



Procedure Committee

Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
London
SW1P 4DF

By email

25 September 2023

Dear Thérèse,

I am writing to you in relation to your departments' performance answering Written Parliamentary Questions. As you know, WPQ performance monitoring forms part of our regular programme of work.

The Committee reviewed WPQ performance for the 2022–23 Session thus far at its meeting on 6 September. The department performed reasonably well in the previous session, being at or just below the cross-Whitehall performance standard of 85% answered on time.

There has, however, been a sharp decline in performance since the start of the session:

2021–22	2022–23
Named Day Questions answered on time: 82%	Named Day Questions answered on time: 59%
Ordinary Questions answered on time: 86%	Ordinary Questions answered on time: 63%

Table: Defra WPQ performance in Session 2022–23

Period	Named Day answered on time	Ordinary answered on time
10 May '22 to 21 Jul '22	130/219 (59%)	275/444 (62%)
2 Sep '22 to 20 Dec '22	159/346 (46%)	303/800 (38%)
6 Jan '23 to 30 March '23	185/256 (72%)	552/627 (88%)

This is without any increase in the average number of WPQs per day; in the most recent period, which has seen the poorest performance, there has been a decrease in the average number of Questions per day.



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We would be grateful if you could investigate this and explain what has caused this decline in performance. We would also be grateful if you could set out the department's plan to improve performance. Our data is taken from the WPQ system; if you believe it is incomplete or inaccurate then please do contact our clerks.

I am copying this letter to the office of the Leader of the House and the Principal Clerk of the Table Office.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Chair of the Procedure Committee