

## My Written Question asking the Minister if he will publish the economic forecasts from the latest Plan B restrictions

**Question:**

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish forecasts of the economic impact of the covid-19 restrictions announced on 8 December 2021. (91823)

Tabled on: 13 December 2021

**Answer:**

**John Glen:**

On 8 December, the government implemented its Plan B response to managing Covid-19. This was in response to the risks posed by the Omicron variant. The government set out the economic impacts of Plan B in its Autumn and Winter Plan, published in September 2021. Plan B has been designed to help control the spread of the virus while avoiding unduly damaging economic and social restrictions. A full assessment of the measures can be found in the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021>

HM Treasury does not prepare formal economic forecasts for the UK economy, which are the responsibility of the independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). HM Treasury will continue to conduct macroeconomic analysis to monitor the impacts on the economy from the implementation of Plan B measures.

The answer was submitted on 16 Dec 2021 at 13:56.

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## What happened to the Nightingales?

**Question:**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what happened to the beds and medical equipment from the Nightingale hospitals. (90312)

Tabled on: 09 December 2021

**This question was grouped with the following question(s) for answer:**

1. To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what the total cost was of setting up, running and closing the Nightingale hospitals.  
(90311)

Tabled on: 09 December 2021

**Answer:**

**Edward Argar:**

Total projected funding for the Nightingale hospital programme was ring-fenced at £466 million. National Health Service providers are currently auditing the accounts for 2020/21 and the final spending outturn will be published in due course.

NHS England and NHS Improvement advise that regions were responsible for co-ordinating the redistribution of assets including beds and medical equipment from the Nightingale hospitals. Each host trust is responsible for managing a list of these assets. The remaining surplus stock has been collected and made available for national redistribution under the existing warehousing, asset tracking and logistics contracts.

The answer was submitted on 15 Dec 2021 at 14:57.

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## [Improving the public sector](#)

Today I have highlighted two disastrous management errors in public services which Parliament has criticised many times in the past. Yesterday Ministers presented their approach to both problems to try to put things right.

In both cases MPs asked about what would happen to the managers who made the mistakes, especially the top management of the Post Office who went on to spend large sums on lawyers to hound the people they had wrongly accused. One contributor has been muddling the state owned Postal Office up with the privatised mail services, which have nothing to do with this issue.

My prior concern over the years has been to speak with others for the postmasters who were so badly treated to get the accusations against them reversed and to give them compensation for their large financial losses forced upon them. I agree the government as owner of the business does need to tell us what will be done about those who pursued this policy at the Post Office. The bill for compensation will be substantial and falls to taxpayers as we own the Post Office.

The Defence Minister has accepted that the MOD needs to improve the way it handles contracts. He has also promised to seek to rescue this large contract by closer working with the defence supplier. He seemed confident that

remedial costs fall to the supplier to pay.

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## **Post Office compensation**

I am glad the government has now signed off on a compensation scheme for Post Office managers wrongly accused and badly treated by the Post Office over the introduction of the Horizon computer system. Some were made to pay large sums to the Post Office they did not owe and some were falsely accused of fraud. Many lost their businesses and some faced criminal convictions for things they had not done.

This was a shameful incident and it has taken time for the Post Office and its government owner to do the right thing.

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## **Buying defence equipment**

Yesterday in the House the government made a statement on what had gone wrong in trying to buy 589 fighting vehicles for the army. So far very few have been delivered and those that have been have not met noise and vibration standards. This has raised hearing issues for some who have worked in them.

The Minister and the review are both critical of procedures . The Minister is leading the work to get the matter rectified by the contractor. He assured the House that the contract was at a fixed price of £5.5bn and the government's intent is to secure the delivery of 589 working vehicles that meet the required standards.

It is most important for the army and taxpayers that he succeeds. There have been too many cases of procurement overruns on time and budget and on the need to remedy or change specifications during the roll out of a programme. Let us hope the MOD can now find new ways to offer value for money and to secure the high quality vehicles, vessels and other equipment they need.