

Controlling the borders

The Home Secretary has been trying to get legislation through Parliament. She has made clear that the government wishes to stop the cruel and exploitative trade in bringing people illegally across the Channel risking their lives. The lawyers and courts have made it difficult for the government to enforce the law against illegal migrants, so the Home Secretary is trying to toughen it in a way which will make it more difficult for them to thwart the policy aim. Border Force apparently need even clearer instructions in legislation to stop this trade.

We need further developments. The Home Secretary recognises the current situation should not continue. It is wrong to allow a lot of people to get here by illegal means and then to keep them here at great expense unable to work. It would be much better if economic migrants applied before they came and only came if they get permission to come.

Your thoughts on how Ministers can get the system to deliver would be interesting.

What estimate has the Health Secretary made of total NHS redundancy payments for the last year?

I suspect the true answer to my question is considerably higher than the answer they provided. I wonder why they left some categories out when I asked for the total?

The Department of Health and Social Care has provided the following answer to your written parliamentary question (146530):

Question:

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what estimate he has made of total NHS redundancy payments for the last year. (146530)

Tabled on: 24 March 2022

Answer:

Edward Argar:

The total value of the redundancy payments incurred by National Health Service in 2020/21 is £27.4 million.

The following table shows these costs by voluntary and compulsory redundancies in 2020/21 by the NHS England group and Consolidated Provider Account group. The NHS England group comprises of clinical commissioning groups and NHS England. The Consolidated Provider Accounts group includes NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts.

Entity	Voluntary redundancies including early retirement contractual costs £ million	Value of compulsory redundancies £ million
NHS England group	2.5	6.1
Consolidated Provider Account group	2.8	16.0

Notes:

These values do not include mutually agreed resignations contractual costs, early retirements in the efficiency of the service contractual costs and contractual payments in lieu of notice. Exit payments following employment tribunals or court orders and non-contractual payments requiring HM Treasury approval.

The answer was submitted on 11 Apr 2022 at 10:40.

[The Chancellor should show he understands the cost of living crisis](#)

The big rise in energy prices is like a big tax rise. It takes a lot of money out of peoples purses and wallets. It reduces discretionary spending as many people cut back to meet the higher bills for the basics. It ushers in stagflation as the economy slows and inflation stays high.

The last thing we need when energy- and now food – prices soar are tax rises as well. That compounds the squeeze and slows the economy more. Last month the U.K. economy after a year of fast growth slowed to just 0.1% whilst inflation rose again. Today we should expect a further rise in prices.

The Chancellor should announce now that he will remove the NI rise and take VAT off fuel. Of course he also needs to bring the deficit down. That requires growing revenues. Producing more of our own oil and gas will give revenue a big boost as there is a double corporation tax rate on that activity. Easing the squeeze will mean more VAT on non energy purchases as there will be more of them, and more Income tax.

It also requires better control over public spending. Maybe we could start by cancelling overseas aid to countries supporting Russia, and charge all the Ukraine spending to the overseas aid budget as a better substitute.

Ukraine

It is good news that the Ukrainian army and people have lifted the siege of Kyiv. The Russians by general report have given up trying to capture the capital or the west of the country, to concentrate their sieges on Donbas and southern cities. The tragic bombardment of Donbas continues, with indiscriminate attacks on civilians and the widespread destruction of homes.

Let us hope there is no return of Russian tanks and troops to Kyiv and the west. It means many Ukrainians who left the country are considering returning to their homes. Some will find their homes as they left them, others may find them looted or shell damaged. The U.K. and other NATO and EU countries should now direct more assistance to those who wish to return and to how buildings and services can be repaired so they can have a better life again. It is very important Ukraine returns as much of its land and economy to more normal working as possible and restores more homes for more of its people. That after all is what they are fighting for.

Fighting inflation without a big downturn

The Fed, the ECB and the Bank of England all made the same mistake last year. They carried on printing more money and buying up bonds to keep interest rates around zero for too long. They were right to offer a big stimulus in 2020 to offset the covid inspired downturn, but misjudged the recovery and helped fuel the inflation. They ignored those of us who warned against excessive laxity. They stuck to silly unrealistic forecasts of inflation for this year of around 2% when it was obvious it would rise considerably higher, especially in the USA where the stimulus was largest.

The Bank of England saw sense soonest, stopped money printing at the end of last year and has started to raise rates. The Fed carried on printing until March this year and has only just started to hike and unbelievably the European central bank is planning to print Euro 90 billion more in the second quarter of this year and is putting off tightening to be reviewed again in the third quarter. Spanish inflation is already at an alarming 9.8% and Eurozone inflation generally is over 7%. How much higher do they want it to go?

The UK has to be careful, as it is not only tightening money policy but also increasing taxation at the same time. The danger is this double hit to an

economy which has been recovering well from covid lockdowns will prove too severe, slowing the economy too much. The Bank's tightening means dearer mortgages and credit, squeezing many consumers further as the high energy prices kick in like a big tax rise. That makes the NI rise and the tax increase on energy that comes with higher energy prices an inappropriate added threat to ,jobs and output.

The UK needed a bit of tightening to curb price rises. It does not need to lead world austerity just as the cost of living crisis hits. The government also needs to do more to assist and stimulate more domestic production of everything from fertilisers to gas and from food to microprocessors. To the extent that the inflation stems from a series of supply side shocks, boosting supply can start to right the position.