



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

AEA Technology Pension Case

**Fifty-Seventh Report of Session
2022–23**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 5 June 2023*

The Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed by the House of Commons to examine “the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit” (Standing Order No. 148).

Current membership

[Dame Meg Hillier MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Hackney South and Shoreditch*) (Chair)

[Olivia Blake MP](#) (*Labour, Sheffield, Hallam*)

[Dan Carden MP](#) (*Labour, Liverpool, Walton*)

[James Cartlidge MP](#) (*Conservative, South Suffolk*)

[Mr Simon Clarke MP](#) (*Conservative, Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland*)

[Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP](#) (*Conservative, The Cotswolds*)

[Ashley Dalton MP](#) (*Labour, West Lancashire*)

[Mr Jonathan Djanogly MP](#) (*Conservative, Huntingdon*)

[Mrs Flick Drummond MP](#) (*Conservative, Meon Valley*)

[Rt Hon Mark Francois MP](#) (*Conservative, Rayleigh and Wickford*)

[Mr Louie French MP](#) (*Conservative, Old Bexley and Sidcup*)

[Peter Grant MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Glenrothes*)

[Anne Marie Morris MP](#) (*Conservative, Newton Abbot*)

[Jill Mortimer MP](#) (*Conservative, Hartlepool*)

[Sarah Olney MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, Richmond Park*)

[Nick Smith MP](#) (*Labour, Blaenau Gwent*)

Powers

Powers of the Committee of Public Accounts are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 148. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2023. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament/>.

Committee reports are published on the [Committee's website](#) and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Lucy Bishop (Committee Operations Officer), Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Media Officer), Ameet Chudasama (Committee Operations Manager), Vanessa Donhowe (Second Clerk), Sarah Heath (Clerk), Rose Leach (Committee Operations Officer).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Committee of Public Accounts, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5776; the Committee's email address is pubaccom@parliament.uk.

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsPAC](#).

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	4
Conclusions and recommendations	5
1 AEA Technology pensions	7
Information provided to pension scheme members	7
The government's response to complaints	9
2 Lessons for pensions and financial advice	11
Routes of appeal for complaints about pensions and advice	11
Government support for complex financial decisions	12
Formal minutes	14
Witnesses	15
Published written evidence	16
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	17

Summary

The former civil servants who transferred their pensions to AEA Technology (AEAT) when it was privatised were badly informed by government at the time, with some losing considerable sums, and have not been treated well in trying to get their complaints heard. The case is another example of the difficulties people face making decisions on complex or long-term financial products such as pensions, and the inadequacy of the support that government provides.

When AEAT was privatised in 1996, its 4,000 employees had the option to keep the pension benefits they had already accrued in the old public sector pension scheme, which is guaranteed by government, or to transfer them to the company's new scheme. Scheme members had reason to believe the new scheme would be similarly protected, and none of the information government provided indicated this was not the case. Nearly 90% of them transferred their pensions and subsequently lost money after the company went into administration in 2012, largely because the compensation paid by the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) does not reflect rises for inflation.

Scheme members have raised complaints with government but have been passed from pillar to post. Nobody in government has taken overall responsibility for the case. There has been no independent review because the relevant ombudsman services have said they cannot investigate the information given to members in 1996, clearly highlighting that there are gaps in the routes of appeal people have for complaints about their pensions.

This is one of several cases we have heard this Parliament highlighting the difficulties people face when making decisions about complex or long-term financial products. The government has a role to help people make good financial decisions, either directly such as in this case, or through regulated financial advice as we have seen in other cases. But once again, we find the government's oversight to have been lacking, and illustrative of a lack of joined-up thinking and strategy regarding pensions. In the current economic climate, it is essential that the government improves the oversight and support it provides to ensure that people can save adequately for retirement.

Introduction

AEA Technology (AEAT) was the commercial arm of the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), and it was privatised in 1996. Around 4,000 employees were transferred to AEAT and joined the company's new pension scheme, and they had several options for the pension benefits they had already accrued in UKAEA, and the movement of these accrued benefits to the new scheme was given impetus by statements by ministers in the House of Commons. This included either keeping the benefits in the UKAEA public sector scheme, which was backed by government, or taking a special offer to transfer their accrued pension to a closed section of the new AEAT scheme. The government made assurances, including in statements by ministers and an information note provided by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to help scheme members make their decisions, that the new scheme would have equivalent benefits to the public sector one. Nearly 90% of eligible members chose to transfer their pension benefits.

In 2012, AEAT went into administration and the pension scheme subsequently entered the Pension Protection Fund (PPF). The compensation the PPF pays is typically lower than the original pension benefits. Since then, scheme members have raised concerns with various parts of government about information provided to employees in 1996 that informed their decision to transfer their pensions, and about the company's administration in 2012.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **The people who transferred their accrued pension benefits to AEA Technology (AEAT) on privatisation, based on incomplete information from government, ended up losing money as a result.** AEAT's pension scheme was not guaranteed by government, but it was not unreasonable for its members to think it was similarly protected. This was particularly due to the assurances that ministers had made at the time, and other privatisations coming with government guarantees. The government should therefore have been clear with members that the new scheme would not have a government guarantee. But the information it provided—including the note provided by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD), which was intended to outline main factors to consider—did not indicate that this was the case. Scheme members were also only given one month to make their decision. Nearly 90% of members chose to transfer their accrued benefits to the new scheme, which turned out in fact to be less secure. Since AEAT went into administration in 2012 and the scheme entered the PPF, scheme members have lost money in real terms, especially now in a time of high inflation. This is because the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) compensation for pension benefits accrued before April 1997—including all the benefits transferred in 1996—are not increased for inflation at all. For benefits accrued from 1997 onwards, increases are capped at 2.5% a year.

Recommendation 1: *The government should review whether the current rules for increasing PPF compensation for inflation are appropriate. This should consider the costs and benefits of extending the rules so that benefits accrued before April 1997 are also increased for inflation and, separately, of raising the cap for annual increases above 2.5%.*

2. **AEAT pension scheme members have been passed from one part of government to another, with no department taking overall responsibility for their complaints.** Scheme members have raised complaints with government since 2012 covering a range of issues that involve several government organisations, including departments and regulators. The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) initially responded in 2013 on behalf of government by providing a factsheet, which summarised the complaints received and the government's position on each. Six months later, after members were dissatisfied with the response, DWP wrote to them again saying it was not responsible for the case and directing them elsewhere. DWP had to subsequently apologise for the fact that its factsheet added to the confusion over who was responsible for what. Responsibilities for pensions are spread across government, with different departments responsible for private and public sector pensions. The lack of joined-up thinking on pensions allowed the issue to fall between the cracks. Government has not commissioned any independent review into the complaints raised by AEAT members, and all of the relevant ombudsman services have said they cannot investigate the information government provided in 1996.

Recommendation 2: *The government should ensure that members' complaints about the AEAT pension case can be independently reviewed, for example by a relevant ombudsman.*

3. **The AEAT case shows that there are gaps in the routes of appeal available for people raising complaints about their pensions.** It is a fundamental right that

people have appropriate and accessible routes of appeal. Ombudsman services provide a way for people to seek independent review of their complaints without the cost of pursuing action through the courts. In this case, ombudsman services such as the Pensions Ombudsman and the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) ruled that they could not examine key complaints raised by AEAT pension scheme members because the complaints fall outside their statutory jurisdictions. For example, PHSO is unable to look into employment matters, including specifically those relating to superannuation and pensions, due to its remit. Legislative amendments would be required to change this. Some aspects may have been within the remit of the Pensions Ombudsman but, because the case was more than 15 years old, the ombudsman would have been unable to award any remedy due to the Limitation Act 1980. Government protocols for retaining data may also often prevent relevant information being maintained for long enough to be reviewed in cases involving pensions. Pensions are long-term financial products, and problems can take many years to become apparent.

Recommendations 3: *The government should review ombudsman arrangements to ensure that all aspects of people’s interactions with their pensions have an adequate route of appeal. We also ask that the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee consider examining whether the current time limits on government for retaining information and ombudsmen awarding redress are fit for purpose when it comes to pensions.*

4. **This is another case of government not giving people enough time or support to make complex financial decisions.** The government has a role to help people make good financial decisions, because of the detriment that bad choices can lead to. In the case of AEAT, it should have done this directly. This was a complex financial decision where members needed clear information on their options and time to seek appropriate financial advice. AEAT scheme members were only given one month to decide between their pension transfer options, and the information they received was insufficient. We have seen similar issues in other areas, including in the private sector where government oversees the regulation of independent financial advice. For example, our inquiry last year into the British Steel Pension Scheme covered the significant financial harm that many scheme members suffered from transferring their pensions after receiving unsuitable advice. We concluded that the regulatory system had left members open to being taken advantage of and that, seven years after the Pension Schemes Act 2015, regulated financial advisers were still not clear on what was expected of them. DWP is developing several initiatives aimed at supporting people to engage with their pensions, such as ‘Pensions Dashboards’ and a recent call for evidence on the support and information people need when accessing their pensions. However, it is not clear when these initiatives might come to fruition and lead to tangible improvements.

Recommendation 4: *The government should write to us within three months to set out what more it will do to support people to make informed financial decisions, including regarding their pensions. This should include what changes it will make in light of DWP’s recent call for evidence, and an update on progress with Pensions Dashboards.*

1 AEA Technology pensions

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) and the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) on the pensions transferred to AEA Technology (AEAT) when it was privatised.¹
2. AEAT was formed as the commercial arm of the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), and it was privatised in 1996. Around 4,000 employees were transferred to AEAT and joined the company's new pension scheme, and they had several options for the pension benefits they had already accrued in their UKAEA pension. This included either keeping the benefits in the UKAEA public sector scheme, which was backed by government, or taking a special offer to transfer their accrued pension to a closed section of the new AEAT scheme. Scheme members were given one month to decide.²
3. The government made assurances, including in statements by ministers and the provisions of the Atomic Energy Authority Act 1995, that the new scheme would have equivalent benefits to the public sector one. Information provided to scheme members, including a note from GAD intended to outline the main factors to take into consideration, said the same thing. The option to transfer pension benefits to the new scheme was taken by nearly 90% of eligible members.³
4. In 2012, AEAT went into administration and the pension scheme subsequently entered the Pension Protection Fund (PPF), which typically pays lower compensation than the original pension benefits. Since then, scheme members have raised concerns with various parts of government about information provided to employees in 1996 that informed their decision to transfer their pensions. This included the fact that none of the information provided to scheme members in 1996 by government or by AEAT said that the new scheme would not be guaranteed by government.⁴

Information provided to pension scheme members

5. When the Atomic Energy Authority Act 1995 was introduced to facilitate the privatisation of AEAT and outline the pension arrangements, it required that the pension benefits in the new AEAT scheme must be "no less favourable" than the previous scheme. Around that time, other privatisations had included government guarantees on their pensions. Ministers also gave assurances in Parliament that pension benefits would be fully protected in the new scheme.⁵ We asked DWP and GAD how the AEAT pension scheme's terms could be no less favourable if, as became clear after 2012, it did not have the protection of a government guarantee. The departments told us their understanding was that the phrase "no less favourable" used in legislation referred only to the pension

1 Comptroller & Auditor General, [Pensions transferred to AEA Technology when it was privatised](#), Session 2022–23, HC 1169, 3 March 2023

2 [ATC0023](#); C&AG's Report, paras 2, 9

3 C&AG's Report, paras 10–11, 1.5

4 C&AG's Report, paras 12–14

5 C&AG's Report, para 1.5, 1.10

scheme benefits, not their security, meaning the 1995 Act did not provide for a public sector guarantee on the scheme. GAD said that it was on this basis that it will have certified that the new pension scheme met the terms of the 1995 Act.⁶

6. None of the information government provided to scheme members told them the government guarantee would be lost if they transferred their accrued benefits into the new pension scheme.⁷ We asked GAD why members were not told this, and whether the note it had provided at the time was therefore misleading. GAD said it did not believe the note was misleading, and that it was intended to assist members with making decisions over their pensions rather than be financial advice which members could depend upon. GAD noted that while the information provided to members did not tell them the new scheme would not have a government guarantee, it had never indicated that the new scheme would still have one either. GAD also argued that some information provided made references to the possibility that the scheme could fail.⁸ However, those same references also stated that pension scheme assets are protected in law.⁹

7. GAD's note suggested that scheme members seek independent financial advice if they were unsure of the most suitable course of action.¹⁰ We asked GAD whether it was realistic for scheme members to get independent financial advice, particularly when GAD is a well-recognised authority on public sector pensions and members were only given one month to make their decision. GAD told us that the range of individual circumstances which members may have been in would have made it impossible for the note to provide appropriate financial advice for each individual. GAD also said that the fact the note mentions that it was not financial advice should have been a sign that this was a matter to take seriously. GAD told us it did not believe the note would have been the only basis on which members made their decision.¹¹ However, nearly 90% of scheme members transferred their benefits. Scheme members have said their decision was heavily influenced by GAD's note, given GAD's role as a professional body independent of the pension scheme, and the stated intention of the note to "outline the main factors to take into consideration in deciding whether or not to transfer". Scheme members have also reported that independent financial advisors who were consulted largely deferred to GAD's note.¹²

8. Since the scheme entered the PPF, members have lost money in real terms each year because the compensation they receive does not include rises for inflation. PPF compensation initially provides members 100% of their pension if they had already reached the scheme's normal pension age, or 90% for those who had not. Compensation on pensions earned after 6 April 1997 increases each year in line with inflation, up to a maximum of 2.5%. However, benefits accrued before 6 April 1997, including all benefits transferred in 1996, are not increased for inflation at all.¹³ Scheme members who wrote to us described the damaging effects of the loss of inflation protection on many years of pension benefits, in one case losing over 40% of their pension in real terms.¹⁴ We asked

6 Q 2

7 C&AG's Report, para 1.10

8 Qq 15, 20, 23–26, 53

9 Q 32; C&AG's Report, para 1.9

10 Q 33; C&AG's Report, para 1.11

11 Qq 52, 54–55

12 Q 54; C&AG's Report, para 1.13

13 Q 79; C&AG's Report, para 2.6

14 [ATC0001](#); [ATC0004](#); [ATC0016](#); [ATC0022](#)

DWP whether the mechanism used to provide restitution for Equitable Life pensioners could be used in this case. DWP was unable to comment on any comparison to Equitable Life, but responded that the PPF was the mechanism government had set up to provide compensation in cases such as AEAT's.¹⁵

The government's response to complaints

9. From 2012 onwards, scheme members raised a series of complaints with multiple government organisations and were dissatisfied with the responses they received. In July 2013, DWP produced a factsheet summarising the complaints government had received and a response to each on behalf of the government. In February 2014, it then sent scheme members a further letter explaining that it was not responsible for the case.¹⁶

10. When we asked it why no part of government had taken responsibility for the issue, DWP described pensions policy as a complex and wide-ranging area which touches on a number of departments. DWP is responsible for private sector pensions rather than public sector pensions, which it told us are the responsibility of HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office.¹⁷ We asked why DWP initially responded to complaints on behalf of government, before saying it was not responsible and directing members to other parts of government such as the then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills or the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO). DWP responded that its factsheet was aimed at answering questions as well as it could by setting out government's position on different issues. However, DWP acknowledged that the factsheet had not been clear about who was responsible for what, and that it had to subsequently apologise for the fact that the factsheet added to the confusion.¹⁸

11. Government has not commissioned any independent review into the complaints raised by AEAT members, and all of the relevant ombudsman services have said they cannot investigate the information government provided in 1996.¹⁹ PHSO told us it is unable to investigate personnel and superannuation matters, and that this would require a legislative change to allow it to look into the issue properly.²⁰ We asked DWP what the Minister of State for Pensions was referring to when he wrote in 2020 that the matter had been thoroughly investigated. DWP told us that the Minister was referring to the large amount of correspondence on the issue and two Westminster Hall debates, rather than any specific investigation or review.²¹

12. We asked how government can ensure that, if a similar thing were to happen again, pensioners making complaints would not be shunted from pillar to post in trying to make appeals and getting no advice or satisfaction. DWP told us that the government's Fair Deal policy introduced in 2013 means that these specific circumstances would be unlikely to happen again, as in cases of privatisation the pensions would now be expected to remain in public sector schemes.²² PHSO said that it would be helpful if government considered ombudsman jurisdictions at the formative stages of policy, to avoid gaps such as these. It

15 Q 79

16 C&AG's Report, para 3.2, 3.6

17 Qq 28, 32

18 Qq 56–57, 67 ; C&AG's Report, para 3.9

19 Q 66; C&AG's Report, para 16

20 Qq 41–43

21 Q 66

22 Qq 31, 68, 80

also told us it had been working with government departments to produce complaints standards, with an aim to move towards consistent practice in how government handles complaints. PHSO told us that a common theme in its investigations is the need for clear communication of change by government so that people can think properly about the options available to them.²³ DWP said it would be careful to ensure responsibilities are set out more clearly in any similar case in future.²⁴

23 Q 74–74

24 Q 67

2 Lessons for pensions and financial advice

Routes of appeal for complaints about pensions and advice

13. It is a fundamental right that people should have appropriate and accessible routes of appeal. Actions by government bodies are in principle subject to judicial review through the courts, but this is an expensive process.²⁵ Ombudsman services provide a way for people to seek independent review of their complaints without the cost of pursuing action through the courts. They are independent statutory organisations set up to make final decisions on complaints that cannot be resolved. Where they make a decision in favour of the complainant, they can typically award or recommend redress.²⁶

14. In the case of the AEAT pension scheme, relevant ombudsman services said they were unable to properly investigate key aspects of scheme members complaints.²⁷ Some aspects of the case could be reviewed. For example, GAD described to us how complaints about work done by individual actuaries who are members of the actuarial profession can be raised through disciplinary and complaints processes of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries and the Financial Reporting Council.²⁸ The Pensions Ombudsman reviewed the approach taken by scheme trustees when the company went into administration in 2012, and PHSO examined DWP's 2013 factsheet for scheme members.²⁹ But none of these organisations has examined the information that government provided in 1996, with the ombudsman services saying it is outside their statutory jurisdictions.³⁰

15. PHSO described to us the gaps in its remit which prevent it from providing pension scheme members with a route to appeal in this case or in similar situations. PHSO explained that its jurisdiction only allows it to investigate GAD on a very specific point about insurance companies during a defined period of time, following an amendment to its legislation that allowed it to investigate the Equitable Life pensions case. Apart from this, Schedule 3 of PHSO's legislation prevents it from looking into personnel and superannuation matters which means it cannot examine information of the type that GAD provided in 1996. An amendment would be needed to the legislation for PHSO to be able to look into the AEAT case or similar issues and have powers to make recommendations to government.³¹

16. The Pensions Ombudsman may also be a suitable body to investigate the administration and management of pension schemes, as it is the expert in government for investigating pensions complaints.³² However, it has no remit over the role of GAD in providing information to scheme members. The Pensions Ombudsman could in theory have examined UKAEA as the outgoing employer, but not AEAT itself as it no longer existed. However, it decided that even if it did investigate information provided by UKAEA, the Limitation Act 1980 means it would not be able to award any remedy as more

25 Qq 47–48

26 C&AG's Report, para 3.8

27 C&AG's Report, para 16

28 Qq 8–9

29 Qq 50, 56; C&AG's Report, para 3.9

30 C&AG's Report, para 3.10

31 Qq 41–45

32 Qq 9, 74

than 15 years had passed between the original transfer of pension benefits and when the complaints were made.³³ Government protocols for retaining data may also often prevent relevant information being maintained for long enough to be reviewed in cases involving pensions. Pensions are long-term financial products, and problems can take many years to become apparent.³⁴ DWP told us that the Pensions Ombudsman is reviewed on a regular basis, and that its next review later this year may be a good opportunity to look at the role of the ombudsman.³⁵

Government support for complex financial decisions

17. The AEAT case is one where government directly provided information intended to help pension scheme members decide what to do with their accrued pension benefits. Members were only given one month to make the decision, and consider that the information provided was insufficient and misleading.³⁶ GAD acknowledged that in the present day, only giving people one month to make a financial decision of this kind would be judged to be inappropriate.³⁷

18. This committee has previously found similar issues with how government provides or oversees support for people making complex or long-term financial decisions, including through the regulation of independent financial advice. Most recently, our inquiry last year into the British Steel pension scheme found that pensions regulators had failed to provide adequate information and support to scheme members to make decisions within tight deadlines, leading to unsuitable financial advice that caused serious financial harm. We concluded that the regulatory system had left pension scheme members open to being manipulated and taken advantage of by unscrupulous financial advisers, and that regulated financial bodies were still not clear on what was expected of them.³⁸

19. This committee's 2016 report on financial services mis-selling similarly concluded that the Financial Conduct Authority was not doing enough to ensure that consumers understand the financial products they are buying. The report found that even the most knowledgeable consumers can find financial services too complex to understand, which emphasises the importance of providing adequate support to consumers making financial decisions.³⁹ While not a financial product, this committee also saw similar themes in its 2018 inquiry into the higher education market. The report found that young people taking out student loans were not properly supported to make decisions on higher education that affected their future careers, in large part due to insufficient and inconsistent careers advice.⁴⁰

20. We asked DWP how government can ensure it gives clearer and more accessible financial advice in similar situations in future. DWP told us that changes to policy on privatisations and transfers of pensions meant that the specific circumstances affecting

33 Qq 50–51; C&AG's Report, paras 3.10–3.11

34 Qq 44, 51

35 Q 74

36 Q 66; C&AG's Report: para 1.7

37 Q 55

38 Committee of Public Accounts, [Investigation into the British Steel Pension Scheme](#), Fourteenth Report of Session 2022–23, HC 251, July 2022, paras 2, 5

39 Q 54; Committee of Public Accounts, [Financial services mis-selling: regulation and redress](#), Forty-first Report of Session 2015–16, HC 847, May 2016, para 4

40 Committee of Public Accounts, [The higher education market](#), Forty-fifth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 693, June 2018, para 2

AEAT pensioners would be unlikely to happen again. More generally, it told us it has worked with the Financial Conduct Authority and the Pensions Regulator to strengthen the protections around financial advice on pensions. DWP said that encouraging engagement with pensions is difficult, and government has been considering how best to nudge people to seek financial guidance or advice, such as through the introduction of a pensions dashboard. DWP wrote to us after our evidence session to explain the ways it is trying to support people to engage with their pensions. This includes new regulations that came into force in 2022 to ensure nobody can transfer their savings through pension freedoms without either receiving Pension Wise guidance or opting out of it. It also includes initiatives under development such as Pensions Dashboards and DWP's recent call for evidence on the support and information people need when accessing their pensions. However, DWP did not indicate when these initiatives might come to fruition and lead to tangible improvements.⁴¹

Formal minutes

Monday 5 June 2023

Members present:

Dame Meg Hillier

Dan Carden

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown

Ashley Dalton

Mr Jonathan Djanogly

Mrs Flick Drummond

Mr Mark Francois

Anne Marie Morris

Nick Smith

AEA Technology Pension Case

Draft Report (*AEA Technology Pension Case*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 20 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fifty-seventh of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Thursday 8 June at 9.30am.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 13 March 2023

Martin Clarke, Government Actuary, Government Actuary's Department (GAD);
Karl Banister, Director of Operations, Legal and Clinical, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman; **Tom Josephs**, Director Private Pensions and Arms-Length Bodies, Department for Work and Pensions

[Q1-80](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

ATC numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Adams, Dr Susan ([ATC0016](#))
- 2 Anonymised ([ATC0010](#))
- 3 Baker, David ([ATC0011](#))
- 4 Bater, Mrs Deborah ([ATC0020](#))
- 5 Bauer, Gerry ([ATC0027](#))
- 6 Brown, Mr Alan ([ATC0006](#))
- 7 Croft, Mr Barry ([ATC0007](#))
- 8 Denham, Dr Mike and Turner, Dr Andrew ([ATC0001](#))
- 9 Hampson, Les ([ATC0017](#))
- 10 Hannan, Matthew ([ATC0029](#))
- 11 Horne, Dr Morag ([ATC0009](#))
- 12 Hutchings, Professor Michael ([ATC0021](#))
- 13 Lee, Mr Richard ([ATC0003](#))
- 14 Lewcock, Mr Andrew ([ATC0014](#))
- 15 Lugg, Mr Nicholas ([ATC0008](#))
- 16 Marshall, Mr Simon ([ATC0018](#))
- 17 Marshall, Mr Simon ([ATC0024](#))
- 18 Moran, Ms Layla (Member of Parliament for Oxford West and Abingdon) ([ATC0025](#))
- 19 Murphy, Steve ([ATC0026](#))
- 20 Playford, Mr Keith ([ATC0004](#))
- 21 Porter, Dr Fiona ([ATC0022](#))
- 22 Prospect Trade Union ([ATC0023](#))
- 23 Raffel, Alistair ([ATC0012](#))
- 24 Roberts, Dr David Nigel ([ATC0015](#))
- 25 Sheldon, Barry ([ATC0002](#))
- 26 Stacey, Mr Kevin ([ATC0019](#))
- 27 Stead, Carolyn ([ATC0013](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Annual Report and Accounts 2020–21	HC 59
2nd	Lessons from implementing IR35 reforms	HC 60
3rd	The future of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors	HC 118
4th	Use of evaluation and modelling in government	HC 254
5th	Local economic growth	HC 252
6th	Department of Health and Social Care 2020–21 Annual Report and Accounts	HC 253
7th	Armoured Vehicles: the Ajax programme	HC 259
8th	Financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England	HC 257
9th	Child Maintenance	HC 255
10th	Restoration and Renewal of Parliament	HC 49
11th	The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme in England	HC 258
12th	Management of PPE contracts	HC 260
13th	Secure training centres and secure schools	HC 30
14th	Investigation into the British Steel Pension Scheme	HC 251
15th	The Police Uplift Programme	HC 261
16th	Managing cross-border travel during the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 29
17th	Government's contracts with Randox Laboratories Ltd	HC 28
18th	Government actions to combat waste crime	HC 33
19th	Regulating after EU Exit	HC 32
20th	Whole of Government Accounts 2019–20	HC 31
21st	Transforming electronic monitoring services	HC 34
22nd	Tackling local air quality breaches	HC 37
23rd	Measuring and reporting public sector greenhouse gas emissions	HC 39
24th	Redevelopment of Defra's animal health infrastructure	HC 42
25th	Regulation of energy suppliers	HC 41
26th	The Department for Work and Pensions' Accounts 2021–22 – Fraud and error in the benefits system	HC 44
27th	Evaluating innovation projects in children's social care	HC 38

Number	Title	Reference
28th	Improving the Accounting Officer Assessment process	HC 43
29th	The Affordable Homes Programme since 2015	HC 684
30th	Developing workforce skills for a strong economy	HC 685
31st	Managing central government property	HC 48
32nd	Grassroots participation in sport and physical activity	HC 46
33rd	HMRC performance in 2021–22	HC 686
34th	The Creation of the UK Infrastructure Bank	HC 45
35th	Introducing Integrated Care Systems	HC 47
36th	The Defence digital strategy	HC 727
37th	Support for vulnerable adolescents	HC 730
38th	Managing NHS backlogs and waiting times in England	HC 729
39th	Excess Votes 2021–22	HC 1132
40th	COVID employment support schemes	HC 810
41st	Driving licence backlogs at the DVLA	HC 735
42nd	The Restart Scheme for long-term unemployed people	HC 733
43rd	Progress combatting fraud	HC 40
44th	The Digital Services Tax	HC 732
45th	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Annual Report and Accounts 2021–22	HC 1254
46th	BBC Digital	HC 736
47th	Investigation into the UK Passport Office	HC 738
48th	MoD Equipment Plan 2022–2032	HC 731
49th	Managing tax compliance following the pandemic	HC 739
50th	Government Shared Services	HC 734
51st	Tackling Defra’s ageing digital services	HC 737
52nd	Restoration & Renewal of the Palace of Westminster – 2023 Recall	HC 1021
53rd	The performance of UK Security Vetting	HC 994
54th	Alcohol treatment services	HC 1001
55th	Education recovery in schools in England	HC 998
56th	Supporting investment into the UK	HC 996
1st Special Report	Sixth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 50
2nd Special Report	Seventh Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 1055

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Low emission cars	HC 186
2nd	BBC strategic financial management	HC 187
3rd	COVID-19: Support for children's education	HC 240
4th	COVID-19: Local government finance	HC 239
5th	COVID-19: Government Support for Charities	HC 250
6th	Public Sector Pensions	HC 289
7th	Adult Social Care Markets	HC 252
8th	COVID 19: Culture Recovery Fund	HC 340
9th	Fraud and Error	HC 253
10th	Overview of the English rail system	HC 170
11th	Local auditor reporting on local government in England	HC 171
12th	COVID 19: Cost Tracker Update	HC 173
13th	Initial lessons from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 175
14th	Windrush Compensation Scheme	HC 174
15th	DWP Employment support	HC 177
16th	Principles of effective regulation	HC 176
17th	High Speed 2: Progress at Summer 2021	HC 329
18th	Government's delivery through arm's-length bodies	HC 181
19th	Protecting consumers from unsafe products	HC 180
20th	Optimising the defence estate	HC 179
21st	School Funding	HC 183
22nd	Improving the performance of major defence equipment contracts	HC 185
23rd	Test and Trace update	HC 182
24th	Crossrail: A progress update	HC 184
25th	The Department for Work and Pensions' Accounts 2020–21 – Fraud and error in the benefits system	HC 633
26th	Lessons from Greensill Capital: accreditation to business support schemes	HC 169
27th	Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme	HC 635
28th	Efficiency in government	HC 636
29th	The National Law Enforcement Data Programme	HC 638
30th	Challenges in implementing digital change	HC 637
31st	Environmental Land Management Scheme	HC 639
32nd	Delivering gigabitcapable broadband	HC 743
33rd	Underpayments of the State Pension	HC 654

Number	Title	Reference
34th	Local Government Finance System: Overview and Challenges	HC 646
35th	The pharmacy early payment and salary advance schemes in the NHS	HC 745
36th	EU Exit: UK Border post transition	HC 746
37th	HMRC Performance in 2020–21	HC 641
38th	COVID-19 cost tracker update	HC 640
39th	DWP Employment Support: Kickstart Scheme	HC 655
40th	Excess votes 2020–21: Serious Fraud Office	HC 1099
41st	Achieving Net Zero: Follow up	HC 642
42nd	Financial sustainability of schools in England	HC 650
43rd	Reducing the backlog in criminal courts	HC 643
44th	NHS backlogs and waiting times in England	HC 747
45th	Progress with trade negotiations	HC 993
46th	Government preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk	HC 952
47th	Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20	HC 994
48th	HMRC's management of tax debt	HC 953
49th	Regulation of private renting	HC 996
50th	Bounce Back Loans Scheme: Follow-up	HC 951
51st	Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system	HC 997
52nd	Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan 2021–31	HC 1164
1st Special Report	Fifth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 222

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
2nd	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
3rd	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
4th	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
5th	University technical colleges	HC 87
6th	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243
7th	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
8th	NHS capital expenditure and financial management	HC 344
9th	Water supply and demand management	HC 378

Number	Title	Reference
10th	Defence capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
11th	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
12th	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379
13th	Whole of Government Response to COVID-19	HC 404
14th	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
15th	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
16th	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 406
17th	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
18th	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408
19th	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549
20th	Tackling the tax gap	HC 650
21st	Government support for UK exporters	HC 679
22nd	Digital transformation in the NHS	HC 680
23rd	Delivering carrier strike	HC 684
24th	Selecting towns for the Towns Fund	HC 651
25th	Asylum accommodation and support transformation programme	HC 683
26th	Department of Work and Pensions Accounts 2019–20	HC 681
27th	Covid-19: Supply of ventilators	HC 685
28th	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management of the Magnox contract	HC 653
29th	Whitehall preparations for EU Exit	HC 682
30th	The production and distribution of cash	HC 654
31st	Starter Homes	HC 88
32nd	Specialist Skills in the civil service	HC 686
33rd	Covid-19: Bounce Back Loan Scheme	HC 687
34th	Covid-19: Support for jobs	HC 920
35th	Improving Broadband	HC 688
36th	HMRC performance 2019–20	HC 690
37th	Whole of Government Accounts 2018–19	HC 655
38th	Managing colleges' financial sustainability	HC 692
39th	Lessons from major projects and programmes	HC 694
40th	Achieving government's long-term environmental goals	HC 927
41st	COVID 19: the free school meals voucher scheme	HC 689
42nd	COVID-19: Government procurement and supply of Personal Protective Equipment	HC 928
43rd	COVID-19: Planning for a vaccine Part 1	HC 930

Number	Title	Reference
44th	Excess Votes 2019–20	HC 1205
45th	Managing flood risk	HC 931
46th	Achieving Net Zero	HC 935
47th	COVID-19: Test, track and trace (part 1)	HC 932
48th	Digital Services at the Border	HC 936
49th	COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough	HC 934
50th	Defence Equipment Plan 2020–2030	HC 693
51st	Managing the expiry of PFI contracts	HC 1114
52nd	Key challenges facing the Ministry of Justice	HC 1190
53rd	Covid 19: supporting the vulnerable during lockdown	HC 938
54th	Improving single living accommodation for service personnel	HC 940
55th	Environmental tax measures	HC 937
56th	Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund	HC 941