HM Treasury

Treasury Minutes

Government responses to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Eighteenth and the Twentieth to the Twenty-Fourth reports from Session 2019-21

CP 363

January 2021

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Government responses to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Eighteenth and the Twentieth to the Twenty-Fourth reports from Session 2019-21

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

January 2021

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Government responses to the Committee of Public Accounts Session 2019-21

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Eighteenth Report of Session 2019-21

Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, NHS Improvement and Health Education England

NHS Nursing Workforce

Introduction from the Committee

In 2019, the NHS employed around 320,000 nurses in hospital and community services, making up a quarter of all NHS staff, with a further 24,000 employed in GP practices. Around one in ten registered nurses works in social care. In January 2019, the NHS Long Term Plan set out future service commitments and acknowledged the need to increase staff numbers, noting that the biggest shortfalls were in nursing. By the start of 2020, there were nearly 40,000 nursing vacancies in the NHS, a rate of 11%. The Long-Term Plan has set a goal of reducing the nursing vacancy rate to 5% by 2028. A range of national and local NHS bodies are responsible for (nursing) workforce planning as well as supply, which includes training, recruitment and retention of staff. The Department of Health & Social Care (the Department) retains overall policy for the NHS and social care workforces. Health Education England (HEE) oversees NHS workforce planning, education and training, while NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) supports and oversees the performance of NHS trusts, including in relation to workforce retention and other workforce responsibilities. Local NHS trusts, foundation trusts and GPs employ nursing staff, and are responsible for their recruitment, retention and day-today management.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence, on 14 September 2020 from the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, NHS Improvement and Health Education England. The Committee published its report on 23 September 2020. This is the Government response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: *The NHS nursing workforce* – Session 2017-19 (HC 109)
- PAC report: *NHS nursing workforce* – Session 2017-19 (HC 408)

Government responses to the Committee

1: PAC conclusion: ***There has been further delay to the overdue NHS People Plan and there is a risk that the NHS is focusing on short-term pressures at the expense of the necessary long-term strategy*** **conclusion:** ***There has been further delay to the overdue NHS People Plan and there is a risk that the NHS is focusing on short-term pressures at the expense of the necessary long-term strategy.***

1: PAC recommendation*: NHSE&I and HEE must prioritise publication of the substantive long-term workforce plan as soon as possible utilising the NHS's existing long-term funding allocations.*

1.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2021

1.2 The NHS People Plan is an ongoing programme of work - with responsibility resting on all NHS leaders, at all levels – to ensure that the NHS has an increased number of staff, working differently, in a compassionate and inclusive culture in order to deliver the *NHS Long Term Plan.*

1.3 In July 2020, NHSE&I and HEE published '*We are the NHS – People Plan for 2020/21: action for us all*' focused on the national and local steps that need to be taken for the rest of 2020-21 to support staff in the NHS and help manage the pressures of COVID-19 through the winter of 2020-21. This publication marks the next stage in the People Plan programme.

1.4 Work will continue beyond 2020-21 in all the areas set out in this plan.

2: PAC conclusion: ***The Department could not show that its commitment to 50,000 more nurses by 2025 matches the actual need for nurses in the NHS.***

2: PAC recommendation: ***NHSE&I and HEE should update and publish the results of their modelling work on the demand for NHS nurses, including details for regions and specialisms and any impacts arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.***

2.1 The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation.

2.2 The government agrees that the modelling will need to be updated in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. However, it cannot currently commit to when any such modelling will be complete and publishable as it is likely to be subject to substantive ongoing change as the COVID-19 outbreak develops.

2.3 The NHS Long Term Plan and People Plan described the longstanding shortages in nursing, as well as the pressure of continuing demand growth from a growing and ageing population and the expanding frontiers of medical science and innovation.

2.4 The government therefore committed to ensuring a substantial improvement in nurse staffing levels in England's NHS by committing to the delivery of 50,000 more nurses, to tackle challenging vacancy levels seen in the NHS, continuing demand growth, and concerns about areas of longstanding unmet need. Nursing numbers have grown by over 13,000 WTEs over the past year.

3: PAC conclusion: ***We are not convinced that the Department has plans for how the NHS will secure 50,000 more nurses by 2025.***

3: PAC recommendation: ***As part of the published people plan, the Department, NHSE&I and HEE should include a set of costed and detailed action plans for each of the different supply routes for nursing, and how many nurses each route is expected to contribute to the overall nursing workforce. They should consider what national actions, for example on pay, they may need to take to increase recruitment and retention.***

3.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Autumn 2021

3.2 The commitment to 50,000 more nurses is underpinned by a robust costed delivery programme which will be achieved through increased domestic recruitment (including undergraduates, postgraduates, reduced attrition, blended degrees, apprenticeships and nursing associate conversions to registered nurses), increased international recruitment and improved retention.

3.3 The latest UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) data show a 23% increase in placed applicants to nursing and midwifery courses when compared to last year, meaning the department is likely to see more domestically trained nurses complete training in 2023. In contrast, international recruitment has been disrupted, in the short term, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4 The department has responded to these changes by adapting the programme to flex across workstreams, to ensure the maximum supply and the best value for money. The department will publish plans as soon as practicable, taking account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the programme.

3.5 On national pay, a three-year pay and contract reform deal was agreed in 2018 for all Agenda for Change staff increasing the starting salary for newly qualified nurses by over 12%. Outside of multi-year deals the department plan to rely on the independent NHS Pay Review Body. Pay Review Bodies consider evidence provided by multiple stakeholders including NHS trade unions, system partners and government. In making recommendations, Review Bodies consider affordability and what is needed to recruit, retain and motivate the workforce.

4: PAC conclusion: ***The nursing needs of social care remain an unaddressed afterthought for the Department of Health & Social Care.***

4: PAC recommendation: ***The Department should set out its understanding of the nursing requirement across health and social care, and how it expects its actions will support nurse recruitment and retention in social care.***

4.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2021

4.2 Whilst the government agrees with the Committee's recommendation, it does not agree with the conclusion that the nursing needs of social care are an unaddressed afterthought. DHSC, NHSE&I, HEE and nursing partners work closely in planning the nursing workforce, taking account of the number of nursing staff who go into social care, the private sector and other employment, as well as those employed in the NHS.

4.3 Unlike the NHS, the adult social care workforce is not nationally administered – rather it is a diverse sector, with 1.5 million staff employed in around 24,000 employers. The department recognises the need to support the whole workforce and fund programmes and initiatives to support nurse recruitment, retention, development and wellbeing.

4.4 In 2020-21, the department provided £26.3 million funding to *Skills for Care* to deliver strategic social care workforce priorities, including £300,000 to support the Registered Nursing and Registered Nursing Associate workforce, reflecting variation across sectors and disciplines. Activities include tailored advice and guidance on recruitment and retention, alongside specific COVID-19 activity, including supporting nurse deployment through NSHE&I's Bring Back Staff Programme.

4.5 Skills for Care have supported development of the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship and Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship and advocate for their take up by social care employers. The department is committed to increasing Nursing Associates in social care, which will contribute to capacity for core nursing work and free up registered nurses to focus on more complex clinical care.

4.6 The department's *2020 to 2021 Social Care Winter Plan* includes the appointment of a Chief Nurse for Social Care, to provide professional leadership to the workforce and help achieve parity with the NHS nursing workforce.

5: PAC conclusion: ***The removal of the NHS bursary in 2017 signally failed to achieve the Department's ambition to increase nursing student numbers.***

5: PAC recommendation: ***The Department, NHSE&I and HEE should write to the Committee in October 2020 setting out how they expect the new maintenance loan to increase nursing student numbers overall and for different types of student, nursing specialisms and regions. This should also set out how the loan might affect drop-out during courses.***

5.1 The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

5.2 The department, NHSE&I and HEE wrote to the Committee on 11 November 2020 outlining implementation of the Committee's recommendation. Some of the data requested will not be available until the UCAS has published the End of Cycle acceptance data in January 2021. The department will share these data when they become available.

6: PAC conclusion: ***The COVID-19 outbreak presents new challenges, as well as opportunities, for improving the recruitment and retention of nurses in the NHS.***

6a: PAC recommendation: ***We welcome NHSE&I's publication of early lessons from COVID-19. NHSE&I should ensure it also makes available a full and frank assessment of the new challenges to nursing recruitment and retention specifically and how health providers should address them, particularly where this could disadvantage certain groups for example students or minority ethnic staff.***

6b: PAC recommendation: ***As part of this assessment, NHSE&I should take stock of the measures in place to support nursing staff's mental health and wellbeing, to share good practice and identify what else staff may need.***

6.1 The Government agrees with the Committee's recommendations.

Target implementation date: Spring 2021

6.2 It is important that as a health and care system, the department and NHS continue to assess the potential challenges and impact of COVID-19, including on the recruitment and retention of nurses.

6.3 The impact of COVID-19 will be different on each of the supply routes into the profession and therefore it is appropriate for individual assessments to be undertaken. This work is already underway and will continue to form a key part of the ongoing delivery and monitoring of the 50,000-nursing target and more widely through our continuous work on the People Plan Programme.

6.4 During the initial surge of COVID-19, the NHS introduced a comprehensive package of health and wellbeing support for staff, including confidential support via phone/text, specialist bereavement support, free access to mental health and wellbeing apps, and training and support for line managers. Over 400,000 staff have accessed NHSE&I's physical and psychological health and wellbeing offer to support them through the COVID-19 response and a quarter of a million visits have been made to the NHS' *dedicated website people.nhs.uk.*

6.5 As the COVID-19 pandemic develops and 2020-21 winter approaches, the NHS will continue to review and refine its national health and well-being offer with an emphasis on supporting psychological and physical safety. It is working closely with regional colleagues to develop mental health wellbeing hubs in seven regions. These will provide proactive outreach and access to psychological support for those where there is an identified need.

Twentieth Report of Session 2019-21

HM Revenue & Customs

Tackling the tax gap

Introduction from the Committee

HMRC is responsible for administering the UK's tax system. One of its three departmental objectives is to "collect revenues due and bear down on avoidance and evasion". HM Treasury leads on the design of the tax system. It agrees HMRC's revenue and efficiency targets, and levels of funding. HMRC reported record tax revenue of £627.9 billion in 2018–19, an increase of £22.1 billion (3.6%) on 2017–18. Tax administrations rely heavily on taxpayers reporting and paying their taxes in line with the rules. In 2018–19, HMRC received 90% of total tax owed this way. HMRC's most recent estimate of the tax gap, the difference between tax owed and tax that is actually paid, was £31 billion in 2018–19, equivalent to 4.7% of the total tax owed. HMRC estimated that its compliance activities increased tax revenue by £34.1 billion in 2018–19 against a target of £30 billion. The tax gap figures do not include the impact of COVID-19 and the full effects will take some time to become clear. Total compliance yield in the first quarter of 2020–21 (£7.5 billion) has already fallen by 51% compared to the same quarter in 2019–20 (£15.4 billion). HMRC estimates up to £3.5 billion of furlough payments made by 16 August 2020 may have been fraudulent or paid in error.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence, on 7 September 2020 from HM Revenue & Customs and HM Treasury. The Committee published its report on 16 October 2020. This is the Government response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: *Tackling the tax gap* – Session 2019-21 (HC 372)
- PAC report: *Tackling the tax gap* – Session 201921 (HC 650)

Government responses to the Committee

1: PAC conclusion: *HMRC is not sufficiently clear about levels of uncertainty when publicising the tax gap.*

1a: PAC recommendation*: HMRC should state more clearly (for example in its Annual Report or tax gap press notice) that its tax gap figures are highly uncertain and subject to revision.*

1.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: June 2021

1.2 In *Measuring tax gaps 2020 edition*, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC or the department) published ranges around its tax gap estimates for 42% of the tax gap by value. These ranges were mostly provided where the estimates were derived from sample data, for which there is an established method for calculating confidence intervals.

1.3 The department will explore methodologies for calculating and presenting ranges around more of its tax gap statistics, particularly for those elements not based on sample data. In *Measuring tax gaps 2021* edition, which is due for publication in June 2021, the department will publish ranges where they can be calculated, describe where this is not possible, and provide an uncertainty assessment against those areas where there is no method for calculating a meaningful range.

1.4 The department has implemented changes to its *Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20*, including an explanation that the tax gap is an estimate, with sources of uncertainty and potential error, and is subject to revision. The department will include a statement regarding uncertainty and revisions in its press notice accompanying the publication of the 2019-20 tax gap estimates in June 2021.

1b: PAC recommendation: ***HMRC should report the known range and scale of uncertainty alongside its headline estimates of compliance yield for 2019–20 onwards. Where that is not possible, HMRC should explain the elements where it is too difficult to give the range and scale of uncertainty.***

1.5 The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation.

1.6 Compliance yield is an estimate of the impact of activity undertaken by HMRC to collect or protect revenues that would have otherwise been lost to the UK through tax avoidance, evasion and other non-compliance. Compliance activities vary in nature and levels of uncertainty and due to this complexity, the department does not produce a confidence interval for the total value of compliance yield.

1.7 The department reviews the suitability of assumptions used in these methodologies and they are governed by rigorous internal and external assurance processes. This includes Office of Budget Responsibility scrutiny throughout fiscal event processes and annual review by the National Audit Office.

1.8 The department uses different methodologies to estimate the various elements of compliance yield, so establishing a robust and consistent method for estimating a range around the reported compliance yield would be a complex task. Any method would be heavily based on assumptions so would be limited and not necessarily provide any further insight into the department's performance.

2: PAC conclusion: ***HMRC does not know the relative size of tax gaps in the four nations of the UK or across different industries.***

2: PAC recommendation: ***HMRC should include analysis of the tax gaps for each industrial sector in its future publications of the tax gap. In its Treasury Minute response to this report, HMRC should also set out what the benefits and challenges are of doing a similar analysis about the tax gaps in the four nations of the UK.***

2.1 The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation.

2.2 In *Measuring tax gaps 2020 edition*, the department provided tax gap estimates by tax type, taxpayer group and behaviour. As tax gap models are built to estimate the total gaps by tax type, data and modelling techniques do not allow for some forms of subgroup analysis to be achieved comprehensively – such as analysis by industry sector.

2.3 It may be possible to estimate some components of the tax gap by sector, for example for estimates based on data from the random enquiry programme. In this instance, data from multiple years would need to be pooled together to provide sufficient cases for subgroup analysis, which would mean the department could not present a time-series in this analysis. To improve precision for single-year estimates, additional resource would be needed for the random enquiry programme to increase the number of cases. This would also increase the burden on compliant customers who are selected for enquiry and would entail an opportunity cost as an equivalent number of risk-based enquiries would yield more revenue. In the absence of sufficient data, breaking down the total tax gap by industry sector would entail a high level of assumption and would result in extremely uncertain estimates that would not be in keeping with the level of precision offered by the statistics presented elsewhere in the report.

2.4 The department recognises that from time-to-time risks will emerge in specific industries, regions or tax regimes, and the department will seek to provide tax gap estimates as to the magnitude of these where it is feasible. For example, in *Measuring tax gaps*, the oils tax gap for Northern Ireland is disaggregated from the gap for Great Britain, which demonstrates the difference in the size of the illicit diesel market between these regions.

2.5 The department will continue to keep its tax gap estimates under review and will prioritise development where most value can be provided to users of its statistics.

3: PAC conclusion: ***HMRC does not include sophisticated and undesirable tax planning by the wealthy and large businesses in its estimates of the tax gap.***

3a: PAC recommendation*: Parliament needs to know when taxpayers do not follow the spirit of the rules, and how much tax revenue is lost as a result.*

3.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

3.2 The department already provides an estimate of revenue loss that results when taxpayers do not follow the spirit of the law, this is the avoidance tax gap. In the department's *Measuring tax gaps* publication, tax avoidance is defined as "bending the rules of the tax system to gain a tax advantage that Parliament never intended. It often involves contrived, artificial transactions that serve little or no purpose other than to produce a tax advantage. It involves operating within the letter, but not the spirit, of the law." The estimate of the avoidance tax gap represents losses that can be addressed under UK law. The latest estimates of the avoidance tax gap are presented on page 14 of *Measuring tax gaps 2020* edition.

3b: PAC recommendation*: In addition to the tax gap, HMRC should look at ways to measure and report the estimated scale of sophisticated tax planning that is legal but undesirable from a policy perspective by tax type and taxpayer group each year.*

3.3 The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation.

3.4 The department measures the tax gap for taxes and duties which are due under law – the 'compliance gap'. The department's tax gap includes an estimate of revenue loss that results when taxpayers do not follow the spirit of the law, this is the avoidance tax gap.

3.5 There would be issues of feasibility in estimating the value of tax saved through 'undesirable' sophisticated tax planning. There is no generally accepted definition of what tax planning is deemed 'undesirable' from a policy perspective, and the department has no objective way of assessing this.

4: PAC conclusion: ***Although HMRC has yet to see the full effects of COVID-19 on taxpayer compliance, it is already estimating up to £3.5 billion of fraud and error in furlough payments and has seen a significant drop in compliance yield in the first quarter of 2020–21.***

4: PAC recommendation*: HMRC should, alongside its Treasury Minute response, write to us separately explaining in detail how it will change its compliance approach in light of COVID-19.*

4.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation Implemented

4.2 The department regularly publishes how the compliance approach has changed in light of COVID 19 on GOV.UK. This was last updated on 11 November 2020.

4.3 The department plans to publish a full and robust estimate of error and fraud, which will be available in late 2021 at the earliest. This timeline is being reviewed in light of the recently announced extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to the end of March 2021.

5: PAC conclusion: ***It is not clear that Making Tax Digital will help reduce the tax gap or taxpayer costs at a time when individual taxpayers and small businesses are under considerable pressure.***

5: PAC recommendation*: HMRC should, as part of piloting future rounds of MTD, assess whether the administrative burden it is imposing on taxpayers is reasonable and affordable before proceeding with further national roll-outs.*

5.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Summer 2021

5.2 In July 2020, the government published *Building a trusted, modern tax administration system*, a vision for the future of tax administration, designed to improve resilience and effectiveness. This included an expansion of Making Tax Digital (MTD) to the remaining VAT population from April 2022; and to unincorporated businesses and landlords with over £10,000 total business and property income for Income Tax from April 2023.

5.3 MTD helps to reduce avoidable mistakes which cost over £8.5 billion in 2018-19[1]. MTD also enables businesses to see a real time picture of their finances and facilitates increased productivity. Businesses using MTD VAT software are already benefiting from improved working practices as well as wider productivity gains and reductions in input errors[2]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many have turned to digital tools and an extension of MTD aims to meet the needs of the increasingly digitally engaged business population.

5.4 Costs will vary from business to business, being dependent on factors such as business size, complexity, degree of digital capability and the cost and functionality of the software used. Free software products may suit businesses with the simplest affairs; many businesses will be able to achieve MTD compliance at minimal cost.

5.5 Since the July 2020 announcement, HMRC has undertaken significant engagement with business and accountancy representative bodies and software developers in order to further understand the associated costs of future MTD mandation. HMRC continues to work with stakeholders to ensure estimates are accurate and will do all it can to minimise costs. Revised estimates will be published in due course.

6: PAC conclusion: *HMRC's plans to tackle the part of the tax gap attributable to small businesses are made more difficult by the need to help those businesses survive the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

6: PAC recommendation*: HMRC should write to us within one month of this report explaining how it plans to balance its efforts to tackle the tax gap in small businesses with the support that those businesses will need to survive the impact of COVID-19.*

6.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation Implemented

6.2 As requested, the department *wrote to the Committee* to this effect on 10 November 2020. The department recognises that COVID-19 is having a huge effect on small businesses, leaving a significant number in an extremely difficult position. The department committed to supporting viable businesses to cope with the impact of the pandemic, both by making it easy for them to receive key COVID-19 business support

[1] MTD for VAT - Evaluating Making Tax Digital's impact on record-keeping behaviour and scope for error among small businesses- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/871582/HMRC_research_report_576_-_MTD_and_small_business_record_keeping.pdf

[2] *Measuring tax gaps 2020 edition -* https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907122/Measuring_tax_gaps_2020_edition.pdf

grants to which they are entitled and by administering the tax system in a way that takes account of their ability to meet their obligations to file their returns and pay their tax bills on time. The department have made general adaptations to tax administration and in addition have responded in a tailored way to individual businesses' needs.

6.3 It remains essential that businesses comply with their tax obligations if they can, and that where a business is able to comply but fails to do so, the department takes the right action to secure the revenues that pay for essential public services and ensure a level playing field for those businesses that do meet their obligations.

6.4 In order to provide transparency and reassurance to small businesses, the department has published the approach to all of this in an HMRC issue briefing: *COVID-19: how HMRC will continue to support customers and the economy*.

Twenty-First Report of Session 2019-21

The Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance

Government Support for UK Exporters

Introduction from the Committee

In 2019, the UK exported £701.2 billion of goods and services to overseas countries. The UK is currently the sixth largest exporter in the world, behind China, the United States, Germany, Japan and France. The Department for International Trade (the Department), established in 2016, is responsible for delivering the UK's independent trade policy. It promotes exports by connecting UK businesses with overseas buyers and by working with foreign governments to resolve trade barriers. The Department works with UK Export Finance (UKEF), the UK's official export credit agency. UKEF, which is a separate ministerial government department, helps UK companies to win contracts by providing finance and insurance to exporters and their overseas buyers.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence, on 14 September 2020 from the Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance. The Committee published its report on 28 October 2020. This is the Government response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: *Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance: Support for exports* – Session 2019-21 (HC 574)
- PAC report: *Government Support for UK Exporters* – Session 2019-21 (HC 679)

Government responses to the Committee

1: PAC conclusion: *A lack of strategic alignment between the Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance means that opportunities for exports may have been* missed.

1: PAC recommendation*: By the end of 2020, the Department and UKEF should agree how they will work effectively together to ensure consistency in strategic outcomes and objectives, and formally set these arrangements out in a signed Memorandum of Understanding, reporting publicly on progress, for example in their annual reports.*

1.1 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: April 2021

1.2 The Department for International Trade (the department) and UK Export Finance (UKEF) already work closely to progress the government's trade agenda and welcomed the Federation of Small Businesses' (FSB) appreciation for their actions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. There are ways in which this relationship can be further improved, and work was already underway on a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

1.3 The department and UKEF are developing a strategic MoU which will set out the standards and practices expected of both organisations in working together, across both strategic and operational issues. It will formalise much of what already happens in terms of collaboration, whilst identifying areas for improvement, in line with the Committee's findings.

1.4 Work on developing the MoU is already underway. However, additional time is required to ensure the MoU fully reflects key strategic outcomes and objectives. It is therefore expected to be signed before the end of the 2020-21 financial year after which the details will be shared with the Committee.

1.5 The Committee's recommendation for an annual progress reporting mechanism is noted, and a proposal for managing this process will be developed as part of the MoU.

2: PAC conclusion: ***The Department for International Trade and UK Export Finance are not yet doing enough to identify and help the businesses of tomorrow to export.***

2a: PAC recommendation*: The Department and UKEF should develop a more integrated approach for working with other government departments, in particular with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and UK Research & Innovation, in order to build the UK's industrial capability and prioritise investment in sectors of growing importance and export opportunity, such as renewable energy.*

2.1 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

2.2 The department and UKEF work closely with Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and across government to ensure domestic policies support export and investment ambitions across key growth sectors, such as strengthening of the UK renewable energy export pipeline.

2.3 To develop an integrated approach, in conjunction with BEIS, the department has developed a framework that takes a strategic view across the pathway from innovation and investment, through commercialisation and deployment, to export. The department is now working with BEIS to apply this framework to critical net zero technologies such as hydrogen, floating offshore wind and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). The approach will build on the work of the *Energy Innovation Needs Assessments* (EINAs) to integrate export potential into domestic policy making at the earliest stage for clean growth sectors, particularly those aligning to the *Ten Point Plan* announced by the Prime Minister on 18 November 2020, such as the forthcoming hydrogen strategy.

2.4 At this stage there are no plans to partner on UK Research and Innovation's studies. However, the department and UKEF will continue to look for opportunities.

2.5 The department is committed to boosting sectors of key importance through its ambitious and comprehensive Free Trade Agreements with key partners including Australia, New Zealand and the USA. DIT is seeking to future proof the agreements in line with the government's ambition on climate and in anticipation of rapid technological developments, such as artificial intelligence. All departmental trade policy objectives are being developed through close ongoing engagement with colleagues at BEIS.

2b: PAC recommendation*: The Department should also consider other ways of supporting potential exporters and companies exporting for the first time, for example, by encouraging more peer support to companies or by considering the merits of rolling out initiatives such as the Europe trade hub to the rest of the world. The Department and UKEF should report back to us by September 2021 on the arrangements they have put in place.*

2.6 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

2.7 The department has built a community of more than 1,100 Export Advocates and 400 Regional Export Champions in England who volunteer to encourage and assist businesses to export. Export Champions provide informal exporting advice, participate in events as speakers or panel members, offer business insights to help inform policy making, act as role models for marketing campaigns and participate in high-level visits.

2.8 The department welcomes the FSB and Committee's assessment of the Europe Trade Hub. This 'Hub Model' is now being evaluated against the department's value for money framework. Once this has been completed, the department will examine whether it is suitable to expand to other markets.

2.9 Alongside considering other ways of supporting potential exporters and companies, the department is analysing how it can deliver the right type of support to exporters at the right stage in their journey. This approach will enable the department to understand better the needs of SMEs and deliver at a greater scale. The department proposes to update the committee by correspondence regarding progress in 2021-22.

3: PAC conclusion: ***The Department for International Trade's contribution to export performance is unclear because of a lack of robust metrics.***

3: PAC recommendation*: By the end of 2020, the Department should set out longer-term outcome measures that enable us, Parliament and the taxpayer to hold it to account for its impact on exports, and which capture the full range of its activities to support exports. Measures should include supporting exports, such as removing market access barriers, including better international comparators, the impact of free trade agreements and the number of exporters. DIT's performance against all measures, existing and new, should be reported transparently.*

3.1 The government disagrees with this recommendation.

3.2 The department already publishes metrics which cover its activities supporting exports, as part of a balanced suite of indicators. Metrics have been identified or are under development for all priority outcomes set out in the 2020 Spending Review:

- Secure world-class free trade agreements and reduce market access barriers, ensuring that consumers and businesses can benefit from both
- Deliver economic growth to all the nations and regions of the UK through attracting and retaining inward investment
- Support UK business to take full advantage of trade opportunities, including those arising from delivering FTAs, facilitating UK exports
- Champion the rules-based international trading system and operate the UK's new trading system, including protecting UK businesses from unfair trade practices.

3.3 The volume of export performance measures has grown in the past year, and DIT publishes information relating to many of the recommended measures. For example, summary data on the department's work to reduce and remove market access barriers were included in its *2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts* and the impact assessment has been published for the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The department has also committed to publish impact assessments of all future FTAs and will monitor their implementation through measures such as the utilisation rate of trade preferences.

3.4 The department is committed to developing a better understanding of its impact and contribution to export performance, using long-term measures and international comparators where relevant. DIT is developing a theory of change for the whole department, which demonstrates how trade agreements, trade policy and trade promotion activities contribute to export performance. These underpin DIT's framework, which includes a range of measures for each objective to provide a balanced scorecard, accounting for known limitations in particular metrics and links our measures to the department's activities, outputs and outcomes. The department will not commit to publish any specific additional metrics until it is sure that the metric in question is a robust, fair and accurate presentation of the department's contribution to export performance.

4: PAC conclusion: ***The Department for International Trade is not doing enough to address the challenges that small businesses face when they export.***

4a: PAC recommendation*: DIT should take urgent action to ensure that more small businesses become exporters. Specifically, it should:*

- ***Improve the support it offers to smaller businesses. It should improve the quality of the International Trade Adviser service and explore the merits of introducing accreditation, ensure that its digital services meet the needs of smaller businesses, ensure all SMEs are aware of how they can report trade barriers, and, if resources allow, increase the financial support available for SMEs attending trade shows. There should be a comprehensive SME chapter in every free trade deal negotiated.***

4.1 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

4.2 The department will continue to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) export including through the recently launched £38 million Internationalisation Fund and through seeking to include SME chapters in all free trade agreements (FTAs).

4.3 With regard to the Committee's points, subject to business planning, the department will:

- explore the merits of accreditation as part of improvements to the International Trade Adviser service. DIT has recently launched a new small business Export Academy in the Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine and South West which will deliver a series of activities to build the exporting capabilities of smaller companies.
- continue to build upon DIT's digital offer for both businesses new to exporting and more experienced traders. The continued iteration of services will increase the quality of support the department provides at scale, providing relevant content, data, and digital services to users. The department has also released *'Check how to export goods'* which provides UK goods exporters with product and country-specific information such as duties and customs procedures for most countries.
- continue to promote the 'report a trade barrier' service amongst SMEs and wider industry so that businesses of all sizes are able to report barriers that are preventing them from trading. We intend to make information available shortly on gov.uk about existing and resolved barriers to trading and investing abroad. This will support UK businesses to check trade barriers which may affect them, and to see where barriers have been resolved to inform their understanding of new potential opportunities.

4b: PAC Recommendation: *DIT should take urgent action to ensure that more small businesses become exporters. Specifically, it should:*

- ***Conduct a comprehensive exercise to determine why some small businesses export and some do not. This should include targeted research to better understand what these businesses need and the barriers to exporting, and more comprehensive international comparisons to learn from other countries that support small businesses well, such as Denmark.***

4.4 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: Summer 2021

4.5 The department will prioritise monitoring and evaluating our export services and will carry out further work to understand why some businesses, including small businesses, export, and some do not.

4.6 DIT currently runs the annual *National Survey of Registered Businesses (NSRB),* a survey of UK businesses' exporting behaviour, attitudes and needs. The survey provides a national picture of the barriers to exporting experienced by businesses of different sizes. The department used this information in the development of the government's *2018 Export Strategy* and will continue to use it to inform our export support.

4.7 Similarly, the department frequently examines partner countries' export support to assess how to improve its offer to business. For example, DIT has learned from Denmark's trade promotion agency such as their prospecting approach to generate new leads, and their proportionate approach to supporting businesses. The department will build on this work in the response to the Committee.

4c: PAC Recommendation: *DIT should take urgent action to ensure that more small businesses become exporters. Specifically, it should:*

- ***Measure the effectiveness of its work to build export capacity in SMEs and set clearer milestones for measuring its progress in supporting SMEs. For example, it should set out how it will increase the number of UK businesses that currently export and aim to increase the proportion of companies who start exporting or increase exports as a result of going to trade fairs.***

4.8 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

4.9 The department uses a mix of indicators to measure effectiveness by monitoring key national level metrics, along with internal management information as part of its monitoring and evaluation of specific products and services (including the Tradeshow Access Programme). This is also supported by econometrics comparing outcomes for businesses that have received its service and those that have not. The department monitors the number and percentage of registered businesses in Great Britain that export as measured by the ONS on a yearly basis and triangulate with the findings from the National Survey of Registered Businesses also on a yearly basis. DIT also runs an annual Export Client Survey, which monitors customers' perceptions of the quality of support and advice provided by the department after three months and measures the reported impact of DIT's services after nine months. Results are published on a yearly basis. To measure economic impact, the department uses econometric techniques comparing users and non-users of its services and their outcomes overtime.

4.10 To support businesses and address the Committee's recommendation, the department will develop its approach and provide support for businesses in a proportionate way, with services tailored to their specific needs and the department's assessment of their potential contribution to exports and the UK economy.

5: PAC conclusion: ***UK Export Finance directly supported only 199 customers in total in 2019–20, failing to meet its own target of 500.***

5a: PAC recommendation***: UKEF should report back to us in writing by September 2021 with an update on progress and action is has taken to: Proactively target the green technology and renewable energy market.***

5.1 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

5.2 In the UK and overseas, UKEF plans to expand its network of 'clean and green' Export Finance Managers (domestic) and International Export Finance Executives (overseas) with the aim of finding and securing further opportunities for UK exports in clean growth.

5.3 UKEF is increasing its marketing and communications targeted at the clean growth sector to raise awareness and increase the uptake of UKEF support among SMEs and larger companies' supply chains. As a part of this, UKEF will promote opportunities to supply the international clean growth projects it supports, thereby building export capability. UKEF will engage more widely with trade bodies and other potential partners in the sector to support this activity.

5.4 At Budget 2020, an additional £2 billion was allocated to UKEF's direct lending facility specifically to support clean growth projects. UKEF also revised its policy on UK content in 2019, allowing a more flexible approach, including the ability to take into account UK content within phases of a project that do not require finance. UKEF is now better placed to support UK businesses providing design and engineering or operation and maintenance services in projects where the capital goods are sourced from other markets.

5b: PAC recommendation***: UKEF should report back to us in writing by September 2021 with an update on progress and action is has taken to Increase the number of SMEs it is supporting in a wider range of countries through take up of its new General Export Facility, and consider using UKEF recently approved marketing budget to do that.***

5.5 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

5.6 UKEF launched the General Export Facility (GEF) in December 2020 following conclusion of negotiations with the five banks currently operating the delegated schemes. By providing a product that better fits with how banks lend to SMEs, the GEF may lead to a step change in the number of SMEs who receive UKEF support.

5.7 UKEF has refreshed its “Exporters Edge” marketing campaign, which raises awareness of UKEF among exporting SMEs. Promoting the uptake of GEF and other SME-focused products will be a central part of the campaign, working with UK banks and other industry partners.

5.8 At the beginning of 2020, UKEF adjusted the terms of its agreement with the banks to provide delegated authority for its trade finance products, streamlining delivery and making it easier for the banks to lend.

5.9 On the buyer finance side, UKEF has set up a new team to look at smaller transactions. This team is focused on improving these products to make the terms more straightforward, in turn opening up funding from new lenders that are better placed to operate in the SME space.

5c: PAC recommendation*: UKEF should report back to us in writing by September 2021 with an update on progress and action is has taken to Support exporters during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to the expansion of the scope of its Export Insurance Policy to a wider number of markets.*

5.10 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

5.11 UKEF has utilised flexibilities in the state aid regime implemented for the pandemic and will continue to broaden its support.

5.12 UKEF actively contributed to the wider *Trade Credit Reinsurance* schemes established by government and this also covers exporting businesses.

5.13 The introduction of UKEF’s *Export Development Guarantee* (EDG) has proved invaluable to large firms looking for additional liquidity during the COVID-19 pandemic and GEF has the potential to be similarly useful to exporting SMEs.

5.14 *Export Insurance Policy* applications have more than doubled in 2020 and UKEF has supported almost twice as many new customers through these products in 2020 as it did in 2019 (86% increase).

5d: PAC recommendation*: UKEF should report back to us in writing by September 2021 with an update on progress and action is has taken to develop and implement a customer satisfaction survey. UKEF should consider the merits of developing its own survey as well as working with the Department to identify opportunities to include questions on export finance in the Department’s survey. It should commit to sharing publicly more of the results.*

5.15 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: April 2021

5.16 UKEF will be piloting new customer satisfaction surveys in 2020-21 with a view to adopting them as a long-term feedback tool from 1 April 2021 and will look to report on the results in its Annual Report and Accounts. It already conducts an annual survey of its target audience (since 2016) to provide insight on awareness and understanding of UKEF and the export finance requirements of UK exporters.

5.17 The DIT National Survey of Registered Businesses’ exporting behaviours, attitudes and needs already includes questions that provide insight to UKEF on the financial concerns of UK businesses who are considering exporting. To support this, UKEF has now set up a dedicated Market Research and Analysis Group to place greater focus on research, data and analytics to inform service improvement, product development and this should make it easier to establish new forms of research such as a satisfaction survey.

6: PAC conclusion: ***It is more difficult for businesses who are not customers of five of the largest commercial banks to access export finance.***

6: PAC recommendation*: To make it simpler for smaller businesses to apply for export finance, UKEF should accelerate its expansion of the number of banks that can apply for UKEF's products using the quicker online process. In its Treasury Minute response, we expect UKEF to confirm by when it expects to achieve this.*

6.1 The government agrees with this recommendation.

Target implementation date: September 2021

6.2 Work is already underway to expand the number of banks operating under the delegated approach, and as soon as the General Export Facility (GEF) product is available, we will work to sign up new institutions as quickly as possible. While we are open to applications from any bank to participate in the GEF scheme, we have begun engaging with a number of banks that currently use trade finance schemes on a non-delegated basis. Our first new partners should be in place shortly, and we will continue to add to them on an ongoing basis.

6.3 UKEF is also reaching out to other funders, including FinTechs, to understand how its products could be adapted to work for their exporting customers. These discussions are all at an early stage and we expect it to take several months to resolve documentation and for partners to take the UKEF scheme through their own governance.

Twenty-Second Report of Session 2019-20

Department of Health and Social Care and NHSX

Digital transformation in the NHS

Introduction from the Committee

Improving digital services is at the heart of delivering the NHS Long-Term Plan but remains a huge challenge to deliver. The Department and NHS bodies still have a long way to go to deal with the proliferation of legacy IT systems across the health and care system and move on from their track record of failed IT programmes. The Department did not achieve a 'paperless NHS' by 2018, and this target has now been watered-down and moved back by six years.

We are far from convinced that the Department and NHS bodies have learned the lessons from previous IT programmes. Without this, they risk repeating the mistakes that led to those programmes failing to deliver and taxpayers' money being wasted. Successful delivery of the digital ambition for the NHS will require effective governance, realistic and detailed plans, sufficient investment nationally and locally, and clear accountability. It is six years since its 2014 digital strategy with the headline target to achieve a 'paperless NHS' and none of these vital components to make digitally-enabled care mainstream across the NHS are in place. Despite publishing its Vision for digital, data and technology in 2018, the Department still does not have an implementation plan for how this will be delivered in practice. Current governance and accountability arrangements are both overly complex and insufficiently defined. Local trusts are at varying levels of digital maturity and some are struggling financially. Unless national bodies do more to support trusts and local health and care systems in difficulty, then their progress in digital transformation is at risk of diverging further.

The Department and NHS bodies face major challenges dealing with the current COVID-19 pandemic, and we commend the work of staff across these organisations. This has also shown the potential for organisations to deploy digital solutions and adapt to new technologies. We look to the Department and NHS bodies to make best use of this learning in their digital programmes.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence, on Thursday 17 September 2020 from the Department of Health and Social Care. The Committee published its report on 6 November 2020. This is the Government response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: *Digital transformation in the NHS* – Session 2017-19 (HC 317)
- PAC report: *Digital transformation in the NHS* – Session 2017-19 (HC 680)

Government responses to the Committee

1: PAC conclusion: ***The Department and National Health Service have a poor track record for transforming NHS IT and have made insufficient progress against national ambitions.***

1: PAC recommendation*: The Department should set realistic targets for transforming digital services and sustaining the gains made during the COVID-19 pandemic, and publish details of these by March 2021.*
This should include a mix of longer-term and intermediate targets for tracking progress for both nationally-led programmes and those delivered at local health and care system level.

1.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: March 2021

1.2. NHSX is a joint unit bringing together teams from the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England and NHS Improvement to drive the digital transformation of care, reporting directly to the

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Chief Executive of NHS England and NHS Improvement.

1.3 NHSX's delivery plan will be published by March 2021. It will build on the accelerated progress in digital transformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the *NHS Long Term Plan* and the *Tech Plan* vision, to set out our milestones for digitising services to a core level of maturity within budgets, connecting them to support integration, and thereby enable service transformation.

1.4 NHSX recognise that progress has been fragmented and has varied in speed across care settings and providers. NHSX will use our plan to drive change at a local level, through a combination of setting expectations and standards for digitisation, and establishing what good looks like, and clarifying match funding principles (see also the response to recommendations 5 and 6 below on these programmes) and maintaining a proportionate oversight of local progress and digital maturity. The Tech Plan vision itself will be subject to review to reflect progress and learning through the COVID-19 emergency.

2: PAC conclusion: ***The Department's failure to ensure clear and transparent governance arrangements for digital transformation is putting the successful delivery of the Vision for digital, data and technology at risk.***

2a: PAC recommendation***: To improve clarity and transparency, the Department should:***
- ***Write to the Committee by spring 2021 clearly setting out the responsibilities for digital transformation of each national organisation and communicate this to local organisations.***

2.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: March 2021

2.2 To support transparency and understanding of the role of NHSX, it will publish an account describing how NHSX will support the digital transformation of the health and care system, setting out system governance and accountabilities, and the role of national organisations. This will be shared widely with local organisations and published on the NHSX website.

2b: PAC recommendation***:***
- ***Publish an annual report of NHSX's activity and the spending it controls and/or directs.***

2.3 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: June 2021

2.4 NHSX will provide an annual report on its activity for the period 2020-21 and each year thereafter, updating on its progress and spending on digital transformation in the system. As NHSX is not a legal entity, NHSX will also feature as part of the annual reports of NHS England, NHS Improvement and the Department of Health and Social Care.

3: PAC conclusion: ***Without a proper implementation plan, the Department and NHSX cannot be sure that the £8.1 billion of taxpayers' money being invested in the digital transformation programme will deliver value for money.***

3: PAC recommendation***: NHSX should, as a matter of urgency, publish an implementation plan for meeting its ambitions for transforming digital services. This should:***
- ***Clearly set out actions required to transform digital services and how it will assess progress in enabling organisations to interact effectively to improve care.***
- ***Include the incentives and levers that improve the application of national standards for interoperability within and between local NHS organisations.***
- ***Identify and prioritise those areas where the digitisation of services will add the greatest value to patients and clinicians.***

3.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: March 2021

3.2 NHSX will publish a delivery plan by March 2021 which sets out current activities to deliver digital transformation, and future actions. The plan will have a particular focus on measurement of progress at a local level, ensuring there is visibility to be able to evaluate how locally adopted software systems comply with national standards or what plans are underway to secure compliance.

3.3 NHSX is undertaking a review of the incentives and barriers to digital transformation, including the adoption of standards, created by the current financial architecture for the NHS. This will feed recommendations into 2021-22 policies, as well as for future years.

4: PAC conclusion: ***To deliver the digital Vision, NHS organisations' IT systems must be interoperable.***

4: PAC recommendation***: NHSX should urgently bring forward the remaining standards in order to provide clarity for trusts and suppliers, including providing trusts with guidance on the potential use of the cloud to enable digital image sharing.***

4.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Summer 2021

4.2 NHSX agrees fully that it should use standards to provide clarity for providers. Its programme is not limited to the ten standards published, which are now defined, but covers standardisation work which supports interoperability, and is ongoing, and open-ended, as NHSX embed, and maintain standards. The approach is to drive progress through compliance and improvement, using levers and incentives including procurement frameworks, standard contracts and guidance. A standards catalogue will provide clarity and drive adoption through a consistent process, connecting the levers and incentives to standardisation work.

4.3 NHSX is exploring with the NHS England and Improvement National Imaging Board, how the Cloud can support digital imaging networks, as part of delivery of the National Medical Imaging Platform. The national strategy for imaging networks established in 2019 proposes the creation of formal imaging networks in two phases: phase 1 creating 24 networks by 2022, moving towards consolidation of those 24 into 18 imaging networks in phase 2 by 2023, and these will be supported with appropriate guidance on the use of the Cloud within agreed budgets.

5: PAC conclusion: ***We are concerned that patients and local health and care systems could be left behind if some less digitally-advanced trusts are unable to invest in the technology and skills they need to catch-up.***

5: PAC recommendation***: As part of the implementation plan, NHSX should work with NHS England & Improvement and NHS Digital to develop a more-focused package for those local health and care systems most in need of support for planning, funding and implementation, and with a clear basis for priority action.***

5.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Summer 2021

5.2 NHSX is developing options for different types of support to providers in 2021 to help them access key skills, knowledge and experience, such as project and financial management support, benefits realisation capabilities, change management, data migration and integration experience, and clinical adoption and deployment skills. This is particularly important for trusts with low digital maturity and minimal readiness. NHSX will look for packages of support that will ensure maximum effectiveness and are value for money, including freeing up staff time and operational efficiency, within budgets.

5.3. Providers will also benefit from our ongoing ‘What Good Looks Like’ programme of work which includes a capability framework, describing the expectations of digitally-enabled health and care providers and systems, a related maturity model that helps organisations and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) understand their current status, gaps and investment priorities; and a planning framework for delivering digital investment, along with other governance and procurement support. It will help Trusts and other providers to understand the characteristics of high quality and effective digital services, and the maturity model will provide a baseline which will allow providers to see where they are, and where they want to be.

6: PAC conclusion: ***The Department and NHSX lack the information they and local organisations need on which of the options for achieving digital transformation in local health and care systems achieves the best value for money.***

6: PAC recommendation*: NHSX should develop and publish a cost-benefit analysis of the various approaches available to local organisations when implementing their system solutions. It should also use the information to assess the realism of the £3 billion contribution from the NHS trust sector toward the overall budget of £8.1 billion.*

6.1 The government agrees with the Committee’s recommendation.

Target implementation date: Summer 2021

6.2 NHSX will publish the minimum digital capability expected within organisations by March 2021 (through the ‘What Good Looks Like’ exercise) and support systems and providers to baseline themselves against this by September 2021. This baselining exercise will help organisations establish the residual digital capabilities that they need to invest in to achieve the minimum expected capability.

6.3 NHSX will also publish analysis to support organisations considering which of the supported options to choose to achieve these capabilities of a) enterprise-wide Electronic Patient Record or b) best of breed approach by June 2021.

6.4 These two things together will enable: individual organisations to determine the residual investment needed, and the forecast cost and benefits, to achieve the minimum expected capability; and NHSX to aggregate the position to validate current estimates the total amount of central and local investment required.

Twenty-Third Report of Session 2019-21

Ministry of Defence

Delivering Carrier Strike

Introduction from the Committee

Carrier Strike provides the ability to undertake a range of military tasks and is central to the government's ambition to be able to respond at short notice to conflicts and humanitarian relief efforts anywhere in the world. It is based around two Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, Lightning II jets and a new radar system. The deployment of a carrier strike group will involve a significant proportion of the Navy's fleet, including destroyers and frigates, and is dependent on auxiliary ships to support and resupply the carriers. As at October 2020, the Ministry of Defence (the Department) had built two new aircraft carriers, brought 18 Lightning II jets into service and completed the infrastructure works to berth the carriers in Portsmouth and operate the jets from RAF Marham. It expects to declare initial operating capability for Carrier Strike in December 2020 and will undertake its first operational deployment in 2021 with the US Marine Corps. The Department will then work towards full operating capability by 2023—at which point it will be able to support two UK Lightning squadrons (up to 24 jets) from one of the carriers. The Department's longer-term aim is that, by 2026, the carriers can undertake a wide range of air operations and support amphibious operations worldwide.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence, on 28 September 2020 from the Ministry of Defence. The Committee published its report on 13 November 2020. This is the Government response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: *Carrier Strike - preparing for deployment* - Session 2019-2021 (HC 374)
- PAC report: *Delivering Carrier Strike* - Session 2019 -21 (HC 684)

Government responses to the Committee

1: PAC conclusion: *Building two aircraft carriers is a significant achievement and it is vital the Department applies the lessons learned from this project across its wider defence programme.*

1: PAC recommendation*: The Department should review fully the lessons learned on the Carriers project and assess whether other future contracts would benefit from similar contractual models. The Department should also write to the Committee within one month of publication of this report setting out how it is working to improve its relationships with contractors.*

1.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

1.2 In advance of completion of the formal Aircraft Carrier Alliance Lessons for Evaluation report by Dr Jinks at the end of 2020, key lessons from the Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) programme have been taken forward into future projects. The DREADNOUGHT project benefits from an Alliance arrangement between the department, BAE Systems and Rolls Royce with some differences associated with specific regulatory requirements of the nuclear propulsion plant and common missile compartment. Although the Type 26 and Type 31 frigate projects are quite distinct contractually and do not constitute an Alliance structure, the models do incorporate successes such as alignment of incentives and clarity on programme risks. For both projects, there are clear governance arrangements, under a single Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), who oversees robust control of the requirement and holds the contractor to the contract and schedule. The department has seen the effective use of a Strategic Partnering approach coupled with a Target Cost Incentive Fee arrangement on Type 26. In addition, the competition for the Type 31 programme has offered an opportunity for new entrants and the basis for new partnering. The Type 31 competition also allowed bidders the opportunity to innovate and control their own risks within a clear demarcation of roles.

1.3 Each procurement model must be tailored to suit the requirement and the market and applicable successes from QEC will always be considered, however, a single procurement model would not be optimal for all. Each procurement has a different mix of contractors and sites, and so the chosen model reflects that. However, the important lessons from QEC are ingrained. These are that there must be a robust control of the requirement and ability to hold the contractor to the contract and schedule. Crucially, this is supported by a strong, responsible governance system.

2: PAC conclusion: ***There remains considerable uncertainty over the Department's future ambitions for Carrier Strike.***

2: PAC recommendation***: The Department must ensure that its ambitions for Carrier Strike are clearly articulated and understood across government as part of the Integrated Review. Once this Review is published, the Department should quickly publish its policy ambitions for the carriers and translate them into affordable plans for future investment and operation.***

2.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: July 2021

2.2 Carrier Strike, alongside all capabilities in Defence, will be considered as part of the *Integrated Review*. Once the Review is published, the department will evaluate the outcomes in detail to refine its policy ambitions. Any future investments will then be captured in the costed 10-year Equipment Plan.

2.3 Concurrently, the department is engaging with counterparts in the United States to reinvigorate future options for the UK-US '*Statement of Intent regarding Enhanced Cooperation on Carrier Operations and Maritime Power Projection*'. The department and their US counterparts are working to explore deeper interoperability in maritime power projection. The department is also focused on developing carrier strike as a NATO asset, and its interoperability with other allied and partner navies.

3: PAC conclusion: ***The Department still does not fully understand Carrier Strike's support and operating requirements or costs.***

3: PAC recommendation: ***The Department should collect full information on the costs of operating a carrier strike group during its 2021 deployment. This is a crucial opportunity to develop its understanding of consumption issues and the level of spares it needs. The Department should be prepared to set out its findings at a future evidence session with the Committee and be able to demonstrate that it has a better grip of future support and operating costs.***

3.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: June 2022

3.2 The department already has provisional estimates of operating and support costs for deploying the core elements of the Carrier Strike Capability and provided 'better estimate' costs to the Committee in December 2020. These figures will be further refined following the first representative deployment in 2021 once a better understanding of actual operating and support requirements has been gained.

4: PAC conclusion: ***The value for money of the investment in the carriers will be significantly reduced if the UK cannot afford enough aircraft to sustain operations over the carriers' service life.***

4a: PAC recommendation: ***Within one month of this report, the Department should provide the Committee with a full and detailed breakdown of Lightning II related expenditure to date, the approved budget and the forecast whole life costs of the Programme.***

4.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: January 2021

4.2 The department has arranged for a private briefing session on 20 January 2021 to discuss Lightning II related expenditure. To note: The briefing date has been agreed with the Committee, however, this does not meet the recommendation timeline (within one month).

4.3 The briefing will cover the Whole Life Costs (WLC) of the 48 F-35 aircraft that the department is currently committed to purchase and includes the current programme approval levels. The procurement strategy for Lightning II is one of incremental acquisition and was approved at Main Gate 2 in 2006. This strategy tied the UK to a through-life collaborative partnership within the Joint Strike Fighter Programme, using the governance and procurement processes set out in the Production, Sustainment and Follow-on Development memorandum of understanding.

4.4 The WLC model considers all the acquisition phases from Lightning inception to aircraft disposal and are based upon the current mandate for 48 F-35Bs with an out of service date of 2048. The costs do not include operating costs such as service delivered manpower, fuel and weapons expenditure that are covered under separate Top-Level Budgets.

4b: PAC recommendation***: It should also set out the additional whole life cost of buying more than 48 jets.***

4.5 The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation.

4.6 The future F-35 profile and wider Combat Air (CA) requirements will be determined by the current Integrated Review and progress of the future CA system 'assessment phase'. Therefore, it is not possible to expand this costing model to factor more than 48 aircraft until the department is informed on the future CA position by the Integrated Review results and a formal mandate change to the Lightning Programme is issued.

5: PAC conclusion: ***The Department's failure to ensure the timely delivery of the Crowsnest radar system leaves the carriers with less protection than planned in its early years.***

5: PAC recommendation: ***The Department should write to the Committee to advise how it has addressed the challenge of not initially having a fully operational Crowsnest system, and on the timetable for enhancements. More broadly, it should advise the Committee how it has improved the oversight of sub-contractors in the light of this case.***

5.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target Implementation date: February 2021

5.2 Whilst the department will not have the full Crowsnest capability when Carrier Strike Group 21 (CSG21) deploys, it will have a credible baseline capability to provide surveillance and Force Protection of the task group. That initial baseline capability will be enhanced periodically (via software updates) during the deployment and beyond until Full Operating Capability (FOC) is achieved in 2023. The initial baseline capability will encompass air, littoral and maritime surveillance and interoperability with other aircraft (including F35) and ships over secure datalink. A written brief on how the department has addressed the challenge of the late delivery of Crowsnest will be provided to the Committee in February 2021.

5.3 The department has significantly increased its oversight of Crowsnest sub-contractors through more frequent and senior scrutiny of the programme. Whilst this may appear disproportionate in comparison to other programmes across Defence, in retrospect and regard of the importance of this capability, it is entirely appropriate.

5.4 More broadly, the principal responsibility for managing subcontractor performance rests with the prime contractor, with whom the department directly contracts. However, when a project is of sufficient size and complexity, the department requires the flow-down of performance reporting to sub-contractors (e.g. Tier 2 suppliers). This requires qualifying prime contractors to collect and supply sub-contractor performance data to the department. The department's equipment procurement organisation, Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S), has introduced widespread use of Earned Value Management to better track supplier (and hence sub-contractor) variance to cost and schedule, which provides greater insight when variances arise and drives improved performance.

6: PAC conclusion: ***The Department's failure to fund several key supporting capabilities will restrict how it can use the carriers for many years.***

6: PAC recommendation: ***The Department should develop a plan setting out the investment required to develop essential supporting capabilities for a carrier strike group. This should include cost-benefit assessments of potential capability enhancements and how to maximise the value of investment to date. It should write to the Committee by June 2021 setting out its planned investment over the next 10 years.***

6.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: June 2021

6.2 The department will address the capabilities required to support the carriers as part of the Integrated Review, reporting in the first quarter of 2021. Although taut and requiring mitigation in 2022 when RFA Fort Victoria undergoes maintenance, the support shipping needed to keep the carriers supplied with fuel, munitions and stores is in place for the period up until Full Operating Capability for Carrier Strike in 2023. To allow declaration of the wider Full Operating Capability for Carrier Enabled Power Projection from 2026, and the associated routine operating model, the Fleet Solid Support requirements have been informed by operating experience and a new competition will be launched in the first quarter of 2021. Building on the success of the Type 31 Programme, the department intends to allow international partners to work with UK firms to bid for this British-led shipbuilding project.

6.3 The Integrated Review will consider the requirement for the movement of people and goods within the carrier group, noting that the department will not have a full understanding of the requirement until the capability has been "road tested" in 2021. The task is currently performed by existing utility helicopters as an interim solution. The Rotary Wing strategy element of the Integrated Review will address the out of service dates of existing helicopters, so this maritime intra-theatre lift task is one of a number that require a long-term solution. The Review should also set out the maritime elements of the future joint force including the role and numbers of anti-submarine warfare frigates. Once the Review is published, the department will evaluate the outcomes in detail and present the future investment plan accordingly.

Twenty-Fourth Report of Session 2019-21

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government

Selecting towns for the Towns Fund

Introduction from the Committee

In March 2019, the previous administration announced the Stronger Towns Fund, a £1.6bn fund to support towns in England. In July 2019, this was incorporated into the larger, £3.6bn Towns Fund with the intention to support a selection of struggling towns across England to develop and sustain strong local economies. This expanded fund included additional funding for the Future High Streets Fund, alongside the programme of Town Deals.

Officials from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (the Department) designed a process to support Ministers to select towns that gave them scope to use their own judgement on which towns to select. Officials provided Ministers with information on the need and growth potential of towns across England in a prioritised and ranked list, from which Ministers selected 101 towns, following the approach recommended by their officials. Ministers selected all 40 high-priority towns, then selected the remaining 61 towns from a pool of 501, the vast majority of which were medium-priority and for which they recorded their reasons for selection. Officials later reviewed the Ministers' selection of towns against the required tests set out in HM Treasury's Managing public money, concluding the selection was appropriate. The National Audit Office's report sets out in detail the process followed by the Department to select the 101 towns. In September 2019, the Department published its selection of towns and invited them to set up a Town Deal Board and bid for funding to implement a Town Deal that departmental officials would agree—a plan setting out the town's investment priorities to drive growth. The Department is currently assessing bids submitted by the first cohort of 13 towns.

Based on a report by the National Audit Office, the Committee took evidence on Monday 21 September 2020 from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. The Committee published its report on 11 November 2020. This is the Government response to the Committee's report.

Relevant reports

- NAO report: *Review of the Town Deals selection process* – Session 2019–2021 (HC 576)
- PAC report: *Selecting Towns for the Towns Fund* – Session 2019-2021 0 (HC 651)

Government responses to the Committee

1: PAC conclusion: *The selection process was not impartial.*

1: PAC recommendation*: Within one month of this report, the Department should share with the Committee the Accounting Officer assessment that gave assurance that the selection process met the requirements of Managing Public Money.*

1.1 The government disagrees with the Committee's recommendation.

1.2 As the Committee will be aware and as set out in *Treasury Minutes from December 2016* (recommendation 3b) wider government practice precludes the sharing of the full Accounting Officer advice with Parliament. The summary of the Towns selection AO assessment, the National Audit Office (NAO) report and statements by Ministers in Parliament provide much more detail about selection decisions for the Towns Fund than is available for previous, similar programmes. The full Accounting Officer advice was shared with the NAO in the usual way and a summary of the Accounting Officer advice was provided to the Committee in October 2020 and has also been published on the *Towns Fund GOV.UK* page.

2: PAC conclusion: ***The Department has a weak and unconvincing justification for not publishing any information on the process it followed, which does not vindicate its lack of transparency.***

2: PAC recommendation***: To avoid accusations that government is selecting towns for political reasons, the Department should be upfront and transparent about how it reaches funding decisions as the Towns Fund progresses, particularly the planned competitive round. The principle of openness and transparency should extend across the whole of government when it is selecting some local areas, but not others, to benefit from taxpayers' money.***

2.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

2.2 As the Committee will be aware, the department *wrote to the Committee* in October 2020 with details of how town level scores were calculated in relation to risks from a no deal Brexit.

2.3 The department has also set out the assessment process in the *Further Guidance* published in June 2020. Funding offered is determined by an objective formula, based on assessment of the Town Investment Plan. Feedback is provided on request.

2.4 In relation to funding decisions on the Towns Fund and similar local growth programmes, the department will provide: where relevant, a record of Ministerial recusal from decisions affecting the constituencies of Ministers; a statement of the criteria that have been used to make decisions; and the details of scores or other assessments that have been used as part of the decision-making.

2.5 This will be provided to the Committee when all decision making is complete. On the Towns Fund, this will be when all 101 Towns have submitted Town Investment Plans and funding decisions have been made.

2.6 When Heads of Terms are agreed between the department and Towns, the department plans to publish these on GOV.UK.

2.7 The Levelling Up Fund announced at Spending Review 2020 includes £300 million previously set aside for a Towns Fund competition. This element of the Levelling Up fund will continue to support towns, and the department will set out the processes around it in due course.

3: PAC conclusion: ***It is unclear how much engagement and intelligence gathering, if any, Ministers held with local and regional representatives, to inform their selection of towns from the medium- and low-priority groups.***

3: PAC recommendation***: In its Treasury Minute response, the Department should set out how it will oversee Town Boards, and how it will ensure that all relevant local and regional bodies, and local residents, are involved in planning and implementing Town Deals.***

3.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

3.2 As the Committee will know, the department and Ministers engage regularly and widely with local and regional representatives, including Members of Parliament, to understand their priorities for their local areas and communities.

3.3 Specifically in relation to the Towns Fund, the department has already set out, prior to the Committee's recommendations, expectations and plans for Town Deal Boards and for community engagement and local and, where appropriate, regional representation on boards.

3.4 Indeed the model of Towns Deal Boards offers a significantly more open and transparent way of developing and agreeing plans for growth funding in a local area than is traditionally seen. Town Boards give a significant voice to people from the local area and allow a far wider range of stakeholders to inform a town's plans as a result – an approach government feels is crucial to ensuring that investment can better match the needs of the communities it is destined to support.

3.5 Expectations for Town Deal Board membership were set out in the *Towns Fund Prospectus* (November 2019) and *Further Guidance* (June 2020), recommending a mix of representatives from across the public, private and community sectors. Regional teams and our delivery partners then worked with Town Deal Board's on diversity, best practice and mandatory compliance.

3.6 The department has subsequently assessed Town Deal Board governance for all towns that have submitted their Town Investment Plans.

3.7 The department also specified that Town Investment Plans should include detail of consultation with local residents. The level and quality of engagement with community groups and the alignment and involvement of key bodies are both rigorously assessed. Towns must provide a stakeholder engagement plan in advance of signing Heads of Terms agreements.

4: PAC conclusion: ***It is still unclear what impact the Department is expecting from the Towns Fund, or when, and how the Department will measure its success.***

4: PAC recommendation*: In its Treasury Minute response, the Department should set out how the Towns Fund programme will secure positive, long term outcomes, and the measures of success it intends to use to monitor and evaluate its impact. In particular it should be clear about the measures against which it will measure any new jobs created.*

4.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: Spring 2021

4.2 The department does not agree with the committee's conclusion that it has not been clear on the impact it expects from the Towns Fund. The objectives of the Towns Fund are set out in the *Towns Fund Prospectus* (November 2019) and *Further Guidance* (June 2020). Furthermore, the department is providing up to £10 million for the monitoring and evaluation of the programme in order to capture the positive contribution to economic growth from this Fund.

4.3 At programme level, the department already has plans to undertake a national assessment of impact, tracking a set of metrics on employment, income and wellbeing in towns. This will be collected from inception to establish a baseline; and then annually to track progress. Towards the conclusion of the programme, the department will use quasi-experimental impact evaluation methodologies to establish a counter-factual and attribute impact to the Towns Fund.

4.4 At project level, the department is setting baselines and targets using standardised metrics and indicators. These will be tracked on a bi-annual basis. Using this data, the department will carry out a thematic level evaluation of outcomes under the three investment themes (regeneration, skills, enterprise and connectivity), drawing on a menu of standardised outcome indicators. This will involve selective sampling of interventions.

4.5 The department will publish its monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Towns Fund in Spring 2021. The department will use the annual update to keep the Committee informed of the success of the Fund with evidence from the monitoring and evaluation process.

5: PAC conclusion: ***We are concerned that towns may not have the capacity to deliver their plans and spend the money well.***

5: PAC recommendation*: From the end of March 2021, the Department should write to the Committee with annual updates to provide assurance that it is spending the money well. The Department's updates should demonstrate that its due diligence processes have included an assessment of towns' capacity to successfully deliver their plans.*

5.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Target implementation date: April 2021

5.2 Local areas understand best what they need to grow and thrive. Nevertheless, the department shares the Committee's concern that some areas might need additional support to fully develop their plans and have taken steps from the outset to address this. Since launching the Towns Fund, the department has worked directly with towns, supporting them as they established Town Deal Boards and developed their Town Investment Plans. Every town has a named contact in the department to provide ongoing guidance and support, and each local area has received capacity funding to develop their plans. The Towns Fund Delivery Partner, Arup and consortium, have also provided additional support.

5.3 As part of the established investment process for Town Investment Plans, the department carries out a thorough review of town's capacity to deliver, and the deliverability of the plan itself. All projects are also subject to full business case assessment, normally carried out by the lead local authority.

5.4 Even with the best of these endeavours some places may continue to struggle, and the department will continue to take further steps to support these areas. Through this ongoing support, the department confident that towns can make a success of Town Deals and create a better future for their communities.

5.5 The department will provide an annual update to the Committee on the progress of the Towns Fund, including an assessment of towns' capacity to successfully deliver their plans.

6: PAC conclusion: *It is not clear how the Towns Fund fits with other government funding programmes with overlapping aims.*

6: PAC recommendation*: The Government should use the opportunity provided by the Spending Review to be clear about the strategic fit of the Towns Fund programme with other funding programmes across government.*

6.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

6.2 The department recognises that there are several funding programmes at the local level. That is why one of the specific purposes of Town Deals was to allow towns to align different sources of funding to deliver their strategic objectives. This is why the department is supporting the development of Town Investment Plans to set out a long-term vision and strategy and reference other funding streams.

6.3 Part of the town selection methodology was looking for opportunities to align with wider government funding, for example the Local Growth Fund. This ensured that maximum value can be achieved from Towns Fund investments. The department is working closely with other government departments to ensure alignment and places are supported to explore complementary private investment.

6.4 The Towns Fund is a central component of the government strategy to level up the country, alongside the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Future High Street Fund and the recently announced Levelling Up Fund.

6.5 This is also why the government announced the 2020 Spending Review on 15 December 2020, the Levelling Up Fund, which will be the next step in moving away from a fragmented landscape with multiple different funding streams. This will build on the place-based approach to investment spearheaded by the Towns Fund and will align closely with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, allowing places to make choices and identify priorities in a coherent, joined up way. It will focus on bids that drive growth and regeneration in places of need, including previously neglected towns.

6.6 The Levelling Up Fund includes £300 million that had previously been set aside for the Towns Fund competition – this will now be run as part of the consolidated fund.

7: PAC conclusion: ***The impact of Covid-19 is likely to mean that some towns' plans for how best to spend the money will need to be revisited.***

7: PAC recommendation***: In its Treasury Minute response, the Department should set out how it is responding to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on towns and their ability to implement their proposals for spending the funding and on the timeline for releasing funding.***

7.1 The government agrees with the Committee's recommendation.

Recommendation implemented

7.2 The department has been very aware of the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of the Towns Fund. Indeed, the type of interventions funded through the Towns Fund have proved to be prescient – COVID-19 has accelerated and magnified existing market forces in many ways, making investment of this kind all the more important.

7.3 That is why in September 2020, all 101 towns identified for a Town Deal received accelerated funding to help address the immediate additional challenges caused by Covid-19. Payments totalling £81.5 million were made that month.

7.4 The department know that as towns seek to recover from the crisis, Town Deals may take on additional purpose. The impact of COVID-19 has been particularly acute for those areas with the vulnerabilities and challenges that the Towns Fund was established to address. The focus has not changed, but the funding that has been made available has become even more important. That is why the Department has made adjustments in recognition of this from the outset of the pandemic, including allowing towns additional time to develop and submit their Town Investment Plans and also encouraging Towns to review their plans to take account of changing circumstances and emerging priorities. The department continues to monitor the situation and where needed will provide towns with additional support.

7.5 All towns have been asked to outline in their proposals how they have considered the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The department has a package of support in place from the Town's Fund delivery partner (Arup and consortium). They are providing guidance to towns and joining them up where they face shared challenges, as well as providing additional support to those with the greatest challenges.

Treasury Minutes Archive[3]

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

Session 2019-21

Committee Recommendations: 161
Recommendations agreed: 145 (90%)
Recommendations disagreed: 16

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
July 2020	Government response 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

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 report 112-119 [1 and 2]	CP 210

Session 2016-17

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

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[4]	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
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

[4] Report 32 contains 6 conclusions only.

Treasury Minutes Progress Reports Archive

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

Publication Date	PAC Reports	Ref Number
November 2020	Session 2010-12: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2013-14: updates on 1 PAC report Session 2015-16: updates on 0 PAC reports Session 2016-17: updates on 7 PAC reports Session 2017-19: updates on 73 PAC reports Session 2019: updates on 2 reports	CP 313
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[5]	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[6]	CP70
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

5 Includes updates to Treasury Minutes published up to July 2019
6 Includes updates to Treasury Minutes published up to October 2018

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

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