade associations. Following that, the Government will determine when international travel should resume, which will be no earlier than 17 May.

I am in regular contact with the cruise sector and will engage with them once timelines have been determined.

### ■ Road Tolls: Dyslexia

**Justin Madders:**

[\[162644\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the wording of road toll information on meeting the needs of people with severe dyslexia.

**Rachel Maclean:**

The Department has made no specific assessment of the adequacy of the wording of road toll information on meeting the needs of people with severe dyslexia. Traffic signs always display the minimum amount of words and pictograms are used extensively, including for tolling and charging.

## ■ Shipping: Wales

**Liz Saville Roberts:**

[\[161828\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what support his Department has provided to the maritime sector in Wales since March 2020.

**Robert Courts:**

Ministers and officials have engaged with their Welsh counterparts throughout the global pandemic on a wide range of issues. While financial support for the maritime sector in Wales is predominantly a matter for the Welsh Assembly, particularly where it relates to non-reserved harbours and ports, the financial support that the Chancellor has announced, including business support loans and the job retention scheme, is in place to support all parts of the economy including the maritime sector. My officials and I have worked closely throughout the pandemic with all parts of the maritime sector on the challenges they have faced and the support that they need.

The Department for Transport is also supporting Cabinet Office in the delivery of the £200 million Port Infrastructure Fund, helping ports to build and enhance vital import facilities. The Welsh ports of Fishguard, Holyhead, and Pembroke have been awarded grants totalling £2.8 million.

## ■ Travel: Coronavirus

**Justin Madders:**

[\[162630\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the comments made by Minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment of 26 January 2021 advising people not to book overseas summer holidays, whether he has made an assessment of the potential merits of providing sector specific support for (a) airline companies and (b) other companies in the travel industry.

**Robert Courts:**

The Government recognises the challenging circumstances facing the aviation and travel industries as a result of Covid-19.

The travel sector can draw upon the unprecedented package of measures announced by the Chancellor, including schemes to raise capital and flexibilities with tax bills. We estimate that by the end of April 2021 the air transport sector (airlines, airports and related services) will have benefitted from around £7bn of government support since the start of the pandemic. The extension of Government-backed loans and furlough payments announced at the budget build on this and will help ensure this vital and vibrant part of the UK economy is ready to bounce back in the wake of the pandemic.

We are listening to sectors affected by Covid to understand their recovery horizons, as we roll out the vaccine.

**■ Travel: Quarantine****Apsana Begum:**[\[162709\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what the reasons are for Mauritius being placed on the UK's red list of countries for which hotel quarantine is required; and when a review of the countries placed on that red list is scheduled to take place.

**Robert Courts:**

The decision to place Mauritius on the red list on 9 January was in direct response to scientific and medical data, which represents an increased risk to UK public health and an increased risk of community transmission of COVID-19 variants of concern identified in other countries. These are intended to be temporary measures and the government keeps data for countries and territories under constant review.

The government has made it consistently clear that it will take decisive action to contain the virus, including adding further countries to the red list, or keeping countries on the red list, if the public health risk of people returning from a particular country without self-isolating becomes too high.

**TREASURY****■ Crown Estate Commissioners: Wind Power****Ian Lavery:**[\[162610\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in light of the conclusion of Round 4 of Offshore Wind Leasing, if he will review the formula for the Crown Estate's annual payments to the taxpayer from net revenue profits,.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

Her Majesty The Queen surrenders the profits from The Crown Estate (which she owns as reigning Monarch) to the Government. As a result, over the last ten years, The Crown Estate has paid to HM Treasury £2.9 billion for the benefit of all taxpayers and invested in vital public services such as the NHS, transport, schools and defence.

In return for The Crown Estate's revenue, the Government provides funding, known as the Sovereign Grant, for use by the Royal Household to support Her Majesty's official duties.

The level of the Sovereign Grant is determined according to a formula set in the Sovereign Grant Act. As required by the Act, the reference percentage used for setting the Sovereign Grant is reviewed every five years to ensure it remains at an appropriate level. The next review will take place in the coming financial year, and any change will take effect from April 2022.

## ■ Free Zones

**Rachel Reeves:** [\[163679\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the cost of establishing the eight proposed freeports (a) for each freeport and (b) in total.

**Rachel Reeves:** [\[163680\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the eight proposed freeports will become operational.

**Rachel Reeves:** [\[163681\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the potential savings to businesses of using freeports over traditional ports and border points.

**Rachel Reeves:** [\[163682\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he will take to ensure that the proposed freeports will be adequately resourced with fully-trained staff.

**Steve Barclay:**

The government is pleased to have announced the locations of 8 new English Freeports at Budget.

Freeports will be introduced as soon as possible and successful bidders will be confirmed subject to a business case review, agreement of governance arrangements, and the fulfilment of the appropriate authorisations. The government will be working with bidders on these through 2021 and expects Freeports to be operational in late 2021.

As part of this process there will be an assessment of the costs of benefits of specific sites within the Freeport.

As part of the authorisation of Freeport customs sites, operators will need to demonstrate adequate staffing arrangements.

## ■ Furs: Overseas Trade

**Emily Thornberry:** [\[161721\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of how much (a) fur imports and (b) fur exports contributed to the UK economy in 2019-20.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for the collection and publication of data on UK imports and exports of goods to and from the UK. HMRC release this information monthly, as a National Statistic called the Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics.

The value of imports to and exports from the UK of raw, tanned or dressed furskins (including heads, tails, paws and other pieces or cuttings, suitable for furriers' use) and of articles of apparel, clothing accessories and other articles of furskin for 2019



and 2020 are set out in the tables below. The data is based on declared trade so is not an estimate.

The data provided does not include raw hides and skins of animals which may have hair or wool on them or articles of clothing such as gloves, shoes, hats and coats which are only partially made of fur, for example, containing a fur trim. This is because these goods are declared under commodity codes other than those used exclusively for furskin and articles of furskin.

#### **UK IMPORTS OF FURSKINS (ENTERED TO COMMODITY CODES 4301; 4302) BY VALUE**

Calendar Year	Trade Value (£)
2019	8,735,686
2020	5,548,413

*Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics*

#### **UK exports of furskins (entered to commodity codes 4301; 4302) by value**

Calendar Year	Trade Value (£)
2019	7,549,209
2020	2,667,315

*Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics*

#### **UK imports of articles of furskin (entered to commodity codes 4303) by value**

Calendar Year	Trade Value (£)
2019	44,174,922
2020	23,227,363

*Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics*

#### **UK exports of articles of furskin (entered to commodity codes 4303) by value**

Calendar Year	Trade Value (£)
2019	25,163,877
2020	17,249,958

*Data source: HMRC Overseas Trade Statistics*

HMRC hold no other data that would enable an estimate of how much fur imports or fur exports contributed to the UK economy in 2019 and 2020.

## ■ Public Sector: Equality

**David Linden:**

[\[163279\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what equalities impact assessment he has made of Budget 2021 to fulfil the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty; and if he will publish that assessment.

**Steve Barclay:**

The measures at Budget 2021, such as the continuation of the measures to respond to the impact of COVID-19, will support many people across society and promote this government's belief in fairness. The Treasury carefully considers the impact of its decisions on those sharing protected characteristics, including at Budgets and other fiscal events, in line with both its legal obligations and with its strong commitment to promoting fairness. At Budget 2021, Ministers have paid such due regard to the equalities implications of their decisions and these decisions have been announced to Parliament. In interests of transparency we publish impacts in summary form for tax measures in tax information and impact notes (TIINs) alongside Finance Acts.

## ■ Schools: Coronavirus

**Hilary Benn:**

[\[162515\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which of the covid-19 support measures he announced in the 2021 Budget will apply to English Language Schools; and if he will make a statement.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

The Government has supported businesses, including English Language Schools, through the COVID-19 crisis through an unprecedented support package. The level of support for businesses continues to be tailored to reflect the changing circumstances.

The Budget confirms the continuation of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in its current form until the end of June 2021. As the economy reopens and demand returns, the government will introduce employer contributions towards the cost of unworked hours until September 2021.

The Budget also announced the new Recovery Loan Scheme which will provide lenders with a guarantee of 80% on eligible loans between £25,000 and £10 million. The scheme will ensure that businesses in all parts of the UK can access the finance they need, including those who have already received support under the existing COVID-19 guaranteed loan schemes.

The government is also providing all local authorities in England with an additional £425 million of discretionary business grant funding, on top of the £1.6 billion already allocated.

I encourage English Language Schools to make full use of the extensive support available.

## ■ Self-employment Income Support Scheme

**Chris Grayling:**

[\[163646\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether HMRC can use its discretion in individual cases when approving applications to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

**Jesse Norman:**

There is no legal right of appeal against decisions made in relation to the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), and there is also no legal provision for 'reasonable excuse' within the legal framework for SEISS.

HMRC have limited discretion in operating the SEISS and any exercise of this discretion must be rational and justifiable on the grounds of good management and administration. This discretion can only be used in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances could include situations where HMRC have made an error which has affected an individual's eligibility for, or amount of, a SEISS grant.

The SEISS continues to be just one element of a substantial package of support for the self-employed. Those ineligible for the SEISS may still be eligible for other elements of the support available. The temporary £20 per week increase to the Universal Credit standard allowance has been extended for six months, and the Government has decided to extend the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor for three months, to the end of July 2021, so that where self-employed claimants' earnings have fallen significantly, their Universal Credit award will have increased to reflect their lower earnings. In addition to this, they may also have access to other elements of the package, including Restart Grants, the Recovery Loan scheme, business rates relief, and other business support schemes.

## ■ Social Security Benefits: Disability

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[162552\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what plans he has to place on a statutory basis the transfer of information between HMRC and the Department for Work and Pensions relating to eligibility for tax credits and their interaction with other qualifying disability benefits so as to allow for redress in cases of incorrect decisions.

**Steve Barclay:**

It remains a fundamental principle that claimants are responsible for notifying HMRC of any changes in their circumstances and for claiming the entitlement they may be eligible for.

Although there are no plans to put the administrative processes currently used on a statutory footing, DWP routinely share information with HMRC about the start and end dates of disability benefit awards to underpin claimant notification and ensure correct decisions are made about tax credits entitlement.

Furthermore, the Government has recently legislated to ensure that HMRC have the full powers to review tax credits awards as intended, and apply disability elements in retrospect where appropriate.

#### ■ **Stamp Duties: First Time Buyers**

**Thangam Debbonaire:**

[\[163710\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of people who have benefitted from stamp duty relief for first time buyers have been women in each year since the introduction of that relief.

**Jesse Norman:**

HM Revenue & Customs do not directly hold information on the sex or gender of first-time buyers, as this information is not a mandatory requirement for the independent calculation of the amount of Stamp Duty Land Tax liable on the purchase of a property.

#### ■ **Towns Fund and UK Community Renewal Fund**

**Dan Jarvis:**

[\[R\] \[163698\]](#)

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government on the (a) Towns Fund and (b) UK Community Renewal Fund.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

MHCLG oversees the Towns Fund and the UK Community Renewal Fund. Treasury Ministers have a broad range of discussions with Ministerial colleagues about all significant Government investment programmes.

## WOMEN AND EQUALITIES

#### ■ **Community Development**

**Ruth Cadbury:**

[\[161789\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what recent discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government on community champions.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

I announced the Community Champions scheme in my first quarterly report to the Prime Minister on progress to address disparities in risks and outcomes from COVID-19, published on 22 October, and provided an update in my second quarterly report published on 26 February. Officials in the Race Disparity Unit, who are supporting me in this work, continue to meet regularly with colleagues in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government who are leading on the scheme.

## ■ Equality Act 2010

**Martyn Day:**

[\[162660\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, what plans she has to strengthen the protection against intersectional discrimination and enact section 14 of the Equality Act 2010.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

We have no plans to implement the dual discrimination provision in the Act. We believe that current protections are adequate and that enactment would introduce unwelcome regulatory complexity and place new costly burdens on business and the public sector consequent on the introduction of a further 21 protected characteristics. In addition, an employee or service user may bring a discrimination claim under more than one ground, which the courts can then consider consecutively, where appropriate.

## ■ LGBT People: Employment

**Martyn Day:**

[\[162661\]](#)

To ask the Minister for Women and Equalities, if she will include improved data collection from LGBT+ employees as part of the LGBT+ Action Plan.

**Kemi Badenoch:**

We understand that robust data collection can help employers to better understand the needs of their employees. The Office for National Statistics and the Government Statistical Service has developed monitoring standards for sexual orientation and gender identity. These standards are freely available and can be found on the ONS website.

In 2020, the Minister for Women and Equalities announced that the Equality Hub in the Cabinet Office will be embarking on the Government's broadest and most comprehensive equality data project yet. The Equality Data Programme will gather data in order to understand the barriers that people from every background are facing across the UK.

## WORK AND PENSIONS

### ■ Bereavement Benefits

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[162555\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 20 July 2020 to Question 76930, what progress has been made in laying the remedial order governing (a) widowed parent's allowance and (b) bereavement support payment.

**Guy Opperman:**

We are currently considering the detail and implementation of the draft remedial order and will update the House in due course.

## ■ Carer's Allowance

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[162560\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will uprate the earnings limit for claiming carers allowance in line with the minimum wage.

**Paul Maynard:**

[\[162561\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many unpaid carers lost eligibility for carer's allowance as a result of increased minimum wage payments in the 2019-20 financial year.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Carer's Allowance earnings limit is not linked to the number of hours worked or the level of "minimum wage" payments. Therefore, the department does not routinely collect information on whether those claiming Carer's Allowance are being paid at those levels and so the information requested is not available.

The earnings limit is set at a level that aims to encourage those who give up full time work in order to undertake caring responsibilities to maintain a link with the labour market through some part time work. The Carer's Allowance weekly earnings limit has increased by nearly a third since 2010 (from £100 to £128 net earnings per week), reflecting an increase in average earnings in recent years. These increases have helped ensure that the earnings limit has maintained its value.

The department is currently undertaking research which will touch on carers employment and potential barriers to them working. We will look at the findings from the research and other evidence and arguments with an open mind, and would consider changes to the way the earnings limit is calculated if they were deemed to be necessary and affordable.

**Mr Barry Sheerman:**

[\[163154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of an increase to carer's allowance.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The proposed table of benefits / pension rates for 2021/22, including Carer's Allowance, was published on 4 December 2020 in the House Library, following the Secretary of State's annual review of benefit rates. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.25 a week, meaning around an additional £700 a year for carers. Between 2020/21 and 2025/26 real terms expenditure on Carer's Allowance is forecast to increase by nearly a third (around £1 billion). By 2025/26, the Government is forecast to spend just over £4bn a year on Carer's Allowance.

As of August 2020, there were 2,158 carers in the Huddersfield constituency that were claiming Carer's Allowance, of which 1,667 were in receipt of Carer's Allowance while 495 had an underlying entitlement to it (which can passport to carer premiums). In 2019/20 we spent approximately £5.7 million on Carer's Allowance there.

Information on the number of people claiming Carer's Allowance by Parliamentary constituency is published and available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Guidance for users is available at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/index.html>

The latest information on benefit expenditure by parliamentary constituency including Carer's Allowance is also published and available at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/920543/benefit-expenditure-by-parliamentary-constituency-2019-20.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920543/benefit-expenditure-by-parliamentary-constituency-2019-20.xlsx)

## ■ Employment

**Ruth Jones:** **[161867]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent assessment she has made of the change in the level of employment in the UK.

**Mims Davies:**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces labour market statistics from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is a survey of people resident in households in the UK.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 on the LFS, the ONS advise that current estimates of employment levels and changes in these levels should be used with caution, however employment rates are considered to remain robust.

An overview of the latest Labour Market Statistics is available from ONS at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/february2021>

## ■ Employment: Epilepsy

**Cat Smith:** **[161806]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of people with epilepsy entering employment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The Government has put in place a range of measures to support disabled people and people with long term health conditions, including those with epilepsy, to enter and stay in work. During the Covid-19 outbreak, we have made changes to ensure disabled people have still been able to access specialist employment support.

We have two large-scale nationally contracted programmes that support disabled people:

- The Work and Health Programme was launched in 2017 throughout England and Wales for people who expect to find work within 12 months. It enables participants to receive coordinated and person-centred support from local services, and



provides targeted support for disabled people, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, who can volunteer to join the programme at any time. It also provides extra tailored support to find employment for other groups, including long term unemployed people.

- IPES launched with the first referrals on 2 December 2019 and is now in place across England and Wales. It is a voluntary programme designed to help disabled people with more complex needs or barriers, who want to work but also require specialist support to achieve their goal of sustained employment. This includes people with Autistic Spectrum conditions, mental health issues, substance abuse, or history of sensory impairments, learning difficulties or recurring and fluctuating health conditions. IPES is expected to provide support for around 2,500 starts a year for four years, totalling 10,000 on the programme.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we provided this support remotely and made these programmes easier to access by allowing self-referrals as well as referrals through work coaches.

Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we introduced the Work and Health Programme Job Entry: Targeted Support (JETS) which went live across Wales and England this Autumn and provides light touch employment support which will complement the provision already available for disabled people under the Work and Health Programme. We will protect funding and capacity for helping disabled people and priority disadvantaged groups.

Alongside provision aimed at individuals, we continue to support employers to attract, recruit, retain and develop disabled people in the workplace through the Disability Confident scheme. The scheme was designed as a journey with three levels. All employers start at Level 1, progressing through the scheme at their own pace.

## ■ Flexible Support Fund

**Seema Malhotra:**

[\[163235\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what data her Department holds on how the Flexible Support Fund is spent.

**Mims Davies:**

The Flexible Support Fund may be used for a wide range of activities at the discretion of Jobcentre Plus District Managers and Work Coaches, but must support core Department for Work and Pensions objectives.

Data available for the most recently audited Financial year is provided below.

### **Flexible Support Fund Expenditure by DWP Region £'000**

REGION	TOTAL
South	11,398
Scotland	2,896

REGION	TOTAL
Central & Wales	8,259
North	13,555
Other	303
Total	36,411

Source : Hyperion

Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

The data provided in the above table forms part of the expenditure position reported within the DWP Annual Report & Accounts 2019-20.

#### **Flexible Support Fund Expenditure by Category £'000**

CATEGORY	TOTAL
Partnerships	3,586
Removing Barriers	13,277
Training	16,923
Childcare *	1,569
Other	1,055
Total	36,411

Source : Hyperion

Figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand.

\* Childcare is only reported as a separate category from October 2019. Childcare expenditure between April 19 – September 19 cannot be separately identified and is reported within the Removing Barriers category.

The data provided in the above table forms part of the expenditure position reported within the DWP Annual Report & Accounts 2019-20.

#### ■ **Maternity Allowance**

**Imran Ahmad Khan:**

**[163324]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of pregnant women have been entitled to maternity allowance in the last 12 months.

**Guy Opperman:**

The proportion of pregnant women who have been entitled to Maternity Allowance in the last 12 months has not been assessed.

**Personal Independence Payment****Vicky Foxcroft:**[\[161810\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure her Department contacts each person due a backdated personal independent payment.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

Our progress update on the MH and RJ administrative exercise published on 25th February 2021 gives the number of cases that have been cleared following a review – approaching 1 million cases for both the MH and RJ Upper Tribunal decisions.

Through continuous monitoring of the exercise, we have been identifying claimants most likely to benefit, so that we can focus on paying these claimants backdated payments more quickly. We are writing to other claimants, explaining how we apply the Upper Tribunal decisions and letting them know they can get in touch with us if they think they are affected, and we will review their claim.

We have dedicated substantial resource to checking claims and are committed to ensuring that everyone with a health condition or disability gets the support they are entitled to.

**Universal Credit: Self-employed****Paul Maynard:**[\[162557\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the effect of the interaction between universal credit's minimum income floor and the requirement for self-employed universal credit claimants to report income monthly on the differential amount of universal credit received by self-employed claimants compared to employed claimants.

**Mims Davies:**

Self-employed earnings are reported on a simplified 'cash accounting' basis, which asks for the total income from receipts into the business and details of payments out of the business under defined categories during the assessment period. The requirements were designed to be as simple as possible in order for self-employed claimants to easily report their earnings. Most claimants now report monthly on-line, via their Universal Credit account, with a telephone service still available where additional support is required.

Company directors and those combining employed work with their self-employed activities may receive a salary using the PAYE system. All earnings processed through PAYE are reported automatically to the DWP through HMRC's RTI feed. Monthly reporting of earnings and other income is a fundamental part of the design of Universal Credit and allows the Universal Credit award to be adjusted on a monthly basis to reflect the circumstances of the household.

**■ Work Capability Assessment****Bambos Charalambous:****[161833]**

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of (a) universal credit and (b) employment support allowance claimants who were not (i) offered and (ii) deemed suitable for a virtual or telephone Work Capability Assessment during 2020.

**Justin Tomlinson:**

The data you have requested is not available.

Face to face assessments for health and disability benefits are currently suspended in line with public health advice. We continue to complete paper-based assessments and make recommendations based on the written evidence available, as often as we are able to.

Where a case cannot be progressed by a paper-based assessment, a telephone assessment will be conducted, where appropriate to do so. Telephone assessments were introduced during the pandemic, as part of the Covid-19 response and we are working hard to increase the number of people able to participate in these assessments. We also undertake some video assessments, where appropriate.

The suspension of face to face assessments is regularly reviewed in line with the latest public health guidance and will recommence as soon as it is safe to do so. Claimants who cannot be assessed by telephone or video because of their health condition will be prioritised when we are able to safely resume face to face assessments.

## MINISTERIAL CORRECTIONS

### HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

#### ■ Midwives: EU Nationals

**Sarah Olney:**

[\[163274\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how many midwives, expressed as a headcount, were employed by each NHS trust in England (a) in total and (b) who were nationals of an EU member state, at the most recent date for which figures are available.

**An error has been identified in the written answer given on 10 March 2021. The correct answer should have been:**

**Helen Whately:**

NHS Digital publishes Hospital and Community Health Services workforce statistics. These include staff working in hospital trusts and clinical commissioning groups, but not staff working in primary care, general practice surgeries, local authorities or other providers.

A table showing the total number of midwives and the number of those midwives who have self-reported their nationality as from the European Union employed by each National Health Service trust as at 30 November 2020, headcount, is attached.

**Attachments:**

1. **[Midwives by nationality and organisation November 2020\\_PQ163274.xlsx FINAL - Copy.xlsx](#)**

## WRITTEN STATEMENTS

### HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

#### ■ Property Sector Update

**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for rough sleeping and housing (Eddie Hughes):** [\[HCWS837\]](#)

The Government has responded at pace since the onset of this pandemic to provide a range of guidance to support and advise households. We have kept our guidance under continual review in response to the latest available evidence.

Today, the Government has published a new page of guidance. This guidance is for people living in all types of housing, in particular for people who live in: accommodation with shared facilities, such as a block of flats; overcrowded accommodation; shared accommodation.

The guidance highlights the importance of ventilation and cleaning, and makes information available on people's rights as tenants and how to work with landlords and local authorities to address hazardous issues.

We continue to work with agencies across Government to collect evidence to inform the advice we issue so that it reflects the realities on the ground.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-shared-and-overcrowded-housing-reducing-the-risk-of-infection>

### TRANSPORT

#### ■ Improving Connectivity Update

**Secretary of State for Transport (Grant Shapps):** [\[HCWS838\]](#)

The government is committed to the deepest possible integration of the four nations of the United Kingdom, so that businesses and individuals have the infrastructure they need to trade, travel and do business across the whole country. To that end, in June, Sir Peter Hendy CBE was tasked by the Prime Minister with exploring ways in which transport can better connect the four nations of the United Kingdom, levelling-up all parts of the country and helping us Build Back Better from the pandemic. The Government is also announcing that the consultation on aviation tax reform, announced at Budget 2020, will be published in Spring 2021.

The consultation will include options to change the APD treatment for domestic flights, such as reintroducing a return leg exemption or creation of a new lower domestic rate. In addition to looking at the case for increasing the number of international distance bands, we will continue to decarbonise domestic aviation as part of our ambition to reach net zero, including through mandating the use of sustainable aviation fuels. All domestic aviation emissions are captured in carbon budgets.

The government welcomes the Union Connectivity Review Interim Report published today by Sir Peter. The report marks a key step in looking at whether and how connectivity across the UK can be improved in order to support this government's aim to build a stronger and fairer economy for the future. To support this, we are making £20m development funding available to begin assessing options on road and rail schemes which have been identified by the review as crucial for cross-border connectivity. To achieve the aim of better connecting the UK, the report has considered the creation of a new UK Strategic Transport Network that will allow people and commerce to move freely by road, rail, sea and air, spreading ideas and investment to all corners of this country.

This Network of improved routes, which will now form the main focus of Sir Peter's continuing investigations, would form the transport spine of the country, facilitating quicker and easier travel and trade between all corners of this country, levelling up communities and maximising national potential.

I am placing a copy of Sir Peter Hendy's report in the Libraries of both Houses.

**Attachments:**

1. Improving Connectivity Update Report [UnionConnectivityReview Interim Report.PDF]