

Press release: John Cridland CBE and the Government Actuary's Department release reports into the future State Pension age

Two reports have been published today that will help inform the government's review of the State Pension age which is due in May 2017.

The John Cridland report looked at the key issues that drive State Pension age changes including, but not limited to:

- life expectancy
- the challenges faced by those who rely most on the State Pension
- the long-term financial sustainability of the system

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) was asked to consider 2 alternative scenarios for the State Pension age, reflecting an adult in receipt of the State Pension for either 32% or 33.3% of their projected adult life in retirement. To do this it used figures drawn from life expectancy projections from the Office for National Statistics.

In his report, which will be considered before any decision is made on changes to the State Pension age timetable after 2028, Mr Cridland makes a number of recommendations including:

- State Pension age should rise to 68 between 2037 and 2039
- State Pension age should not increase more than 1 year in any 10 year period, assuming that there are no exceptional changes to the data used
- that all employers should have elder care policies in place which set out a basic care offer
- that people should be able to access a mid-life career MOT and review which should be facilitated by employers and by the government using online support and through the National Careers Service

Meanwhile, the Government Actuary's Department report concludes that:

- under a 32% scenario the State Pension age could rise to 69 between 2040 and 2042
- under a 33.3% scenario the State Pension age could reach 69 between 2053 and 2055

No new changes to [State Pension age](#) will come into effect before 2028 and the government is committed to maintaining a State Pension that is fair for all generations and helps to provide for the cost of living in retirement. Part of this commitment to fairness includes providing 10 years' notice of any changes to the State Pensions age.

Follow DWP on:

[Press release: Trustees of Ipswich Kurdish Islamic Cultural Centre breached their legal duties, regulator finds](#)

The Charity Commission has today (23 March 2017) [published a report](#) of its statutory inquiry into the [Ipswich Kurdish Islamic Cultural Centre](#) (registered charity number 1149580) ('the charity'), concluding that there was misconduct and mismanagement in the charity's administration.

The report sets out multiple failings by the trustees and concludes that the charity's financial management was poor.

The inquiry, which began in November 2015, found that the trustees:

- made unauthorised salary payments to one trustee amounting to £1,360, even though the charity's governing document prohibits the employment of trustees
- provided a zero interest loan to 2 members of the local community totalling £20,000 which amounted to twice the size of the charity's 2015 income
- did not have a safeguarding policy in place despite the fact that the charity operates weekend classes for children

The report also criticises the trustees' approach to engaging with the Commission, saying that their conduct fell below that which the regulator and the public expect, including by initially failing to take prompt action to address concerns identified by the Commission before it opened the inquiry. Following the opening of the inquiry, and as reflected in the report, the Commission acknowledges improvements in the trustees' conduct.

As part of the inquiry, the Commission has made an order requiring the trustees to complete a number of actions to address the failings and regulatory concerns identified.

The report states that the regulator will take further regulatory action if the trustees fail to comply with the order within a stated timeframe.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations Monitoring and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

Our inquiry into the Ipswich Kurdish Islamic Cultural Centre found serious problems and basic failures. As our core guidance, [The essential trustee](#), explains, trustees must comply with their charity's governing document and the law and must manage their charity's resources responsibly. That hasn't always happened at this charity, putting it at risk of not being able to carry out its charitable purposes. I now hope the trustees take the necessary steps we have set out in our Order to improve the charity's governance in the future.

The [full report](#) is available on GOV.UK.

Ends

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Notes to editors

1. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
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[News story: HS2 Phase One community information events 2017](#)

We invite you to attend one of our community engagement events about Phase One of the High Speed Two (HS2) project and what it means in your local area.

We hope you will take this opportunity to talk to the project team, view maps, and ask us questions, and learn more about the construction and design of the new railway.

Date	Venue	Time
Wednesday 22 November	The Link – Water Orton Community Venue, 4 New Road, Water Orton, B46 1QU	3pm to 5:30pm
Tuesday 28 November	Carrs Lane Church Conference Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham, B4 7SX	12pm to 2pm
Thursday 30 November	Stoke Mandeville Community Centre, Eskdale Road, Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury, HP22 5UJ	7:30pm to 9:30pm
Thursday 30 November	Whittington Village Hall, Langton Crescent, WS14 9LR	5pm to 7pm

Date	Venue	Time
Monday 4 December	Burton Green Village Hall, Hodgetts Lane, Burton Green, CV8 1PH	4pm to 6pm
Wednesday 6 December	Bengali Workers' Association, Surma Community Centre, 1 Robert Street/Hampstead Road, London, NW1 3JU	5pm to 7pm

Past events will be removed as new events are added.

On 23 February 2017 Royal Assent was granted for Phase One of HS2. Since then, a range of preparatory works have commenced, including archaeological surveys and the creation of new wildlife habitats. We continue to engage with communities affected by the construction of the railway. Find out more about [how we're constructing HS2](#).

[Press release: Justice Secretary announces plans to create 5,000 modern prison places](#)

- New builds to create up to 2,000 construction jobs and generate millions of pounds to British economy
- Builds on the government's commitment to create up to 10,000 modern places, aimed at reducing overcrowding and creating the right conditions for reform.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss has today unveiled plans for the building of 4 new prisons in England and Wales – creating 5,000 modern prison places and replacing old and overcrowded establishments with new, fit for purpose buildings.

Sites in Full Sutton in Yorkshire; Hindley in Wigan; Rochester in Kent and Port Talbot in South Wales have been earmarked for development as part of the government's commitment to build up to 10,000 modern prison places by 2020, backed by £1.3 billion to transform the estate.

As well as creating modern establishments fit for the twenty-first century, the proposed new builds will also act as a boost to regional economies across the country – creating up to 2,000 jobs in the construction and manufacturing industries and new opportunities for local businesses.

Final decisions on the new prisons will be subject to planning approvals, as well as value for money and affordability.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss said:

We cannot hope to reduce reoffending until we build prisons that are places of reform where hard work and self-improvement flourish.

Outdated prisons, with dark corridors and cramped conditions, will not help offenders turn their back on crime – nor do they provide our professional and dedicated prison officers with the right tools or environment to do their job effectively.

This significant building programme will not only help create a modern prison estate where wholesale reform can truly take root, but will also provide a thriving, economic lifeline for the local community – creating hundreds of jobs for local people and maximising opportunities for businesses.

Today's announcement comes weeks after the opening of HMP Berwyn – the new, modern prison in north Wales which will hold over 2,000 prisoners. The construction of this new prison has already contributed over £100 million to the local economy and created around 150 jobs and apprenticeships before doors have even opened.

In creating a modern prison estate, old and inefficient prisons will be closed and replaced by the new accommodation. A programme of valuation work will now begin to help inform further decisions about the estate. Announcements on prison closures will be made later in the year.

Today's announcement builds on ambitious reforms to improve safety in prisons, including an additional £100 million to bolster frontline staff by 2,500.

This wholesale, organisational reform will be supported by measures within the Prisons and Court Bill, which will set out a new framework and clear system of accountability for prisons, building on the wide-ranging reforms set out in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper.

1. We will be applying for outline planning permission for new prisons in Yorkshire, the North West, Kent and South Wales.
2. A Written Ministerial Statement detailing further information will be published at 0930 Wednesday 22 March.

[News story: Almost half of UK financial services staff now covered by ground breaking Women in Finance](#)

Charter

33,000 extra staff in the UK now covered by the plan to tackle gender inequality in financial services.

The news comes on the first anniversary of the charter, with 122 firms, employing over half a million people in the UK and covering almost 50% of the financial services sector, now signed up.

The [Women in Finance Charter](#), launched a year ago today, asks financial firms to commit to four industry actions to build the female talent pipeline for leadership positions. The Charter's innovative approach has been an unprecedented success with some of the UK's biggest and most well established firms signing up.

The latest signatories include retail banks such as CYBG, payment firms such as VocaLink, global banks such as the Royal Bank of Canada, insurers like Ageas UK, and other firms including Pinsent Masons LLP and NS&I, while Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the latest firm with headquarters in the US to sign up.

Since the Charter launched, 77 financial services firms have committed to have at least 30% women in senior roles by 2021 and 23 firms have committed to a 50/50 gender split in senior roles by 2021. New signatories will announce their targets in June.

The Commercial Secretary, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, said:

I know how difficult it can be for a woman to get the recognition she deserves and achieve her potential. And in financial services particularly, women progress too slowly or they leave the sector completely.

We have made a strong start – the first anniversary of the [Women in Finance Charter](#) sees 122 firms seizing the competitive advantage by tackling sex inequality head on.

But this is just the beginning. The financial industry is famed for its ability to identify opportunities to improve productivity. The [Women in Finance Charter](#) is one of those opportunities. It offers the chance to increase diversity of thought and for the financial services sector to better reflect the society it serves. This is why I encourage firms across the UK to step up and sign the Charter.

Jayne-Anne Gadhia, CEO of Virgin Money and the government's Women in Finance Champion, said:

I am delighted with the strong and ongoing momentum of the Women in Finance Charter. A truly diverse financial services sector will drive productivity and underpin the UK's position as a strong and competitive economy. There is still further to go and I urge more businesses to commit to the charter so that they can play their part in building an economy that works for everyone.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the latest firm with headquarters in the US to sign up, joining the likes of Morgan Stanley, BNY Mellon, BlackRock, Circle and Thomson Reuters. This proves that there are no barriers for international firms to show their commitment to gender parity by signing the Charter.

Alex Wilmot-Sitwell, President, EMEA at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, said:

Bank of America Merrill Lynch has a long history of supporting women's leadership and economic empowerment, but there is clearly more to be done.

Increasing the number of senior women and addressing gender balance is crucial for our long-term success. This means supporting and engaging women at all levels, to ensure a strong pipeline of talent.

We are wholly supportive of the Women in Finance Charter and the positive impact it will have on our industry.

FinTechs have also responded to the government's call to action with nine signing up including Nutmeg, RateSetter, Starling, Monzo, Zerado, Azimo, and FINTECH Circle.

The [Gadhia review](#) looked at the issue of unequal gender representation in financial services and found that in UK financial services female representation was around 23% on boards, but only 14% on executive committees. It is estimated that equalising the role of men and women in the labour market could increase GDP by 10% by 2030.

On 29th June, HM Treasury, in partnership with [GrowthBusiness.co.uk](#), What Investment magazine and Virgin Money, will launch the inaugural [Women in Finance Awards](#) at The Savoy in London.

These awards will celebrate the individuals and organisations who are leading change by driving the gender diversity agenda in financial services.