

Coal mines, fracked gas and keeping the lights on

The world currently relies on fossil fuels for 80% of its energy. All the time most UK people have a gas boiler, a diesel or petrol car, eat meat and rely on products that need plastics, steel, ceramics, cement and other components that need plenty of energy to produce we will help create CO₂. Our choice is do we use more of our own coal, oil and gas, or import more? If we import more that will entail more CO₂ being generated worldwide to fuel the transport of products. It will mean fewer well paid jobs in the UK and less tax revenue.

Importing more fossil fuel or fossil fuel using products is a kind of self harm, not a policy which saves the planet. Transition to a carbon free future will occur at the pace the public dictates by all our choices on what to eat, how to heat and how to travel. It is a strange argument that we should not allow onshore gas in the UK yet it is fine to import it from the USA to keep us warm. It is odd some think we can import coal to keep the lights on but should not produce specialist coal of our own.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury's Reply to my Written Parliamentary Question

I am concerned about the decline in self employment and have been an opponent of the IR 35 tax treatments as amended in 2017 and 2021. I have asked what impact there has been. The figures they refer to did not seem to enlighten the issue. I have seen other figures suggesting there has been a fall of 700,000 to 4.3m in the number self employed since 2020. I accept covid lockdowns will have had an impact on numbers, but this also includes a period of tightening of rules to discourage self employed status. It is worrying, yet the Treasury says some of these people are still doing the same jobs under different tax arrangements. It would be good to have more informed data and analysis as expanding self employment is an important part of building a flexible and faster growing economy.

Treasury has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (92045):

Question:

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many people have ceased to be self-employed since the introduction of the 2021 IR 35 rules. (92045)

Tabled on: 21 November 2022

Answer:

Victoria Atkins:

It is an anticipated outcome of the 2021 off-payroll working (IR35) reform that organisations and contractors will consider the best way for contractors to provide their services, while being compliant with tax legislation.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publish data on trends in employment. [Dataset A02 NSA](#) provides quarterly estimates of the number of self-employed individuals over the age of 16 for the period sought. On 6 September ONS officials gave evidence to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee on changes in the number of individuals self-reporting as self-employed during the relevant period as a part of the committee's UK Labour Supply Inquiry. That evidence stated that some part of the change in individuals self-reporting as self-employed is due to changes in how people classify themselves, without having changed the way they work.

The answer was submitted on 29 Nov 2022 at 07:58.

Innovation and productivity

In his speech to the CBI Annual Conference the Prime Minister called for more innovation and better productivity advances. He is right that innovation can accelerate growth, create more better paid jobs, and raise productivity. Waves of innovation in past decades have fuelled huge advances in living standards and pay.

The government needs to use its Brexit freedoms and its powers as an important buyer of goods and services in our economy to boost the ideas that will give us greater prosperity. A more productive economy is one with higher pay and with better service.

One of the ways to raise productivity is to concentrate more activity and people in the most productive areas. The suggestions below seek to tackle that:

1. Pharmaceuticals and medicine. Allow access to generic anonymised data about treatments and success rates in the NHS to companies seeking to research new life saving and life enhancing treatments and medicines. Amend the rules on the conduct of tests on new drugs and products to make them competitive with US ones, whilst ensuring strong safety protections.
2. Energy. This is an area of high value added and well paid jobs. The government accepts that oil and gas are transition fuels which will continue to provide the bulk of the UK's energy this decade whilst the

electrical revolution develops. It should therefore use its tax policies and licencing powers to develop more of our domestic oil and gas. Home produced produces less CO2, sparing the CO2 generated by long distance transport for imports. It also pays a lot more tax to the UK Exchequer instead of paying huge sums in tax away for foreign governments.

3. High energy using industries like special steels and ceramics, where there can be high value added from design and specification. Suspend emissions trading which imposes a heavy extra cost on our industry making it difficult to compete against imports.
4. Defence. Spend more of the growing and substantial defence budget on UK procurement. Encourage greater UK R and D in smart weaponry, communications and cyber.
5. Nuclear. Pump prime the production of small modular nuclear reactor to gain type approval and licences, ready to mass produce for home and export markets.

[Additional Government Support for the Homeless](#)

I have received the letter below from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The Government recognises the additional pressures people are facing with the cost of living and appreciates that some vulnerable households may find themselves at greater risk of homelessness, requiring additional support.

It has announced an additional £50 million that will be made available to local authorities in England in 2022/23 through a top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant. The additional funding will support local authorities to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless. The extra £50 million will build on the £316 million in funding already available to local authorities through the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2022/23, bringing total spend through that grant to £366 million.

This winter, Wokingham Council will be receiving an additional £74, 884 and West Berkshire Council will receive an additional £42,344 which will top up the Homelessness Prevention Grant already in place.

Dear Colleague

Support for homelessness pressures over winter

The Government understands the pressures people are facing with the cost of living and has taken decisive action to support households. This includes the Energy Price Guarantee, to support households with their energy bills over the winter, and a further £37 billion of support for the cost of living this year. At Autumn Statement the Chancellor also unveiled £26 billion of support

to protect the most vulnerable households in 2023/24.

We recognise that some vulnerable households may find themselves at risk of homelessness and may need additional support. We want to make sure councils are able to respond effectively to support households and prevent homelessness.

Homelessness Prevention Grant – Winter 2022 financial support

We are therefore announcing an additional £50 million that will be made available to local authorities in England in 2022/23 through a top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant. The additional funding will support local authorities to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless. Local authorities will target this funding to those who need it most to manage local homelessness pressures.

The details of individual local authority allocations are attached at Annex A.

This additional £50 million investment builds on the £316 million in funding already available to local authorities through the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2022/23, bringing total spend through that grant to £366 million. This is part of £2 billion of Government funding to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping over the next three years.

We remain committed to the manifesto commitments and this additional funding demonstrates our commitment to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

With every good wish,

Michael Gove MP

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations

[The Minister for Development and Africa's Replies to my Written Parliamentary Questions](#)

I will pursue these matters, as I am concerned about how much aid we give to multinational organisations to spend for us. Having a voice at the Board table in general discussion does not mean all the aid spent will be in ways and in places we would choose, and it does raise issues over accountability for such large sums of money. Given the need to control public spending better it makes little sense to trust international organisations to spend money for us.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (92049):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what unrestricted aid funding the Government provides to international organisations. (92049)

Tabled on: 21 November 2022

Answer:

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

In 2021 £4,277 million of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) was delivered through core contributions to multilateral organisations. This was 37.4 per cent of the total UK ODA budget.

Multilateral organisations, including the United Nations, global health and education funds, the international financial institutions and the Commonwealth are essential partners in achieving the UK's goals. The UK uses its voice on multilateral boards to ensure decisions align with UK priorities, including how and where their funds are spent.

The answer was submitted on 29 Nov 2022 at 16:00.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (92050):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government takes to assess the suitability and value for money of (a) projects organised by and (b) grants from international organisations. (92050)

Tabled on: 21 November 2022

Answer:

Mr Andrew Mitchell:

The suitability and value for money of international organisations receiving Official Development Assistance (ODA), including the projects they organise and grants they provide, is continually assessed through FCDO annual reviews and business cases, as set out in the Department's Programme Operating Framework.

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) independently scrutinises UK ODA to international organisations to assess value for money and impact, including recent ICAI reviews of tackling fraud in multilateral organisations and of the UK's work with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). The UK is also a member of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), which carries out regular assessments of multilateral organisations.

The answer was submitted on 29 Nov 2022 at 16:01.