



This report shows written answers and statements provided on 18 October 2019 and the information is correct at the time of publication (04:17 P.M., 18 October 2019). For the latest information on written questions and answers, ministerial corrections, and written statements, please visit: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers/>

CONTENTS

ANSWERS	2	WORK AND PENSIONS	5
BUSINESS, ENERGY AND INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY	2	■ Children: Maintenance	5
■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries	2	■ Occupational Pensions: Barnsley Central	5
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE	3	■ Occupational Pensions: Ogmores	6
■ Anne Sacoolas	3	■ Occupational Pensions: West Bromwich West	7
SCOTLAND	4	■ Personal Independence Payment	7
■ City Region Deals and Local Growth Deals: Scottish Islands	4	■ State Retirement Pensions: Females	8
TREASURY	4	■ Universal Credit	8
■ Tax Avoidance	4		

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

■ Iron and Steel: Manufacturing Industries

Nic Dakin:

[\[153\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps she will take to ensure there is no price disparity in electricity costs for the UK steel sector compared with its international competitors.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The Government is committed to minimising energy costs for businesses to ensure our economy remains strong and competitive. The ability of our steel industry to compete globally and across Europe is a priority for this Government.

We have taken steps to reduce the cumulative impact of energy and climate change policies on industrial electricity prices for the steel sector and other key energy intensive industries. This includes paying over £300m compensation to the steel sector since 2013.

We have a number of funds available to energy intensive industries, including steel, to help them increase energy efficiency and transition to a low carbon future. These funds include the £315 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, the Industrial Heat Recovery Support Programme and the recently announced £250 million Clean Steel Fund.

Nic Dakin:

[\[154\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment she has made of the benefits to the (a) economy and (b) steel sector of the UK steel sector's commitment to increase capital investment in the UK by a quarter should steps be taken to reduce the price disparity on electricity costs between the UK steel sector and its international competitors.

Nadhim Zahawi:

The ability of our steel industry to compete globally and across Europe is a priority for this Government. We therefore provide electricity cost compensation and exemption support to maintain the UK's reputation as an attractive location for these businesses.

In 2017, the Department commissioned independent research identifying high value opportunities for UK steel, worth up to £3.8 billion a year by 2030(1). To access these opportunities, as well as match funding grants for R&D, significant investment will need to be made by the sector.

We have a number of funds available to energy intensive industries, including steel, to help them increase energy efficiency and transition to a low carbon future. These funds include the £315 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, the Industrial

Heat Recovery Support Programme and the recently announced £250 million Clean Steel Fund.

1. *Future capacities and capabilities of the UK steel industry:*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-steel-industry-future-market-opportunities>

Nic Dakin: [160]

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of higher electricity prices since 2016 on the steel industry.

Nadhim Zahawi:

We have not made a specific assessment of the effect of higher electricity prices on the steel industry. The ability of our steel industry to compete globally and across Europe is a priority for this Government. We therefore provide electricity cost compensation and exemption support to maintain the UK's reputation as an attractive location for these businesses. We also have a number of funds available, or in development, that support energy intensive industries, including steel, to help them increase energy efficiency and transition to a low carbon future. These funds include the £315 million Industrial Energy Transformation Fund, the Industrial Heat Recovery Support Programme and the recently announced £250 million Clean Steel Fund.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

■ Anne Sacoolas

Nic Dakin: [144]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, on which dates US citizen Anne Sacoolas held diplomatic status in the UK.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

[Holding answer 17 October 2019]: The US member of staff and his family were notified to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on arrival in the UK by the US Embassy under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. His spouse had immunity while in the UK. Immunity ended when she returned to the US.

Nic Dakin: [145]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department holds information on the potential involvement of the US Embassy in the departure of Anne Sacoolas from the UK.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

[Holding answer 17 October 2019]: As part of their day to day business, diplomatic missions in the UK are responsible for making arrangements for the arrival and departure of the personnel and dependents they send to the UK.

Nic Dakin:

[146]

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, whether his Department holds information on when the US Embassy became aware of Anne Sacoolas's suspected involvement in a fatal road traffic collision on 27 August 2019.

Mrs Heather Wheeler:

[Holding answer 17 October 2019]: We do not hold this information. This is a matter for the US Embassy.

SCOTLAND

■ City Region Deals and Local Growth Deals: Scottish Islands

Angus Brendan MacNeil:

[84]

To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, with reference to the Prime Minister's announcement of 28 July 2019 on City Region and Growth deals, when an announcement will be made on the Islands Deal.

Mr Alister Jack:

My officials are awaiting receipt of the latest suite of proposals from the Islands partners. Once this is received, we will consider the contents and announce next steps towards agreeing an Islands Deal.

TREASURY

■ Tax Avoidance

Andrea Jenkyns:

[363]

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what steps he is taking to ensure the independence of the review of the 2019 Loan Charge.

Jesse Norman:

The Chancellor commissioned Sir Amyas Morse, former CEO of the National Audit Office, to lead an independent Review to consider the impact of the Loan Charge, focusing on individuals who entered directly into disguised remuneration schemes.

Sir Amyas has a strong track record of holding the Government to account and is widely respected, as was emphasised by colleagues across the House in a debate of 6 March 2019.

Sir Amyas has full control over how the Review is run and the outcome. For more information, the Review's terms of reference can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disguised-remuneration-independent-loan-charge-review>

WORK AND PENSIONS**■ Children: Maintenance**

Dan Jarvis: [\[188\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to change the hierarchy of the distributions for payments made through the Child Maintenance Service so that unpaid child maintenance is better favoured for repayment; and if she will make a statement.

Mims Davies:

The Child Maintenance Service (CMS) aims to ensure liabilities are paid in full and on time. Where this does not happen the Service prioritises the collection of on-going maintenance before any arrears to avoid the build-up of maintenance arrears and ensure that today's children will benefit. The CMS will pursue arrears alongside the collection of on-going liabilities wherever possible and will continue to pursue until all the debt has been paid. There are no plans to change the hierarchy of the distribution of the maintenance payments.

■ Occupational Pensions: Barnsley Central

Dan Jarvis: [\[185\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in Barnsley Central constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled into a workplace pension and (b) saved more than the auto-enrollment minimum contribution.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving, and reversing the decline in workplace pension participation in the decade prior to these reforms. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates ¹.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as at end of September 2019 ²:

In the Barnsley Central constituency since 2012, approximately 10,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 1410 employers have met their duties.

¹ Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

² The Pensions Regulator's data on Automatic enrolment declaration of compliance by constituency, available via the following weblink: <https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

■ Occupational Pensions: Ogmore

Chris Elmore:

[289]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in Ogmore constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled into a workplace pension and (b) saved more than the auto-enrolment minimum contribution.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving, and reversing the decline in workplace pension participation in the decade prior to these reforms. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates ¹.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as at end of September 2019 ²:

In the Ogmore constituency since 2012, approximately 4,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 820 employers have met their duties.

¹ Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

² The Pensions Regulator's data on Automatic enrolment declaration of compliance by constituency, available via the following weblink: <https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

■ Occupational Pensions: West Bromwich West

Mr Adrian Bailey:

[28]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of people in West Bromwich West constituency have (a) opted out after being auto-enrolled into a workplace pension and (b) saved more than the auto-enrolment minimum contribution.

Guy Opperman:

Automatic enrolment has achieved a quiet revolution through getting employees into the habit of pension saving, and reversing the decline in workplace pension participation in the decade prior to these reforms. Since automatic enrolment started in 2012 participation rates have been transformed with 87% of eligible employees saving into a workplace pension in 2018, up from 55% in 2012.

The Department does not hold data for individual constituencies in relation to opt outs or the number of individuals who have saved above the automatic enrolment minimum contribution level. However, we do know that overall around 9% of automatically enrolled workers have chosen to opt out which is significantly below original estimates; and our latest evaluation report shows that, in April 2017, approximately 5.9 million eligible employees were already meeting the April 2019 minimum contribution rates ¹.

I am providing the following information about the impact of automatic enrolment in your constituency, as at end of September 2019 ²:

In the West Bromwich West constituency since 2012, approximately 16,000 eligible jobholders have been automatically enrolled and 1480 employers have met their duties.

¹ Automatic Enrolment Evaluation Report 2018, available via the following weblink: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/764964/Automatic_Enrolment_Evaluation_Report_2018.pdf.

² The Pensions Regulator's data on Automatic enrolment declaration of compliance by constituency, available via the following weblink:

<https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/research-and-analysis/data-requests>

■ Personal Independence Payment

Dan Jarvis:

[186]

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to ensure that Personal Independence Payment claimants are not required to travel for longer than is set out in the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessment Service – Service Requirement document of May 2012.

Dan Jarvis: [\[187\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to reduce the maximum travel times for claimants of Personal Independence Payment which are set out in the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Assessment Service – Service Requirement document of May 2012; and if she will make a statement.

Justin Tomlinson:

The department has set clear requirements in terms of geography and travel time to a PIP assessment and continues to ensure assessment providers adhere to this requirement. There are no current plans to reduce the existing travel time of 90 minutes by public transport though best endeavours are taken to schedule assessment appointments in centres near to a claimant. This limit of 90 minutes is an absolute maximum and the department expects that only a small minority of claimants will have to make a journey of this duration. New assessment centres have opened, and continue to open, to ensure the needs of claimants are met.

■ **State Retirement Pensions: Females**

Ruth Jones: [\[279\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the High Court judgment of 3 October 2019 on the increase in the state pension age for women born in the 1950s, what recent discussions she has had with Cabinet colleagues on developing transitional arrangements for those women.

Guy Opperman:

The claimants applied for permission to appeal on the 16 October 2019. I cannot comment on live litigation.

■ **Universal Credit**

Dan Jarvis: [\[R\]](#) [\[168\]](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to permit Universal Credit claimants to backdate a claim due to ill health in circumstances where medical evidence is provided by a GP.

Justin Tomlinson:

Universal Credit claims may be backdated, by up to one calendar month, in some circumstances for vulnerable claimants who may be delayed in claiming Universal Credit through no fault of their own. More specifically, in cases where medical evidence satisfies the Department that a claimant had an illness that prevented them from making a claim sooner, Universal Credit can be awarded from an earlier date.

In order to provide the best possible support to our claimants it is important that the Department are able to engage with claimants at the earliest possible opportunity, whether to support them back into work or to provide other support and guidance. It is therefore important that backdating provisions are used in specific circumstances, and that all claimants are encouraged to contact us at the earliest opportunity.