HM Treasury

Treasury Minutes

Government Response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Twenty-Third to the Twenty-Sixth reports from Session 2024-25

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Presented to Parliament by the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury by Command of His Majesty

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Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts Session 2024-25

Twenty-Third Report of Session 2024-25

HM Revenue and Customs

The cost of the tax system

Introduction from the Committee

The tax system administered by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) raised £829 billion in 2023–24. HMRC's aim is to be a trusted, modern tax authority. Its strategic objectives include collecting the right tax, and making it easy to get tax right but hard to bend or break the rules. HMRC takes the lead role in government on the implementation of tax policy. HM Treasury leads on the design of tax policy.

Administering taxes costs all parties over £20 billion per year, with most cost falling on businesses. Of the £4.3 billion HMRC spent on tax collection in 2023–24, £2.4 billion (56%) was accounted for by its Customer Compliance Group and £1.3 billion (30%) by its Customer Services Group. The costliest taxes for HMRC to administer in 2023–24 were Income Tax Self Assessment (£1,056 million, 25% of HMRC's total cost of tax collection), VAT (£905 million, 21%), Income Tax Pay As You Earn (£777 million, 18%) and Corporation Tax (£496 million, 12%).

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence on 6 March 2025 from the His Majesty's Revenue & Customs. The Committee published its report on 30 April 2025. This is the government's response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: The administrative cost of the tax system – Session 2024-25 (HC 675)
- PAC report: The cost of the tax system – Session 2024-25 (HC 645)

Government response to the Committee

> *1. PAC conclusion: The cost of administering taxes is increasing for HMRC and taxpayers.*

> *1. PAC recommendation: HMRC should publish realistic plans to simplify the tax system and establish robust metrics for reporting the impact on its costs, and on taxpayers' costs, in its annual reports. The plans should explain how HMRC has identified areas of most concern to taxpayers and how it will address these.*

1.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Summer 2025

1.2   The government has committed to simplifying the tax system and taking this forward as part of its three strategic priorities for HMRC (improving day-to-day performance and the overall customer experience, closing the tax gap, and reform and modernisation).

1.3   In summer 2025, the government will publish HMRC's Transformation Roadmap which will bring together HMRC's strategic and transformation ambitions into a single, public document. The roadmap will set out how HMRC plans to transform and simplify the way it administers tax and customs to reduce the time customers spend managing their affairs through better digital services, simplifying tax rules and improving education and guidance. The Roadmap will include the metrics HMRC will use to report progress.

1.4   HMRC already publishes the cost for HMRC to collect each £1 of tax, within its Annual Report and Accounts, which has been stable at around half a penny since 2017-18.

1.5   HMRC publishes estimates of any significant change in administrative burden on businesses arising from changes in tax policy in Tax Information and Impact Notes. The estimates draw on insights and data from a range of sources, including evidence in HMRC's Standard Cost Model (SCM), which contains data on the costs of existing obligations. HMRC is assessing the feasibility of updating the SCM to produce a publishable estimate of business taxpayers' costs and is also considering measurement of administrative burdens on individual taxpayers.

> ## 2. PAC conclusion: Taxpayers' trust in HMRC is falling.

> ### 2a. PAC recommendation: HMRC should work with taxpayers and their representatives to understand why trust in HMRC is falling and what it can do to quickly address the decline.

2.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

2.2   HMRC recognises five drivers of customer trust, being perceptions of fairness, competence, transparency, reciprocity and prevalent social norms.

2.3   HMRC uses its annual customer surveys (most recently 2024), complaints data, and focus groups to understand these perceptions in driving changes in the headline measures for different customer groups. HMRC place great value on customer feedback.

2.4   Alongside good customer service, trust depends on ensuring a fair tax ecosystem by holding to account those that do not pay the correct amount of tax, in addition to other factors such as prevailing trust in government.

2.5   HMRC aims to continue improving levels of trust by being more supportive, creating a level playing field, and ensuring its services and processes are quicker, easier and help more customers to get their taxes right first time. For example:

- Delivering sustained improvements in HMRC's helpline services.
- Improving digital services.
- Updating guidance regarding tax avoidance schemes.
- Consulting on ways to improve intermediary standards and the benefits good advisers bring to the tax system, counter those that promote avoidance, and reforming the tax administration framework.
- Making improvements to services for tax advisers, such as improving the Agents Dedicated Line and Services Account, building digital transactional services and webchat for tax advisers, and introducing a pre-complaint resolution service.

> ### 2b. PAC recommendation: HMRC should publish the concerns it has heard and the actions it is taking to address these, as a first step to improving trust.

2.6   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

2.7   HMRC publishes the results of its annual surveys as well as a range of other customer feedback (for example, via exercises like public consultation). The Exchequer Secretary has

confirmed that HMRC will publish a Transformation Roadmap this summer, including the details of digital services that will mean a better experience for taxpayers.

> *3. PAC conclusion: HMRC's compliance productivity has declined, despite its increased focus on prevention and investment in digital systems and higher–skilled staff.*

> *3. PAC recommendation: HMRC should write to the Committee alongside its Treasury Minute response, explaining the steps it will take to return compliance productivity to pre–pandemic levels as soon as possible and seek year– on–year improvements thereafter.*

3.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

3.2   HMRC has written to the Committee alongside this Treasury Minute response.

3.3   In 2023-24, HMRC secured record compliance yield of £41.8 billion compared to £34 billion in the previous financial year. This exceeded the annual target of £40.5 billion and was higher than pre-pandemic levels of compliance yield performance. Pre-pandemic productivity in 2019-20 was impacted by two specific very large cases, which resulted in an uplift to performance. HMRC are on track to achieve the 2024-25 end of year compliance yield target of £45.4 billion, a further improvement in performance and productivity. Final figures for 2024-25 will be released within the Annual Report and Accounts.

3.4   HMRC set stretching annual compliance yield targets in accordance with a methodology agreed by HMRC, HM Treasury and the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

3.5   As announced at Autumn Budget 2024 and Spring Statement 2025, HMRC will recruit an additional 5,500 compliance staff by March 2030. This investment, alongside other measures to close the tax gap (such as investing in modernising systems, delivering policy reforms and tackling tax debt) will deliver £7.5 billion of additional tax revenue per year by 2029-30.

3.6   This commitment alongside investing in improvements in HMRC's systems risking capabilities is expected to increase productivity over the Spending Review 2025 period.

3.7   The average rate of return of compliance activity to yield is just one factor HMRC considers when deciding how best to deploy its resources. HMRC will aim to increase productivity, while optimising deployment across compliance priorities.

> *4. PAC conclusion: HMRC allowed many of its IT systems for administering tax and interacting with customers to become out of date, increasing both its costs and the burdens on taxpayers.*

> *4a. PAC recommendation: Within three months of the spending review being published, HMRC should write to the Committee setting out its timetable for remediating its legacy IT systems, the forecast cost of investments and expected savings. It should then report its progress and spending on remediation in its annual reports.*

4.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2025

4.2   HMRC will write to the Committee on its plans to address the remediation of its legacy IT systems with a forecast cost of investments and expected savings. Progress and spending on remediation will be available within the Annual Report and Accounts.

> **4b. PAC recommendation: HMRC should write to the Committee alongside its Treasury Minute response setting out how and when it will reduce unnecessary communication with customers by post and telephone and its estimates of the scale and timing of cost savings.**

4.3   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

4.4   HMRC has written to the Committee alongside this Treasury Minute response.

4.5   HMRC is changing how it interacts with customers, delivering a more streamlined, efficient tax system by increasing the use of digital channels allowing customers to self-serve, making it quicker and easier to meet their obligations and reducing the instances where customers need to call or write to HMRC.

4.6   HMRC is building in mobile messaging updates to customers at varying points in their HMRC journeys to provide them with reassurance, manage their expectations and reduce progress chasing calls.

4.7   HMRC will publish a Transformation Roadmap this summer, bringing together HMRC's strategic and transformation ambitions into a single, public document.

4.8   The government is focused on modernising HMRC to become a digital-first organisation, having committed to reduce the volume of paper post sent whilst maintaining this provision for critical correspondence and the digitally excluded.

4.9   By the end of 2025-26, HMRC will procure an enterprise Customer Relationship Management (eCRM) platform, providing advisers with a complete picture of customers' tax affairs, transforming how HMRC interacts with customers. The platform will support the government's aim for HMRC to modernise its systems, improve customer service, and close the tax gap.

4.10   HMRC will also adopt a Contact Centre as a Service approach (CCaaS). A new omnichannel software solution that connects all customer service channels (like phone, email, webchat, voice recognition, social media) into a single, unified system to provide a better and more consistent customer and advisor experience. eCRM and CCaS will work interconnectedly.

> **5. PAC conclusion: It is of the utmost importance that HMRC learns lessons from its experience of implementing Making Tax Digital (MTD) and puts customer needs at the heart of plans to improve digital services.**

> **5. PAC recommendation: HMRC should ensure it conducts sufficient research into customer needs and design digital programmes and systems which meet those needs. HMRC should evidence its assessment of customer needs in its business cases and in public documents, including Tax Information and Impact Notes.**

5.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

5.2   HMRC conducts regular research with customers to understand their needs and perspectives. HMRC's Government Social Researchers conduct qualitative and quantitative research, including nationally representative surveys, with thousands of customers each year. In 2024-25, HMRC delivered 18 commissioned and 15 in-house social research projects. Additionally, user research is a core activity of HMRC's digital programmes. In 2024-25 HMRC conducted user research with 1,835 participants. Findings were used to inform design decisions on products and services.

5.3   HMRC currently uses customer and user insight as part of its end-to-end change lifecycle for designing new services or making changes to existing ones. This is a critical aspect of design to ensure the department builds solutions that address customer needs and a foundation for evaluating the impact of the service to identify areas of improvement or new opportunities for innovation.

5.4   As part of its business case process, HMRC assesses formal change against Customer Guardrails, a framework for ensuring customer needs are thoroughly considered. Evidence of identified customer needs, including assessment of impacts on customer costs and benefits, is then recorded through completion of an External Customer Impact Assessment document. This forms part of the documentation required by HMRC governance boards.

5.5   Customer impacts are published in the 'Summary of Impacts' section of Tax Information and Impact Notes (TIINs). Where a measure or policy change is driven by customer need, this can be set out in the 'Background to measure' or 'Policy objective' sections of a TIIN as appropriate.

> *6. PAC conclusion: We are concerned that HMRC is not well–placed to take advantage of the opportunities offered by technology, for example the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and e–invoicing.*

> *6. PAC recommendation: HMRC should write to the Committee alongside its Treasury Minute response, with an assessment of how well–placed it is to take advantage of new technology including AI, and its plans and timetable for addressing the factors that constrain its capability and capacity to do so.*

6.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

6.2   HMRC has written to the Committee alongside this Treasury Minute response.

6.3   HMRC is well positioned to take advantage of emerging technologies, particularly AI, to modernise operations, enhance customer experience, and improve productivity. With over two decades of experience applying AI in areas such as predictive analytics, risk assessment, and fraud detection, HMRC has embedded AI into core compliance and customer service functions. This includes tools like VAT Predictive Analytics, Bulk Data Exploitation Capability, and debt prediction models.

6.4   To further advance its AI ambition, HMRC is piloting several Generative AI initiatives:

- A cross-government chatbot to improve navigation of HMRC guidance.
- Copilot, trialled by thousands of staff, to enhance content summarisation, research, and search capabilities, with plans to scale significantly.
- Call summarisation tools to streamline agent workflows and improve service delivery.

6.5   In 2025-26, HMRC will launch new AI-powered compliance tools and expand data-sharing collaborations (e.g. with the DWP). These efforts are supported by a secure Gen AI

Landing Zone hosted in HMRC's Cloud tenancy, enabling safe use of advanced models like GPT-4o

6.6   To ensure the right capability and capacity, HMRC has established an AI Board and delivery team, invested in training through the CDIO University and Digital Academy, and launched career development schemes to reskill staff into future-critical roles such as Cloud Engineers and Solution Architects.

6.7   These initiatives underpin a clearly defined investment proposal focused on delivering improved compliance outcomes and operational efficiencies through AI-enabled digital delivery.

Twenty-Fourth Report of Session 2024–25

Cabinet Office

Government cyber resilience

Introduction from the Committee

Cyber attack is one of the most serious risks to the UK and the Government's resilience. The government defines cyber resilience as "the ability of an organisation to maintain the delivery of its key functions and services and ensure the protection of its data, despite adverse cyber security events". Government's digital estate is vast, complex and diverse. Departments, arm's–length bodies and their partners use a wide range of IT systems to provide public services. Ageing and outdated IT systems, known as 'legacy', increase the cyber risk to government. The cyber threat comes from individuals, groups or organisations, including hostile states and financially motivated cyber criminals, that have malicious intent to cause harm to digital devices or systems. Cyber attacks increasingly threaten the government's ability to safeguard national security and run public services.

The Government Security Group (GSG) in the Cabinet Office was responsible for leading the implementation of the Government Cyber Security Strategy: 2022–2030 ('the Strategy') and supporting government departments to improve their cyber resilience. In June 2025, the government moved responsibility for government and public sector cyber security from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). Departments are responsible for their own cyber resilience and for ensuring their sectors and arm's–length bodies meet strategic resilience targets. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) provides technical advice, support and guidance. In the 2021 Spending Review, the government announced it would invest £2.6 billion in cyber, of which it allocated £1.3 billion to departments for cyber security and legacy IT remediation.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence on 10 March 2025 from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and the Cabinet Office. The Committee published its report on 9 May 2025. This is the government's response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: Government cyber resilience – Session 2024-25 (HC 546)
- PAC report: Government cyber resilience – Session 2024-25 (HC 643)
- Policy paper: A blueprint for modern digital government
- Policy paper: Government Cyber Security Strategy

Government response to the Committee

> *1. PAC conclusion: Government has not kept up with the severe and rapidly evolving cyber threat.*

> *1. PAC recommendation: In one year's time, the Cabinet Office should write to the Committee setting out their assessment of: how the cyber risk to government has continued to change; how government's approach has evolved in response; and the extent to which the gap between the cyber threat and government's cyber resilience has grown or reduced.*

1.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Autumn 2026

1.2   The government has committed in the [Blueprint for Modern Digital Government](#) to resetting the relationship with cyber and technology risk, and taking a stronger and more interventionist approach to drive transformation across government. This approach is needed to achieve a step change in resilience across government, arm's–length bodies and the wider public sector.

1.3   The government has taken immediate action to address this and moved responsibility for government and public sector cyber security from the Cabinet Office to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). This change will strengthen technology resilience and policymaking across the public sector, by better integrating cyber security responsibilities and expertise into the Government Digital Service.

1.4   In winter 2025, DSIT will publish a Government Cyber Security Strategy Implementation Plan (GCSS IP) which will set out the approach to driving cyber and technology resilience. DSIT will write to the Committee to update them on implementation in one year's time.

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2. PAC conclusion: There is a longstanding shortage in government of the experienced, technical cyber skills required.

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2. PAC recommendation: Following the conclusion of the 2025 Spending Review, the Cabinet Office should set out: how many of the estimated cyber vacancies in government that its central interventions will fill; and how it will support departments' plans to fill the remaining gaps in their workforces.

2.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2026

2.2   The government acknowledges the ongoing cyber skills gaps across the public sector and is taking active steps to implement reforms that address this challenge. As part of the announced Machinery of Government change, Cyber, Digital and Data teams focusing on capability and skills will be fully integrated in DSIT by November 2025.

2.3   The government is attracting and upskilling new cyber security talent into government, through several comprehensive talent programmes including the Cyber Fast Stream, Cyber apprenticeships and the Government Cyber Skills Academy.

2.4   Through a new Cyber Resourcing Hub, government is creating a clearer and stronger government employer value proposition to attract candidates within a competitive market and streamlining the recruitment process.

2.5   As part of work to deliver the Government Cyber Skills Strategy, DSIT will continue to work with departments to understand their cyber skills gap and the local action departments are taking to address this.

2.6   2025 workforce data will be utilised to identify cyber vacancies in government and support departments' plans on how they can fill these vacancies through current programmes and initiatives.

2.7   Early next year, DSIT will set how many of the anticipated cyber vacancies in government its central initiatives will address and how it will assist departments in their efforts to fill the remaining workforce gaps.

3. PAC recommendation: The Cabinet Office should set out how it is supporting accounting officers to: improve accountability by appointing an appropriately experienced and expert Chief Information Officer and Chief Security Officer at senior management and board–level; include cyber resilience in departmental plans and activities; and create a strong cyber security culture in their organisations.

3.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2026

3.2   The government recognises the importance of embedding security expertise at the heart of departmental decision making.

3.3   There is a clear need for board-level expertise to ensure that digital and procurement considerations are fully factored into governance, investment and risk decisions. Government's intent for this is stated in the Blueprint where all public sector organisations will be required to have a digital leader on their executive committee and a digital non-executive director on their board by 2026.

3.4   Building on this, DSIT will set expectations for departments to appoint a board member with expertise in cyber security and digital resilience, ensure that boards receive regular reporting on cyber security and digital resilience risks, define roles and responsibilities and specify mandatory risk management and governance actions in a Target Operating Model for Government Cyber and Digital Resilience.

4a. PAC recommendation: The Cabinet Office should set out: what proportion of critical and legacy IT systems it has assessed so far; the optimal scale and frequency of assessment activity needed; a deadline for when this will be achieved by.

4.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2026

4.2   DSIT is currently improving the way that they collect data on legacy systems across government.

4.3   Departments will continue to be required to identify and report on their critical systems through GovAssure, and drive adoption of the scheme across more of government.

4.4   The combined insights from these assurance frameworks will be used to determine the proportion of the estate which has been assessed, and the optimum scale and frequency of assessment activity going forward.

4b. PAC recommendation: [The Cabinet Office should set out] How it will prevent departments from diverting funding away from this activity [critical and legacy IT systems]

4.5   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2026

4.6   DSIT will continue to support the work done by departments to remediate their legacy systems and improve cyber resilience. DSIT will work with HM Treasury (HMT) to develop a methodology for tracking funding allocated to legacy remediation projects to ensure it is delivering the expected improvements.

4.7   DSIT will work with HMT to include all government cyber resilience activity into departments' regular reporting to HMT and DSIT on digital spending and delivery. DSIT is also working with HMT on mechanisms for protecting budgets for specific cyber and legacy remediation programmes to avoid diversion of funding after settlement.

> *5. PAC conclusion: The scale and diversity of government's supply chains, and the size of the public sector, makes it significantly harder for government to manage cyber risk.*

> *5. PAC recommendation: The Cabinet Office should secure clear assurance from departments that they understand and are effectively managing the cyber risk from their arm's–length bodies and supply chains.*

5.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2026

5.2   The government recognises the importance of managing the risk in ALBs and their supply chains. Whilst services can and in many cases should be outsourced from lead government departments, they are still ultimately accountable for the risk and must build in mechanisms to manage this.

5.3   DSIT will clearly outline departmental responsibility for the cyber security and digital resilience of their arm's–length bodies. This will build on and complement the accountabilities set out in 'Government Security Policy: Security Functional Accountability' published outside the public domain in October 2024. As part of the interventionist approach to cyber resilience referenced in the [Blueprint](#), DSIT will assure and enforce that Accounting Officers are meeting this responsibility.

5.4   This more active role will see departments responsible for ensuring their associated arm's–length bodies manage risk in accordance with the centrally set risk appetite. This will include returning assurance data from assurance methods such as GovAssure and Supplier Assurance.

5.5   The Digital Commercial Centre of Excellence will reform procurement processes and ensure clearer guidelines for departments. DSIT will support departments to manage their supply chain risks by embedding baseline contractual requirements into CCS frameworks, providing training and creating the mechanisms to join up between security and commercial teams. DSIT will use government's buying power to set higher expectations of our strategic suppliers in terms of their cyber security practices and incident response processes.

> *6. PAC conclusion: Government's work to date has not been sufficient to make it resilient to cyber attack by 2025, and meeting its 2030 aim to make the wider public sector cyber resilient will require a fundamentally different approach.*

> **6. PAC recommendation: Following the conclusion of the 2025 Spending Review, the Cabinet Office should set out what levers and instruments the centre of government will use to take a fundamentally different approach to cyber resilience.**

6.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Winter 2025

6.2 Work is underway to define a future Target Operating Model for Cyber and Digital Resilience, which will set out how government and the public sector should organise itself and operate to understand, govern, and respond to cyber and digital resilience risk. Later in 2025, DSIT will set out plans for implementation of this model, and how it will enable the delivery of a strong and interventionist approach to cyber and digital resilience.

Twenty-Fifth Report of Session 2024-25

Department of Health and Social Care

Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24

Introduction from the Committee

The Department leads the health and social care system in England. The Department and its group spent £187.3 billion in 2023–24. The C&AG has qualified his opinions on the Department's accounts for the last five years due to a number of different issues within both the Department itself and its wider group of organisations that form part of its accounts. Whilst some of these issues were due to the COVID–19 pandemic, the range and scale of them has highlighted issues with oversight across the group, including financial and compliance issues.

NHS England leads the NHS in England and sets the national direction for the NHS. It commissions services from NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts, and from other healthcare providers, runs national NHS IT systems, and is responsible for the education and training of the NHS workforce. NHS England spent £180.0 billion in 2023–24, of which £153.6 billion was on the commissioning of health and social care services for patients. The government announced on 13 March 2025 that NHS England will be abolished and its functions merged into the Department.

Parliament expects Departments' accounts to be published before the summer recess each year, which the Department has not met since 2019. The Department published its accounts covering 2019–20 to 2022–23 in January each year, six months after this deadline. It published its 2023–24 accounts in December 2024, marking an improvement on the previous four years, but still five months after the pre–summer recess deadline. The 2023–24 accounts were delayed as a result of ongoing issues at UKHSA following the C&AG's disclaimed opinions on its 2021–22 and 2022–23 accounts and because of delays to local NHS audits. The Department's Annual Report and Accounts needs assurance from NHS England's accounts and the Consolidated NHS Provider Accounts because they account for over £100 billion of expenditure. Those accounts in turn rely on assurance from the audits of NHS commissioners and NHS providers.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence on Thursday 13 March 2025 from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and NHS England (NHSE). The Committee published its report on Wednesday 14 May 2025. This is the government's response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- PAC report: DHSC Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24 - Session 2024-25 (HC 639)
- DHSC report: Department of Health and Social Care Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24

Government response to the Committee

> *1. PAC conclusion: The announcement of the abolition of NHS England, and staff cuts across the Department, NHS England, and Integrated Care Boards, has created high levels of uncertainty for patients and for staff.*

> ***1a. PAC recommendation: Within the next 3 months, the Department must reflect on the lessons learnt from previous structural changes and share with us its plan and timetable for the structured transfer of NHS England's functions to the Department, including the resources it will now have for each of its key responsibilities, and any activity it will cease.***

1.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: August 2025

1.2   The Department of Health and Social Care (the department) is carefully considering lessons learnt from previous organisational changes as it takes forward the programme to create a single new organisation.

1.3   The reforms are designed to address the failures of the 2012 NHS restructuring, reducing bureaucracy and duplication to improve care delivery. Equally, the government is also building a new organisation that can deliver on the Health Mission and 10 Year Plan, through enabling and supporting the health and care system and those who lead it locally.

1.4   The department has assessed the current functions across both organisations, agreed a senior structure for the future department, and is developing its plans for the transfer of staff from NHS England to the department. The department is committed to transparency throughout this process and, in keeping with this, has shared this information with staff across both organisations. The department has also written to the Committee Chair on the 7 July 2025 to describe these plans in more detail.

1.5   Information relating to the size of resource functions is likely to be confirmed in Autumn 2025.

> ***1b. PAC recommendation: The changes should preserve the place–based approach to retain close and effective working relations with local councils, directors of public health and local GPs.***

1.6   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: to be confirmed, subject to Primary Legislation

1.7   These reforms focus on empowering frontline staff and local leaders to drive improvements in patient care, by reducing duplication and improving services for patients through a more efficient, less bureaucratic system.

1.8   Strong partnership working at place will be an essential enabler to neighbourhood health; delivering joined up care closer to people's home and proactively supporting people in the community to avoid deterioration of health. This is as much about integration within the NHS – between primary care, community and acute services – as it is about integration between the NHS and wider public sector partners.

1.9   NHS England has already clarified through the model Integrated Care Board blueprint that Integrated Care Boards should continue to foster strong relationships with local government in their places, so that they build a shared understanding of their populations and work together to commission neighbourhood services to improve outcomes and tackle inequalities. NHS England and the department will work closely with the Local Government Association to take this forward throughout the organisational change programme.

1.10   The 10 Year Health Plan will set out an agenda to deliver on the three big shifts needed to move healthcare from hospital to the community, analogue to digital, sickness to prevention. In line with the shift from hospital to the community, preserving and improving

effective working relationships with local government and further enabling local systems are core principles that will remain central in the department's ongoing organisational design work.

> **2. PAC conclusion: The Department's accounts do not provide sufficient information on key long–term financial pressures facing the health and social care system.**

> **2a. PAC recommendation: In line with its Treasury Minute response, the Department should write to the Committee to set out its plans to improve the transparency and usability of its Annual Report and Accounts in the following areas: social care; productivity; prevention; digital and artificial intelligence; palliative and end–of–life care; severance and clinical negligence payments; and any new and emerging areas of Parliamentary and public interest.**
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> **2b. PAC recommendation: All future annual reports and accounts should be very clear about what productivity and efficiency gains have been made during the year and how. Also, a prediction for future years should be included.**

2.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendations.

Target implementation date: September 2025

2.2   The department is committed to the continuous improvement of its Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) to ensure the content is as transparent and informative as possible, both in the specific areas to which the Committee refers and in other emerging areas of public and parliamentary interest.

2.3   The department plans to cover the areas listed in recommendations 2a and 2b in its 2024-25 ARA. The department will update the Committee on progress alongside its update to the Committee on recommendation 5 in September.

> **3. PAC conclusion: There is little to show for the £400 million spent so far on the development of Harlow Health Security Campus, with no decision yet on the future of the site.**

> **3a. PAC recommendation: In line with the recommendations this Committee made in May 2024, UKHSA should urgently outline how it will ensure that the UK continues to have the infrastructure it needs to protect public health, and confirm its plans for its high containment laboratories, including setting out full costs and timeline for completion. In light of spending review, and given UKHSA's poor record of delivering new facilities, it should set out as soon as possible, exactly what the arrangements are in respect of accountability, oversight, and the involvement and status of delivery partners.**

3.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: April 2026

3.2   The government recognises that an urgent decision is needed on the future location of UKHSA's high-containment laboratories. A thorough assessment of options has been conducted to identify the most cost-effective and time-efficient solution, and a decision will be taken following the outcome of the spending review process now that overall capital funding limits have been set out.

3.3   Following this decision, UKHSA will finalise the delivery model and the associated commercial strategy in collaboration with key partners such as DHSC, HM Treasury and the

National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) which will be fully implemented by Spring 2026 following the completion of a programme business case.

3.4   As previously set out to the Committee in the letter dated 24 November 2024, UKHSA has appointed a new senior responsible owner and programme director as part of the Agency's ongoing efforts to strengthen programme governance, strategic leadership and establishing clear lines of accountability to enable effective delivery.

> ***3b. PAC recommendation: The Department should ensure it establishes effective oversight of funding for all major health infrastructure projects, starting with ensuring these are based on a realistic assessment of the costs.***

3.5   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

3.6   The department already has well established governance structures that oversee investment decisions for funding of major health infrastructure projects, which are linked to onward approvals, where needed, from HM Treasury and/or Cabinet Office. A specific test for any approval is on costs, both in terms of affordability for the duration of the project or programme being considered, and the value for money that the proposed project is intended to deliver. In addition, the Department has existing governance structures in place to oversee the delivery of those projects. All existing governance structures, including their Terms of Reference, are subject to regular review to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and to implement process improvements where necessary.

> ***4. PAC conclusion: It is unacceptable that the Department is yet to develop a plan to deal with the cost of clinical negligence claims, and so much taxpayers' money is being spent on legal fees.***

> ***4a. PAC recommendation: Within the next 6 months, the Department should set out a plan with clear actions to:***
>
> * ***Reduce tragic incidences of patient harm to as low a level as possible; and…***

4.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: April 2026

4.2   The department and NHS England will continue to prioritise patient safety and a learning culture across the NHS so that harmful patient events are significantly reduced.

4.3   This includes ongoing work to progress key measures under the NHS Patient Safety Strategy, which sets out how the NHS would improve patient safety continuously. NHS England now estimate that work under the strategy is saving around 1000 lives and over £100 million in care costs each year. Initiatives such as the rollout of Martha's Rule, and implementation of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework and the new statutory medical examiner system are making a real difference. Following publication of the 10 Year Health Plan, and then publication of an overarching Quality Strategy, NHS England will review and update the NHS Patient Safety Strategy. This work will begin once the Quality Strategy is published, currently planned for later in the autumn of 2025.

4.4.   Although major efforts and other key initiatives are being progressed to promote the way safety is approached in the NHS, the department acknowledges that progress to improve patient safety and reduce patient harm is unevenly distributed and that the development of cultures of safety and learning is inconsistent.

> **4b. PAC recommendation:**
>
> - **Manage the costs of clinical negligence more effectively, including introducing a mechanism to reduce legal fees.**

4.5   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: to be advised

4.6   The rising costs of clinical negligence claims against the NHS in England are of great concern to government. Costs have more than doubled in the last 10 years and are forecast to continue rising, putting further pressure on NHS finances. The causes of the overall cost rise are complex and there is no single fix. The department recognises that clinical negligence costs is an important issue, and ministers will examine the drivers of costs, how to manage spending on clinical negligence and the potential merits of reform options

4.7   DHSC will provide a response to the Committee at the earliest opportunity and will keep the Committee updated regarding the implementation date.

> **4c. PAC recommendation:**
>
> - **Improve patient safety across the NHS and in particular in maternity services.**

4.8   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: April 2026

4.9   On 25 February 2025, Professor Chris Whitty wrote to the Committee outlining work the department and its partners is taking to reduce patient harm and improve patient safety in the NHS.

4.10   NHS England is now in the final year of its 3-year maternity and neonatal plan, with building a culture of safety at its centre. Actions include implementation of the Saving Babies Lives Care Bundle, rollout of a Perinatal Culture and Leadership Programme, and significant closing of workforce gaps.

4.11   The department recognise though that too many women and their babies are still not receiving the level of safe maternity and neonatal care we expect. On 23 June, the Secretary of State announced a rapid, national, independent investigation into maternity and neonatal care, expected to report by December 2025. The investigation will conduct urgent reviews of up to 10 trusts where there are specific issues, and also undertake a rapid, systemic investigation into maternity and neonatal care in England. A National Maternity and Neonatal Taskforce will be established alongside this, with recommendations made informing development of a new, national action plan that will lead to rapid improvement of maternity and neonatal quality and safety.

4.12   In terms of wider patient safety, on 7 July 2025, Dr Penny Dash published her review of patient safety across the health and care landscape, which included the review of into six key organisations overseen by DHSC and how they work with the wider patient safety landscape. Dr Dash made nine recommendations which the government has accepted in full. Her findings and recommendations have fed into the 10 Year Health Plan.

> **5. PAC conclusion: We are disappointed by the Department's continued failure to return to publishing its accounts before the summer Parliamentary recess.**

> **5a. PAC recommendation: By the start of September 2025, the Department must write to us with a realistic and credible plan to produce audited accounts before the summer Parliamentary recess. This must include how it will:**
>
> - **Effectively support and hold group bodies to account to ensure they produce accounts of appropriate quality on a timely basis; and**
>
> - **Work with stakeholders across the local audit system to build capacity, resilience and ensure deadlines are met in particular given organisational changes.**

5.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendations.

Target implementation date: September 2025

5.2   As explained to the Committee at the hearing of 13 March 2024, the department has previously detailed a multi-year plan with the aim of returning laying its ARA before the summer parliamentary recess, by bringing forward publication by at least one month each year. This plan balances the department's commitment to accelerating the timetable with the key dependency on private sector audit firms to undertake the audits of NHS providers and integrated care systems. Private sector audit firms have indicated very clearly to the department and the regulator (the Financial Reporting Council, FRC) that they do not currently have the capacity to complete robust, quality audits of NHS organisations quickly enough to support a return to pre-recess laying in the shorter-term.

5.3   The department is continuing to work closely with key stakeholders across the local audit system, including the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, HM Treasury, the National Audit Office, FRC and firms themselves, to build capacity and resilience in the system and ensure deadlines are met.

5.4   The department will write to the Committee in September 2025 with further detail on its multi-year plan, the risks to it, and the action the department is taking to address those risks to the greatest extent possible.

> *6. PAC conclusion: NHS England does not have a coherent plan to better protect taxpayers' money and prevent future unapproved exit packages.*

> **6. PAC recommendation: As part of its Treasury Minute response, NHS England should set out how it will ensure that all exit packages receive the appropriate approvals in advance of payment being made, including details of consequences for non–compliance with the rules. Given the proposed scale of redundancies it should set out how its new approvals mechanism can be enforced to prevent even more unauthorised severance payments.**
>
> **This should include how it will ensure that this corporate knowledge and any lessons learned are not lost when it is abolished and its functions are taken on by the Department.**

6.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation

Target implementation date: end Summer 2025

6.2   NHS England is currently redrafting the guidance around exit packages and the associated approval mechanisms. This guidance will include instruction on all types of exit packages including voluntary severance, Mutually Agreed Resignation schemes (MARS), compulsory redundancies, and special severance cases. This guidance will be communicated

via the regional workforce teams as well as via the NHS England external website. This should have an impact on exits agreed from 2025-26.

6.3   Where instances arise with compliance with the approval mechanism for exit packages, NHSE conducts a lesson-learnt exercise and reiterates the approval rules via several avenues. For example, NHSE directly liaises with the organisations involved to ensure the rules are understood, and through financial control events where NHSE promotes good practice and reminds delegates of the governance arrangements for certain types of transactions. So far for 2024-2025 NHSE has seen fewer instances of non-compliance, but the final assurance process on this is not fully complete as of May 2025.

6.4   Regarding the future arrangements for exit packages, the oversight mechanism will depend on where the legal powers reside after the integration of NHSE into the future Department of Health and Social Care. NHSE will ensure it is picked up in the transition process.

Twenty-Sixth Report of Session 2024-25

Home Office

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

Introduction from the Committee

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of different crimes that are known to disproportionately impact women and girls. These crimes include domestic abuse, rape (and other sexual offences), stalking, harassment, upskirting, revenge porn, so–called 'honour'–based abuses (such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so–called 'honour' killings) and many more.

At least one in 12 women are victims of violence against women and girls every year with over one in four women being a survivor of sexual assault in their lifetimes. In 2022–23, the National Police Chiefs' Council reported that one in five police recorded crimes were related to violence against women and girls. Despite the stark nature of these statistics, the true scale of VAWG is likely to be even higher, as not all survivors will report their experience to authorities. These crimes can have devastating impacts on survivors, affecting them physically, mentally, socially and financially.

The Home Office leads cross–government efforts to tackle violence against women and girls and is the lead department for the government's 'Safer Streets' mission. Achieving long–term, sustainable change will require the commitment and coordination of multiple government departments, including education, health, justice and local government.

The Home Office has led successive efforts to address violence against women and girls, and in July 2021 published its third strategy since 2009–10, followed by the accompanying Domestic Abuse plan in March 2022. The Home Office has spent £149 million between April 2021 and the end of September 2024 tackling VAWG, whilst the National Audit Office estimated that around £979 million was spent by other government departments tackling VAWG in the period from 2021–22 to 2023–24. The current government has set an ambition to halve violence against women and girls in the next decade, as part of its 'Safer Streets' mission. The Home Office told us that it will outline government's plans to deliver on this ambition in its new VAWG Strategy, which we aim to publish in September 2025.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence on 17 March 2025 from the Home Office, Department for Education, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Committee published its report on 16 May. This is the government's response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: Tackling Violence against Women and Girls - Session 2024-25 (HC 547)
- PAC report: Tackling Violence against Women and Girls - Session 2024-25 (HC 644)

Government response to the Committee

> *1. PAC conclusion: Under previous iterations of its strategy to address violence against women and girls, the Home Office failed to secure the full support of other government departments.*

> **1. PAC recommendation: As part of its Treasury Minute response, the Home Office should outline precisely how the mission–led approach will hold all departments to account for their contributions to tackling violence against women and girls and ensure collective buy–in.**

1.1   The government agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

1.2   The Home Office has set up robust governance and accountability through the Safer Streets Mission.

1.3   Governance for the Mission includes a dedicated violence against women and girls (VAWG) Ministerial Group, co-chaired by the Minister for Safeguarding and VAWG and the Minister for Victims and VAWG, to inform and oversee the development of the VAWG Strategy. This Group has been instrumental in establishing a truly cross-government vision and approach and in defining the departmental commitments and contributions. Following the publication of the Strategy, the Home Office will shift to a delivery focus: tracking progress, holding government departments to account on delivery of commitments, reviewing new and emerging evidence on what works, and informing future policy decisions.

1.4   This Ministerial Group will report into the Safer Streets Mission Board, chaired by the Home Secretary and attended by Secretaries of State, to ensure government is on track to meeting Safer Streets Mission objectives. The escalation route developed by these two boards demonstrates that the Home Office is taking a new approach to ensuring cohesion in its policy development and delivery.

1.5   The Safer Streets Mission Board in turn reports into the Prime Minister's regular Mission Stocktake meetings. These stocktakes have coordinated government action on VAWG and will continue to be critical to holding government departments to account on delivery.

1.6   The Home Office has also accepted the NAO recommendation to establish a cross-Whitehall team to monitor the delivery of VAWG commitments. The Home Office is developing options for this joint team to align with the delivery phase of the upcoming VAWG Strategy.

> **2. PAC conclusion: Government departments do not have a realistic understanding of the experiences of survivors seeking support, nor the demands faced by local services on the ground.**

> **2. PAC recommendation: As part of its Treasury Minute response, the Home Office should set out plans, over and above what it has done in the past, explaining how it will:**
>
> - **engage with services supporting survivors to gain an accurate understanding of the demands faced by support services, and the experience of survivors seeking support; and**
>
> - **engage with MoJ and His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service to ensure that all survivors are appropriately supported by the family courts system.**

2.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

2.2   Through ministerially chaired VAWG thematic roundtables with sector experts, delivery partners, academics, policing, local practitioners and government departments, and regular

stakeholder meetings held by the Interpersonal Abuse Unit, the upcoming VAWG Strategy has been shaped by the views and insights of sector experts, delivery partners and victims.

2.3   The government has sought to engage with survivors through the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's (DAC) VOICES network which gives victims and survivors an opportunity to share their experiences to influence policy development. The network was consulted on numerous themes in the development of the VAWG Strategy. At the DAC's Survivor Summit (March 2025) Ministers and senior officials heard first-hand powerful testimonies from survivors about the criminal justice system, accessing victim support services, housing, benefits, healthcare and welfare.

2.4   The Home Office created a VAWG Strategy Advisory Board, comprised of 20 core attendees, including two rotating seats for specialist organisations to bring frontline perspectives to strategy development. The Home Office regularly engages with a wide range of specialist and frontline services from across England and Wales to ensure organisations receiving grant funding are delivering value for money and informing broader policy development.

2.5   The Director-level leads in key partner departments, namely the Department for Education, Ministry of Justice and Health and Social Care, will drive accountability in delivering the new Strategy through the Safer Streets Mission. This will draw together cross-government plans spanning the whole breadth of work on VAWG prevention, victim support to transforming the justice system. The Ministry of Justice's Private Law Pathfinder project in the family courts aims to improve the experience and outcomes for children and families, particularly those needing additional support such as domestic abuse survivors. It supports earlier identification of families' needs and stronger multi-agency working, including with HMCTS, Cafcass, Cafcass Cymru, local authorities, police, and specialist services. The model is running in six court areas currently, including all of Wales, with plans to extend to a further four areas by end of March 26. Feedback and evaluation on delivery to date is showing positive results.

2.6   The Home Office will continue to take a survivor-informed approach, including continued engagement with services supporting survivors and working with the Ministry of Justice on supporting individuals through the criminal and family courts system.

> **3. PAC conclusion: Short–term and fragmented funding hinder government departments' efforts to maximise the impact it is having both at the local and national level.**

> **3. PAC recommendation: In light of the forthcoming Spending Review, the Home Office should then write to the Committee within one month outlining how government's approach is changing in order to coordinate all spending on VAWG–related activities across government and provide long–term funding stability to the sector.**

3.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Autumn 2025

3.2   The government is committed to delivering its ambition to halve VAWG in a decade, underpinned by a transformational approach to be set out in the upcoming VAWG Strategy. This includes ensuring that maximum stability is provided to the sector so that they can continue to deliver for victims and respond to perpetrators.

3.3   The Home Office is due to undergo the departmental budget allocations process, following the Spending Review, through which the final funding allocation will be agreed.

3.4   The coordination of VAWG spending across government will also be subject to other Government departments completing their own internal allocation processes.

3.5   Once the Home Office has decisions and clarity on plans for cross-government spending on VAWG for the Spending Review period, the Home Office will write to update the Committee.

> **4. PAC conclusion: The Home Office has a limited awareness of initiatives proving effective so cannot use this information to improve its understanding of what works to prevent and reduce violence against women and girls.**

> **4. PAC recommendation: Prior to the launch of the new VAWG Strategy, the Home Office should set out how, over and above what it has done in the past, it will capture and share evidence of successful initiatives at the local level, to continually inform its understanding of what works to prevent and reduce violence against women and girls.**

4.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

4.2   The recommendation is being implemented through work undertaken to support the VAWG Strategy and any ongoing analytical work on tackling VAWG.

4.3   The Home Office regularly reviews emerging evidence at both national and local levels to ensure its approach to tackling VAWG is based on the best available evidence. To provide a comprehensive assessment of the existing evidence base and support the development of the VAWG Strategy, the government conducted in-depth reviews on the evidence of what works to reduce VAWG. Four evidence reviews, focused on evaluation evidence, were undertaken to align as closely as possible to the themes of the VAWG Strategy. In addition, information on promising national and local initiatives was shared by a range of stakeholders, including 8 government departments, 23 VAWG sector organisations and 10 international countries and devolved administrations. As part of the evidence review work, 2 workshops on the evidence base and interventions were also held with 12 leading UK academics on VAWG. This work has been used to inform the government response to VAWG outlined in the Strategy; the output will be published alongside the VAWG Strategy.

4.4   The Safer Streets Mission provides the infrastructure needed to ensure all departments are collating and sharing evidence on successful initiatives. The government will continue to grow the evidence base, recognising that there are evidence gaps, to feed into the mission approach, and where feasible will evaluate new and existing initiatives and approaches over the course of their lifecycle. The government will also seize 'test-and-learn' opportunities to design and trial small, innovative local solutions, exploring the potential for national implementation. The overall progress of the Strategy will be measured through a suite of metrics that form the Performance Framework.

> **5. PAC conclusion: There are considerable gaps in the Home Office's understanding of the scale of violence against women and girls, which will undermine its efforts to target interventions and monitor progress against its ambition to halve VAWG.**

> **5. PAC recommendation: As part of its Treasury Minute response, the Home Office should set out how it will:**

- *Measure progress against its ambition to halve VAWG in a decade, demonstrating what alternative indicators will be used to measure progress in those areas not covered by the Crime Survey for England and Wales; and*

- *Ensure all relevant departments, notably DHSC and DfE, are sharing intelligence relating to VAWG appropriately, to build up government's understanding of the scale of VAWG, and its ability to prioritise efforts effectively.*

5.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2025

5.2   The government will use a broad suite of metrics to comprehensively measure the ambition and work on tackling VAWG. This will include a headline metric on the prevalence of VAWG as reported through the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). This will be measured by a new combined measure of those who have experienced domestic abuse, and/or sexual assault and/or stalking in the previous 12 months. The target to halve VAWG within a decade will be set against this headline prevalence measure.

5.3   The government will use supporting headline metrics covering repeat domestic abuse, the prevalence of sexual harassment as measured by the CSEW, and female homicides. A range of other sub-metrics will be used to provide a more comprehensive picture of VAWG in society and measure the effectiveness of the interventions. The suite of sub-metrics will be set out in the new VAWG Strategy. It will include data related to forms of VAWG not covered by the headline or supporting headline metrics, such as online VAWG. The range of measures and data sources selected will ensure that victim interactions with services outside of policing and the CJS are captured, including education, housing and healthcare. This will allow the government to monitor the whole system response to tackling VAWG and the success of the range of interventions outlined in the Strategy.

5.4   The Safer Streets Mission provides the forum by which departments will share relevant information on VAWG. All government departments have contributed to the development of the performance framework, ensuring a range of metrics are included on the scale of VAWG and the full government response. Further detail will be published in the VAWG Strategy.

6. PAC conclusion: We are concerned that, to date, the approach to tackling violence against women and girls has not put enough emphasis on preventative measures that are necessary to achieve long–term change.

6. PAC recommendation: As part of the Treasury Minute response to this report, the Home Office should outline:

- *how it intends to put greater emphasis on preventative measures over and above work it has done previously through its upcoming Strategy, to achieve long–term change; and*

- *how it will work with other relevant departments, notably the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, MHCLG and MoJ, to ensure all opportunities are being taken to work with young boys to prevent harmful attitudes perpetuating, and how this work is being incorporated into the upcoming VAWG Strategy.*

- *Also, as part of the Treasury Minute response to this report, the Department for Education should set out how it intends to work with children and young people to prevent violence against women and girls, including further changes to the relationships and sex education (RSE) curriculum, and how this is being coordinated through the Home Office's upcoming VAWG Strategy*

6.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2025

6.2   The new VAWG Strategy will place prevention at the very heart of the government's approach to halving VAWG in a decade. A key part of the Home Office's approach will be improving the policing, criminal and family justice response. However, enforcement alone is not enough.

6.3   The preventative measures in the forthcoming VAWG Strategy will be designed to achieve long-term change, underpinned by the Theory of Change. This includes challenging the societal norms, attitudes and misconceptions about relationships and consent, how children are educated in school, in communities and online, and identifying those early risk factors in children and families so that fewer children go on to perpetrate abuse or become victims themselves. Prevention of VAWG is a wide-reaching area requiring cross-government effort across DfE, DCMS, MHCLG, DSIT and MoJ, and others.

6.4   The review process for the Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) statutory guidance is almost complete and new guidance will be published in the coming months. The Home Office and the Department for Education have worked closely with a range of stakeholders including those who are working to end VAWG to get the guidance right.

6.5   The Home Office has met with young people who shared their experiences as well as contributing ideas on practical steps schools should take on these matters. Ministers in the Home Office and Department for Education are continuing to work together to ensure that future funding will deliver a positive and lasting impact for children and young people. More detail on this joint work between the Department for Education and the Home Office will be set out in the forthcoming VAWG Strategy

6.6   The Home Office will also continue to work closely with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to enhance media literacy among children and parents, so that they are educated to critically assess and be aware of content they are viewing online, including misogynistic content.

6.7   The government's Opportunity Mission is also dedicated to setting up every child with the best start in life, helping all children to achieve and thrive and creating environments in which young people feel they belong - these are the best available tools for combating violence and prejudice, including misogyny.

6.8   The implementation of the actions outlined in this response by September 2025 is contingent on the publication of the Tackling VAWG Strategy within that timeframe.

> *7. PAC conclusion: We are concerned that government departments' approach to tech–enabled violence against women and girls is not sufficiently agile to address the threats posed by online harm.*

> *7a. PAC recommendation: In six months' time, DSIT should write to the Committee outlining the impact that the Online Safety Act has had on improving the safety of children and young people online, and the role it is expected to play in preventing VAWG in the long–term.*

7.1   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Winter 2025

7.2   The implementation of the Online Safety Act is a key part of the government's strategy to tackle VAWG. The government is also exploring interventions to strengthen protections for

women and girls online, including current work legislating to criminalize the creation of non-consensual intimate images.

7.3   The Act's illegal content duties have been in force since March 2025, and from July 2025, the Act's child safety duties should be in force. The child safety duties will require in-scope services likely to be accessed by children, to protect them from content that is harmful to them.

7.4   From October 2025, DSIT will analyse Ofcom's Online Experiences Tracker, setting out the experiences of 13–17-year-olds and adults on regulated services. This survey may give a view into the early impact of the protections under the illegal content duties, including from harms which disproportionately impact women and girls.

7.5   DSIT expects to see impacts of the child safety duties reflected more in the Spring 2026 Tracker but will aim to update the Committee in six months' time with initial findings from Ofcom's Tracker.

7.6   DSIT is working with Ofcom to develop a longer-term monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the Act's impact, including assessing relevant data and crime statistics.

7.7   DSIT expect Ofcom to publish their finalised guidance to protect women and girls online by the end of 2025. Ofcom is also consulting on further measures which may help tackle VAWG, which launched on 30 June 2025.

7.8   DSIT will update the Committee in six months' time on the implementation of the Act and further actions being taken to protect women and girls online.

7b. PAC recommendation: As part of the Treasury Minute response to this report DfE should set out what it intends to do, over and above previous work, to keep children and young people safe from the dangers of exposure to harmful online content.

7.9   The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

7.10   The Department for Education supports online safety in schools through its statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping children safe in education. The department regularly consult on the guidance to see where it can and should be strengthened. In March 2023, DfE published filtering and monitoring standards to help schools protect pupils online. A series of webinars, developed with the UK Safer Internet Centre, are available to help schools and colleges implement these standards.

7.11   Through statutory Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE), pupils are taught about online relationships, implications of sharing private or personal data (including images), cyberbullying, harmful content, and the risks of over-reliance on social media. The Department for Education is in the process of reviewing this statutory guidance and will continue to ensure it is up to date in helping children stay safe online.

7.12   Additionally, the government is exploring the development of an awareness campaign to strengthen media literacy by empowering online audiences to think critically about misleading and polarising online content.

7.13   Together, these initiatives aim to create a safer, more informed digital environment for children and young people.

Treasury Minutes Archive[1]

Treasury Minutes are the government's response to reports from the Committee of Public Accounts. Treasury Minutes are Command Papers laid in Parliament.

Session 2024-25

Committee Recommendations: 221
Recommendations agreed: 208 (94%)
Recommendations disagreed: 13

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
April 2025	Government response to PAC reports 1-4, 6-9	CP 1306
May 2025	Government response to PAC reports 5,10-17	CP 1328
June 2025	Government response to PAC reports 18-22	CP 1341
July 2025	Government response to PAC reports 23-26	CP 1367

Session 2023-24

Committee Recommendations: 271
Recommendations agreed: 252 (93%)
Recommendations disagreed: 19

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
February 2024	Government response to PAC reports 1-6 [80 Session 22-23]	CP 1029
March 2024	Government response to PAC reports 7-11	CP 1057
April 2024	Government response to PAC reports 12-18	CP 1070
May 2024	Government response to PAC reports 19-24	CP 1085
September 2024	Government response to PAC reports 26-29, 31, 33-38	CP 1151
October 2024	Government response to PAC reports 25, 26, 30 and 32	CP 1174

Session 2022-23

Committee Recommendations: 551
Recommendations agreed: 489 (89%)
Recommendations disagreed: 62

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
July 2022	Government response to PAC reports 1, 3 & 10	CP 722
August 2022	Government response to PAC reports 2, 4-8	CP 708
September 2022	Government response to PAC reports 9, 13-16	CP 745
November 2022	Government response to PAC reports 11, 12, 17	CP 755
December 2022	Government response to PAC reports 18-22	CP 774
January 2023	Government response to PAC reports 23-26	CP 781
February 2023	Government response to PAC reports 27-31	CP 802
March 2023	Government response to PAC reports 32-36	CP 828
May 2023	Government response to PAC reports 37-41	CP 845
June 2023	Government response to PAC reports 42-47	CP 847
July 2023	Government response to PAC reports 48-54	CP 902

[1] List of Treasury Minutes responses for Sessions 2010-15 are annexed in the government's response to PAC Report 52

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
August 2023	Government response to PAC reports 55-60	CP 921
September 2023	Government response to PAC reports 62-67	CP 941
November 2023	Government response to PAC reports 68-71	CP 968
January 2024	Government response to PAC reports 72-79	CP 1000
February 2024	Government response to PAC reports 80 [1-6 Session 23-24]	CP 1029

Session 2021-22

Committee Recommendations: 362
Recommendations agreed: 333   (92%)
Recommendations disagreed: 29

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
August 2021	Government response to PAC reports 1-6	CP 510
September 2021	Government response to PAC reports 8-11	CP 520
November 2021	Government response to PAC reports 7,13-16 (and TM2 BBC)	CP 550
December 2021	Government response to PAC reports 12, 17-21	CP 583
January 2022	Government response to PAC reports 22-26	CP 603
February 2022	Government response to PAC reports 27-31	CP 631
April 2022	Government response to PAC reports 32-35	CP 649
April 2022	Government response to PAC reports 36-42	CP 667
July 2022	Government response to PAC reports 49-52	CP 722

Session 2019-21

Committee Recommendations: 233
Recommendations agreed: 208   (89%)
Recommendations disagreed: 25

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
July 2020	Government responses to PAC reports 1-6	CP 270
September 2020	Government responses to PAC reports 7-13	CP 291
November 2020	Government responses to PAC reports 14-17 and 19	CP 316
January 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 18, 20-24	CP 363
February 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 25-29	CP 376
February 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 30-34	CP 389
March 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 35-39	CP 409
April 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 40- 44	CP 420
May 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 45-51	CP 434
June 2021	Government responses to PAC reports 52-56	CP 456

Session 2019

Committee Recommendations: 11
Recommendations agreed: 11   (100%)
Recommendations disagreed: 0

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
January 2020	Government response to PAC report [112-119] 1 and 2	CP 210

Session 2017-19

Committee Recommendations: 747
Recommendations agreed: 675   (90%)
Recommendations disagreed: 72   (10%)

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
December 2017	Government response to PAC report 1	Cm 9549
January 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 2 and 3	Cm 9565
March 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 4-11	Cm 9575
March 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 12-19	Cm 9596
May 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 20-30	Cm 9618
June 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 31-37	Cm 9643
July 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 38-42	Cm 9667
October 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 43-58	Cm 9702
December 2018	Government responses to PAC reports 59-63	Cm 9740
January 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 64-68	CP 18
March 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 69-71	CP 56
April 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 72-77	CP 79
May 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 78-81 and 83-85	CP 97
June 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 82, 86-92	CP 113
July 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 93-94 and 96-98	CP 151
October 2019	Government responses to PAC reports 95, 99-111	CP 176
January 2020	Government response to PAC reports 112-119 [1 and 2]	CP 210

Session 2016-17

Committee Recommendations: 393
Recommendations agreed: 356   (91%)
Recommendations disagreed: 37   (9%)

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
November 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 1-13	Cm 9351
December 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 14-21	Cm 9389
February 2017	Government responses to PAC reports 22-25 and 28	Cm 9413
March 2017	Government responses to PAC reports 26-27 and 29-34	Cm 9429
March 2017	Government responses to PAC reports 35-41	Cm 9433
October 2017	Government responses to PAC reports 42-44 and 46-64	Cm 9505

Session 2015-16

Committee Recommendations: 262
Recommendations agreed: 225   (86%)
Recommendations disagreed: 37   (14%)

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
December 2015	Government responses to PAC reports 1 to 3	Cm 9170
January 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 4 to 8	Cm 9190
March 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 9 to 14	Cm 9220
March 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 15-20	Cm 9237

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
April 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 21-26	Cm 9260
May 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 27-33	Cm 9270
July 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 34-36; 38; and 40-42	Cm 9323
November 2016	Government responses to PAC reports 37 and 39 (part 1)	Cm 9351
December 2016	Government response to PAC report 39 (part 2)	Cm 9389

Treasury Minutes Progress Reports Archive

Treasury Minutes Progress Reports provide government updates towards the implementation of recommendations from the Committee of Public Accounts. These reports are Command Papers laid in Parliament.

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
March 2025	Session 2017-19: updates on 3 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2021-22: updates on 9 PAC reports Session 2022-23: updates on 41 PAC reports Session 2023-24: updates on 36 PAC reports	CP 1284
May 2024	Session 2017-19: updates on 5 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2021-22: updates on 10 PAC reports Session 2022-23: updates on 53 PAC reports Session 2023-24: updates on 6 PAC reports	CP 1102
December 2023	Session 2017-19: updates on 9 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2021-22: updates on 18 PAC reports Session 2022-23: updates on 48 PAC reports	CP 987
June 2023	Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2017-19: updates on 11 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 5 PAC reports Session 2021-22: updates on 29 PAC reports Session 2022-23: updates on 27 PAC reports	CP 847
December 2022	Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2017-19: updates on 16 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 14 PAC reports Session 2021-22: updates on 38 PAC reports Session 2022-23: updates on 8 PAC reports	CP 765
June 2022	Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2017-19: updates on 27 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 34 PAC reports Session 2021-22: updates on 30 PAC reports	CP 691
November 2021	Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2016-17: updates on 3 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 33 PAC reports Session 2019: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 47 PAC reports Session 2021-22: updates on 5 PAC reports	CP 549
May 2021	Session 2010-12: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2016-17: updates on 4 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 47 PAC reports Session 2019: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2019-21: updates on 28 PAC reports	CP 424
November 2020	Session 2010-12: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2016-17: updates on 7 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 73 PAC reports Session 2019: updates on 2 reports	CP 313

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
February 2020	Session 2010-12: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2015-16: updates on 3 PAC reports Session 2016-17: updates on 14 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 71 PAC reports	CP 221
March 2019	Session 2010-12: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 4 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2015-16: updates on 7 PAC reports Session 2016-17: updates on 22 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 46 PAC reports	CP 70
July 2018	Session 2010-12: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 4 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2015-16: updates on 9 PAC reports Session 2016-17: updates on 38 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 17 PAC reports	Cm 9668
January 2018	Session 2010-12: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 5 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 4 PAC reports Session 2015-16: updates on 14 PAC reports Session 2016-17: updates on 52 PAC reports	Cm 9566
October 2017	Session 2010-12: updates on 3 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 7 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 12 PAC reports Session 2015-16: updates on 26 PAC reports Session 2016-17: updates on 39 PAC reports	Cm 9506
January 2017	Session 2010-12: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2013-14: updates on 5 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 7 PAC reports Session 2015-16: updates on 18 PAC reports	Cm 9407
July 2016	Session 2010-12: updates on 6 PAC reports Session 2012-13: updates on 2 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 15 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 22 PAC reports Session 2015-16: updates on 6 PAC reports	Cm 9320
February 2016	Session 2010-12: updates on 8 PAC reports Session 2012-13: updates on 7 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 22 PAC reports Session 2014-15: updates on 27 PAC reports	Cm 9202
March 2015	Session 2010-12: updates on 26 PAC reports Session 2012-13: updates on 17 PAC reports Session 2013-14: updates on 43 PAC reports	Cm 9034
July 2014	Session 2010-12: updates on 60 PAC reports Session 2012-13: updates on 37 PAC reports	Cm 8899
February 2013	Session 2010-12: updates on 31 PAC reports	Cm 8539