



Parliamentary Report 2023 Issue 1: January

1 Report Highlights

In the news

- **Online Safety Bill** – During Parliamentary scrutiny of the Online Safety Bill, a group of Conservative MPs secured the Government's agreement to [strengthen the sanctions for senior managers](#) at technology firms. In addition to fines imposed on firms, managers will be criminally liable for repeated breaches of their duty of care to children and could face up to two years in jail.
- **Spiking** – The Government has said it will not introduce new laws on spiking. Almost [5,000 reports](#) of needle and drink spiking were made to UK police forces over the course of 2022. The Government argue that there are already several offences which cover spiking incidents and it had not found any gap in the law.
- **Harm to women from medical interventions** – In its [report](#) published on 20 January, the Health and Social Care Select Committee says that the Government must act urgently to enable women and children avoidably harmed by medical intervention (such as surgical mesh and sodium valproate taken during pregnancy) to receive compensation and care.
- **Channel 4 Privatisation** – Culture Secretary, Michelle Donelan, [has reversed proposals](#) set out by her predecessor in Boris Johnson's government to sell Channel 4. Instead, she is making modest tweaks to the broadcaster's remit, with the business continuing to be owned by the state.
- **Single Use Plastic** – Environment Secretary, Thérèse Coffey, has [announced a ban on single-use plastic](#) including plates, trays, bowls, cutlery, balloon sticks, and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers from October 2023, allowing businesses time to prepare.

New Consultations

- None

Closed consultations. Government response published (See Parliamentary Report section 3 for summaries)

- Making flexible working the default – [Government Response](#); Review of Net Zero – [Government Response](#); Introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme – [Government Response](#).

Select Committees. New enquiries and Committee reports (See Parliamentary Report section 5 for details)

- **Health and Social Care Committee** – Assisted Dying /Assisted Suicide [new inquiry](#); **Health and Social Care Committee** – Review into the harm to women caused by medical interventions [report published](#); **Education Committee** – Support for childcare and the early years [new inquiry](#); **Digital Culture Media and Sport Committee** – Gambling regulation [new inquiry](#).

All of the above are highlighted in red in the full report below.

2 Public Consultations (new information in red)

All consultations can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

Open Consultations	Description	How to respond	Closing Date
Amending The Bread and Flour Regulations 1998 and The Bread and Flour (Northern Ireland) Regulations 1998	Seeking views on proposals to update and amend the regulations to provide for the compulsory addition of certain nutrients, such as folic acid, to non-wholemeal wheat flour to protect public health, with the aim of improving public health outcomes for the UK.	Online	Closed on 23 rd November 2022
Antimicrobial Resistance National (AMR) Action Plan	Seeking views on the next 5-year national action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The plan will run from 2024 until 2029.	Online	30 th January

3 Closed Consultations: Government Response Published (click link for report)

- [Making flexible working the default](#) – Government will make it a right to request flexible working from day one of employment when Parliamentary time allows. Businesses will be required to consult with their employees and explore the available options before rejecting a request. Employees will be able to make two flexible working requests within a 12-month period and employers must respond within two months. Employees will no longer have to set out how the effects of their flexible working request might be dealt with by the employer.
- [Review of Net Zero](#) – The clear message from businesses, organisations, individuals, and local government across the country was that net zero is creating a new era of opportunity, but government, industry, and individuals need to act to make the most of the opportunities, reduce costs, and ensure delivery. It emphasises that the UK must go further and faster to realise the economic benefits of net zero and makes recommendations to enhance the role of local authorities, communities, and individuals to deliver net zero. It makes recommendation on short, medium, and long-term actions.

- [Introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme](#) – The Government will introduce a Deposit Return Scheme. 83% of respondents expressed support for it. The next phase will be to work through development of the legislation, taking necessary steps to ensure it will work in practice, and appointment of the deposit management organisation, followed by set up and roll out. No timeframe has been set.

4 Closed Consultations: Awaiting Government Response (click link for summary of initial consultation)

[Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan](#)

[SEND Review: Right support, right place, right time](#)

[Nature recovery green paper](#)

[Consultation on local connection requirements for social housing for victims of domestic abuse](#)

[Banning conversion therapy](#)

[The impact of ending the freedom of movement on adult social care](#)

3 Oral Questions: Women and Equalities

Click [here](#) for the Hansard report on 25 January and follow the navigation. Below is a list of the topics covered.

Workplace inequality: gender and race

Gynaecological care: waiting lists

Maternity outcomes: migrant women

Gender pay gap

British sign language

Child poverty: BAME children

Gender pension gap

4 Select Committees with open enquiries of potential interest to NCW (new information in red)

Details of Select Committees can be found by [clicking here](#)

Women and Equalities Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries	Description	Status
Honour-based abuse	Highlighted by the public and stakeholders as an important focus area of the Committee's Violence against Women and Girls work	Last evidence session 11 January 2023. Link to evidence.
National Disability Strategy	Scrutinising the implementation and further development of the Government's July 2021 National Disability Strategy covering disabled people and those with learning disabilities and autism. The Committee will investigate the extent to which stakeholder contributions informed the strategy; how well it will help disabled people to enjoy equal living standards and life opportunities to those without disabilities; progress on the strategy so far; how effectively the Government is involving disabled people in the strategy's implementation and further development; how well the strategy is being funded and measured for success; how compatible it is with the UK's treaty obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; what more could the Government do to mitigate the effects of future crises on people with disabilities.	Closed for submitting evidence. No meetings scheduled.
Attitudes towards woman and girls in educational settings	An extension of the enquiry into violence against women and girls looking at how they are affected throughout their lives by attitudes towards them from early years education to	Most recent oral evidence session 12 October 2022. Link to evidence.

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	university. Includes sexism, 'lad culture', spiking and sexual misconduct	
Preventing violence against women and girls	<p>Following its April evidence session, Changing cultures underpinning male violence against women, the Committee has launched the next stage of its work on Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls. The Committee's work will begin with a literature review of existing evidence submitted as part of the Government's consultation for its July 2021 Tackling violence against women and girls strategy, as well as written and oral evidence gathered by the Home Affairs Select Committee as part of its inquiry Violence against women and girls. Click here for full details of how the Committee will conduct its inquiry.</p> <p>Click here for an excellent summary of the topic, including what VAWG is, why it happens, how it can be prevented, international and domestic obligations to prevent it, Government action and the Committee's work to date.</p>	<p>Most recent evidence session 9 March 2022. Link to evidence.</p> <p>Specialist advisers appointed Click for their details</p> <p>No publications or events at present.</p>
Pornography and its impact on violence to women and girls	As part of its wider work on preventing Violence Against Women and Girls, the Women and Equalities Committee is to hold the first of two evidence sessions exploring the impact of pornography on attitudes towards women and girls. It will consider whether the Online Safety Bill offers an opportunity for the Government to better regulate pornographic content in order to reduce harm. It will also look at how the porn industry is currently regulated and the potential impact of rapidly developing technologies.	Most recent oral evidence session 22 June 2022. Link to evidence
Equality and the asylum process	Examining the fairness and discrimination in the asylum process on people with diverse protected characteristics (as defined by the Equality Act), including on the basis of sex. Will	Next oral evidence session 25 January 2023. Link to evidence

	also consider people's experiences of the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme	
<u>Menopause and the Workplace</u>	To examine the extent of discrimination experienced by menopausal people in the workplace and investigate how Government policy and workplace practices can better support those experiencing menopause	<u>Report published 19 July 2022.</u> Click here for <u>summary</u> Government response overdue since 28 September 2022.

Health and Social Care Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Assisted Dying and Assisted Suicide	Seeking views on assisted dying and suicide	Closed for accepting evidence. No meetings scheduled
<u>IMMDS review</u>	To examine progress on the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety report ' <u>First do No Harm</u> ' (2020) on improving communication on risks to women's health from certain drugs and from vaginal mesh.	Report published on 20 January 2023. Click <u>here</u> for summary. Government response due on 20 March 2023.

Education Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Support for childcare and the early years	Investigation into the childcare sector and early years education examining why childcare has become too expensive for a growing proportion of young families, the problems of worker retention and low pay, the change to the staff-to-child ratio and the quality and value of early years education, including how well it prepares young children for the transition to primary education.	Next evidence session on 31 January 2023.

Home Affairs [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Violence against women and girls	How this issue is being addressed. Programme of work will be decided after evidence has been received	One off evidence session on support available for migrant victims and survivors of domestic abuse on 7 September 2022. Link to evidence.

Justice [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
None		

Continued

Work and Pensions [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
<u>Children in Poverty: maintenance service (CMS)</u>	Final part of investigation into children in poverty following no recourse to public funds and measurement and targets. The inquiry will explore how the DWP might improve the CMS to better support children in poverty and examine the barriers parents face when trying to access CMS support as well as how the system interacts with wider social security, including Universal Credit following 2012 reforms. In March, the National Audit Committee said the DWP should be doing more.	Most recent oral evidence session on 2 November 2022. Link to evidence

International Development Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
<u>The future of UK aid</u>	Scrutiny of the cut in spending Overseas Development Aid from 0.7% to 0.5% of UK Gross National Income, the merger of the FCO and Department of International Development and the conclusions of the integrated review	Most recent oral evidence session on 6 December 2022. Link to evidence

Science and Technology Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
The antimicrobial potential of bacteriophages	Seeking views on the restrictions on the clinical use of bacteriophages, an alternative antimicrobial to be used instead or conjunction with antibiotics. They can kill bacteria but aren't harmful to humans. The WHO has warned that resistance to antibiotics is one of the greatest threats to human health	Closed for accepting evidence. No meetings scheduled.
Diversity in STEM	An investigation into the extent of underrepresentation from ethnic minority groups, those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, people with disabilities and women working in STEM, and ask what policies the Government, industry and academia could use to address it.	Most recent oral evidence session 15 June 2022. Link to evidence.

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Plastic waste	The government has set a target of eliminating avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and is working towards only recyclable, compostable or reusable plastic being placed on the market by 2025. The inquiry will scrutinise the government's ambition and whether current measures (plastic packaging tax, deposit return scheme and banning some single use plastics go far enough and how alternatives can be identified and supported	Report published on 7 November 2022. Click here for summary. Government response overdue since 7 January 2023.

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
Gambling regulation	To investigate the Government's approach to regulation following warnings that more needs to be done to protect people, including children from gambling related harm, and the issues raised by Parliament such as keeping up with online innovations and the links between gambling and broadcasting and sport.	Accepting evidence until 10 February.

Transport Committee [click here](#)

Inquiries of potential interest to NCW	Description	Status
No current enquiries relevant to NCW		

Details of Select Committees

Membership and contact details of Select Committees can be found by [clicking here](#) or the Committee Office, House of Commons, Palace of Westminster, SW1A 0AA

Women and Equalities Committee: Chaired by Rt Hon Caroline Noakes MP (Con)

Email: womeqcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 5113

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: Chaired by Julian Knight MP (Con)

Email: cmscom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6188

Education Committee: Chaired by Robin Walker MP (Con)

Email: educum@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 2370

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs: Chaired by Sir Robert Goodwill MP (Con)

Email: efracom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 111

Health and Social Care Committee: Chaired by Steve Brine MP (Con)

Email: hsccom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6182

Home Affairs Committee: Chaired by Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP (Lab)

Email: homeaffcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6856/3282

International Development Committee: Chaired by Sarah Champion MP (Lab)

Email: indcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 1223/1226

Justice: Chaired by Sir Robert Neill MP (Con)

Email: justicecom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 8196/1280

Science and Technology Committee: Chaired by Rt Hon Greg Clark MP (Con)

Email: scitechcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 2793

Transport: Chaired by Iain Stewart MP (Con)

Email: transcom@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 6094

Work and Pensions: Chaired by Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP (Con)

Email: workpen@parliament.uk Phone: 020 7219 8976