

**Session 2021-22
No. 16**



**Tuesday
15 June 2021**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements1

Written Answers.....3

[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

Members who want a printed copy of Written Answers and Written Statements should notify the Printed Paper Office.

This printed edition is a reproduction of the original text of Answers and Statements, which can be found on the internet at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>.

Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Frost	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Lords 2021

This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright/

Written Statements

Tuesday, 15 June 2021

Public Service Pensions: Government Actuary Review of the Cost Control Mechanism

[HLWS89]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My right honourable friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Steve Barclay) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The Government has today published the Government Actuary's final report on his review of the cost control mechanism.

The Government is committed to providing public service pensions that are fair for public sector workers and for taxpayers. The cost control mechanism was introduced into the valuation process for public service pension schemes in the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 following consultation with member representatives. It was designed to ensure a fair balance of risk with regard to the cost of providing defined benefit (DB) public service pension schemes between members of those schemes and the taxpayer.

I commissioned the Government Actuary to conduct a review of the mechanism amidst concerns that it was not operating in line with its original objectives. These objectives are:

- To protect taxpayers from unforeseen costs.
- To maintain the value of pension schemes to the members.
- To provide stability and certainty to benefit levels – the mechanism should only be triggered by 'extraordinary, unpredictable events'.

The Government Actuary's report sets out his findings and makes a number of recommendations on possible changes to the mechanism. The Government will respond to this report in due course.

The report can be found on the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-control-mechanism-government-actuaries-review-final-report>.

Strengthening Transparency and Fairness in Elections

[HLWS87]

Lord True: My Hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution (Chloe Smith MP), has today made the following written statement:

The Government's 2019 manifesto pledged to take steps to protect the integrity of our democracy, tackle electoral fraud, and prevent foreign interference in elections.

Further to the written statements of 12 May 2021 (HCWS10) and 27 May 2021 (HCWS62), I am announcing today further measures to be included in the

forthcoming Elections Bill to support public confidence in the integrity of our electoral system, by strengthening and updating political finance and campaigning regulation. This will ensure that our electoral law continues to be fair and transparent.

Political parties

While political parties are already required to give details of their assets and liabilities in their annual accounts, a new requirement will be brought in for new political parties to declare if they have assets and liabilities of over £500 when registering with the Electoral Commission and, if so, to provide details of these. This will allow earlier public scrutiny of their finances and ensure public confidence in the transparency of all political parties' financial positions.

We will also protect the integrity of spending limits further by prohibiting third-party campaigners (also known as 'non-party campaigners') from additionally registering as a political party. This closes a loophole that was highlighted in the 2019 general election, as a route to access multiple spending limits and unfairly increase spending potential.

Third-party campaigning

All third-party campaigning will be restricted to UK-based (or otherwise eligible, including overseas electors) campaigners, further ensuring that only groups with a legitimate interest in UK elections are able to spend money to campaign at UK elections.

In addition, to bring about greater transparency in electoral campaigning, we will introduce a new tier of registration for third-party campaigners. This will require any campaigners spending more than £10,000 during a regulated period to register with the Electoral Commission, ensuring clarity about who is campaigning.

The Government will extend reporting requirements for joint campaigns to cover political parties and third-party campaigners who are working together. This will ensure existing spending limits cannot be unfairly expanded by sharing costs and will rightly increase the transparency of such arrangements.

Candidates

To ensure transparency and fairness around political finance, the Elections Bill will clarify the rules on notional expenditure so that candidates and agents are only liable to report benefits in kind that they have used themselves or have directed or encouraged others to use on their behalf.

Following a Supreme Court ruling in 2018, the current rules in this area have led to widespread uncertainty and risk a democratic chilling effect by discouraging parties from campaigning in marginal constituencies. This clarification will also be extended to other campaigners who are subject to notional expenditure controls. This will defend the British tradition of party leader 'soapbox' visits. Expenditure which promotes an individual candidature would continue to count towards a candidate's own spending limit.

Campaigning material

The Elections Bill will legislate to extend the ‘imprint’ regime to digital campaigning material. The imprint regime ensures there is accountability over who is promoting campaigning material (and on whose behalf), provides a recourse to challenge, and can help discourage the publication of anonymous intimidatory material.

The Government today is publishing a response to the consultation on how digital imprints should be implemented. This is a complex area, given the need to avoid unreasonably restricting the free speech of individuals, or impose disproportionate measures which would discourage political campaigning. These balanced measures on digital imprints will update our campaigning laws for the modern age and protect the integrity of our democratic processes. A copy of the response has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Government has engaged with the Electoral Commission, social media companies and political parties through the Parliamentary Parties Panel in developing all these provisions, and carefully considered policy recommendations made by respondents to the consultation, think tanks and by Parliamentary Select Committees.

Overall, these measures strike the right balance between further strengthening our regulatory framework and ensuring democratic engagement in this country can continue to be vibrant and inclusive.

United Kingdom Debt Management Office: Business Plan

[HLWS88]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (John Glen) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

The United Kingdom Debt Management Office (DMO) has today published its business plan for the financial year

2021-22. Copies have been deposited in the Libraries of both houses and are available on the DMO’s website, www.dmo.gov.uk.

Declaration on Government Reform

[HLWS86]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: My Rt. Hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Michael Gove MP), has today made the following written statement:

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained our country’s resilience like nothing we have seen out of wartime, and the public has endured huge sacrifices. Our mission now is to respond by transforming the country for the better, levelling up, and making opportunity more equal. These changes will require the re-wiring, and renewal, of government. That is why reform is necessary – not as an end in itself, but as a means of delivering the better Britain the public demands and deserves.

To this end, the Cabinet and Permanent Secretaries have committed today to a collective vision for reform, agreeing immediate action on three fronts:

- i) People - ensuring that the right people are working in the right places with the right incentives;
- ii) Performance - modernising the operation of government, being clear-eyed about our priorities, and objective in our evaluation of what is and is not working; and
- iii) Partnership - strengthening the bond between ministers and officials, always operating as one team from policy through to delivery, and between central government and institutions outside it.

The *Declaration on Government Reform* sets out the Government’s ambitions in more detail, with a set of concrete actions underway and more planned for the year ahead. Copies of the Declaration have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 15 June 2021

Ajax Vehicles: Procurement

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to publish unredacted the report of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority into the Ajax Armoured Vehicle programme. [HL769]

Baroness Goldie: There are no plans to publish the IPA Assurance report of the Armoured Cavalry programme which contains commercially sensitive material. Such IPA reports are not intended for release. The current level of delivery confidence and the reasons behind such an assessment will shortly be published by the IPA in their Annual Report and accompanying transparency release.

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assurances they have received from General Dynamics over (1) the overall cost of the Ajax Armoured Vehicle programme, and (2) the delivery of fully operational equipment under this programme. [HL770]

Baroness Goldie: The contract with GDLS-UK covering the 589 vehicles, training and support is a Firm Price contract. There are 5 Capability Drops as part of the incremental delivery of the programme, with Capability Drop 4 as the final build standard to which all vehicles will be retrofitted. Drop 1 commenced mid 2020 and Drop 4 is currently planned to complete by the end of 2024.

Reclaim Fund

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) guidance, or (2) directions, they have given to the Reclaim Fund about the priorities for the allocation of its funding; and what, if any, requirements that organisation must observe in the allocation of funding. [HL711]

Baroness Barran: Reclaim Fund Ltd is the Dormant Assets Scheme's administrator. It is responsible for managing dormant assets in case of customer reclaims, transferring surplus funds to The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF). TNLCF is the named distributor of dormant assets funding, responsible for apportioning the surplus money among the four nations to be spent on social or environmental purposes.

DCMS' Secretary of State issues high level policy directions to TNLCF on the allocation of the English portion of this funding. It is directed to three social and environmental causes: youth, financial inclusion and social investment. These restrictions are currently set in primary legislation. To date, the funding has been directed to four independent organisations in England: Big Society Capital, Access – The Foundation for Social Investment, Fair4All Finance, and the Youth Futures Foundation.

Funding must fulfil the additionality principle, support the three defined causes and be distributed for initiatives in England. Beyond these requirements, the four specialist spend organisations are free to determine the most appropriate way to deliver against their objectives.

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much of the funding distributed by the Reclaim Fund has been spent in each region of England by each of the organisations funded by the Reclaim Fund. [HL712]

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the process for organisations applying for funding from the Reclaim Fund; whether organisations are required to set out in their applications the geographical regions in which any funding will be spent; and whether details of those applications will be published. [HL713]

Baroness Barran: Reclaim Fund Ltd is the Dormant Assets Scheme's administrator. It is responsible for managing dormant assets and transferring surplus funds to The National Lottery Community Fund, the named distributor of dormant assets funding. Funds must be spent on social or environmental purposes.

Dormant assets funding is not central government money and there is no central bidding process for accessing it. In England, funding is currently distributed to four specialist organisations who work across the areas of youth, financial inclusion and social investment. These organisations are independent from the government, and are not required to report to the government on geographical distribution of funding.

Funding must fulfil the additionality principle, support the three defined causes and be distributed for initiatives in England. Beyond this, the four specialist spend organisations are free to determine the most appropriate way to deliver against their objectives. This includes geographical distribution of any organisations which may apply to them for funding. The organisations themselves are responsible for managing any such applications, including the geographical distribution of their work.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1

Public Service Pensions: Government Actuary	
Review of the Cost Control Mechanism.....1	1
Strengthening Transparency and Fairness in Elections	1
United Kingdom Debt Management Office: Business Plan.....	2
Declaration on Government Reform	2

Written Answers.....3

Ajax Vehicles: Procurement.....	3
Reclaim Fund	3