



## Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs)

8th January 2025

*Briefing by PoliMonitor*

# PMQs Briefing: 8th January 2025

*Briefing by PoliMonitor*

---

Welcome to 2025, and what a start it has been for Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and the Labour government. The first week of the year has already delivered its fair share of challenges, from rising critical incidents reported by NHS Trusts in England as they grapple with the winter surge, to Elon Musk's accusations aimed at ministers, and the growing calls from the Conservative Opposition for a new inquiry into child sexual exploitation cases. If anything, it's business as usual in the political arena, as MPs return to their regular duties after the festive break.

The Prime Minister kicked off the first PMQs of the year by highlighting the launch of Labour's elective reform plan, calling it an essential step that had long been neglected by the previous government. Starmer framed it as a necessary policy intervention for an NHS under increasing pressure, one that he insisted would deliver substantial improvements in patient care. His remarks, however, were swiftly overshadowed by Leader of the Opposition Kemi Badenoch, who immediately pivoted to the issue dominating the headlines—the child sexual exploitation scandal. Badenoch raised concerns about the full extent of the crimes and whether all perpetrators had been adequately uncovered. The inquiry has become a point of contention, with Badenoch asking whether the Prime Minister was confident that the full scope of these atrocities had been revealed, or whether more perpetrators remained at large.

Starmer defended the government's approach to the issue. He acknowledged that some of the crimes were localised, but he reiterated that the national inquiry, launched previously, had produced recommendations—many of which, he argued, had been ignored by the past government. He expressed frustration that despite efforts to tackle the issue, public discourse was still clouded by myths and stereotypes, and called out the Conservatives for their proposed amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill to be voted on later this afternoon that he stated would directly protect children, including those currently out of school. The amendment, which would call for a new inquiry, “would kill it stone dead”, said Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson this morning. Starmer urged Conservative backbenchers not to support the amendment.

Badenoch wasn't prepared to let the matter rest. She countered Starmer's defence by pointing to the progress made under the previous Conservative government, noting that 18 out of 20 recommendations from the earlier inquiry had been accepted. She also highlighted the establishment of a gang taskforce designed to tackle the issue head-on. However, she argued that many perpetrators remained uncaught, and that the government's inaction continued to allow harm to persist. Starmer shot back, accusing Badenoch and her party of failing to act on these matters when in power, noting that whilst they had “accepted” the recommendation, they had not actually actioned them. This was in comparison to his government, which he said was now taking decisive steps to rectify the situation. He directly challenged her to explain why, as a

former minister and as an MP for 8 years, she had never raised the issue in Parliament until now. Badenoch responded saying she had spoken about it (although no record of her having done so in Parliament can be found on Hansard), and stated that she had worked behind the scenes to protect victims such as during the Tavistock scandal, insisting that the focus should remain on the survivors, not political posturing.

The rebuttal was aimed at Starmer's legal background, which she suggested was distracting from the real issue at hand. She urged the Prime Minister to act like a leader, not a lawyer. Badenoch accused Starmer's claim of a national inquiry not being appropriate due to there having already been an inquiry with which the Government could take action on of being a "weak excuse", and warned that failure to act could contribute to the vilification of entire communities, particularly British Muslims, unfairly linked to the perpetrators. Closing her remarks, she called for MPs in affected constituencies to put the victims' voices before political party lines, demanding full accountability.

The first PMQs of 2025 set the tone for what is expected to be a politically charged year. The contrast between Labour's current efforts and the historical challenges of the Conservative government will undoubtedly continue to shape the narrative surrounding national security, justice, and the protection of vulnerable citizens. On the flip side, the Conservatives, under Badenoch's leadership, are using this inquiry issue as an opportunity to reassert their relevance and challenge Labour's authority on national security. However, many critics are beginning to question whether this is just another example of the Tories taking up arms over a new issue, potentially using it to sideline Labour's ongoing challenges.

As 2025 progresses, expect these debates to dominate the political landscape, with both parties feeling the heat of a tense standoff on how best to address this ongoing issue. For Labour, it will be crucial to show that their approach to justice is more than just talk—real action must follow. The public, already fatigued by years of political turmoil, will demand results, not more reviews and inquiries.

You can see the full list of questions and interactions from PMQs below. Thanks, as always, for using PoliMonitor.

## Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition

- The Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, began questions today by wishing all members of the House a Happy New Year. He said our thoughts are with those impacted by the recent funding and thanks to emergency services. Launched our elective reform plan this week and will do what the last government failed to do.
- The Leader of the Opposition, Kemi Badenoch, offered the condolences of the whole House to the Prime Minister over the loss of his brother over the break, offering her party's sincerest condolences. She continued by saying this year has started with a focus on the rape gang scandal which changed many lives forever. There has been an inquiry but not about the rape gang scandal. Is the PM confident that we know the full extent of rape gang activity?
- The Prime Minister said thank you to her for reaching out over the festive period. On a further inquiry, some of the crimes and inquiries were localised and there was a national one which had twenty recommendations none of which were implemented by the last government. He continued by saying this is a serious issue and we must focus on the victims and survivors. He stated that there are mixed views from the victims and survivors on the need for a further inquiry and there needs to be action on what we already know. Myths and stereotypes are at the heart of this, he said, and the review called for mandatory reporting and what cannot be tolerated, the PM said, is that this afternoon Conservative MPs will vote down a Bill that has protection for children within it. One of the measures in the Bill protects children out of school today.
- Badenoch said she was shocked that the PM said actions were not taken, noting that the Conservative government had accepted 18 of the 20 recommendations and went further, launching a gang taskforce that found 550 more perpetrators which shows there is still work to be done. She continued by outlining that in Rothertham alone there are huge numbers of victims and wider in the UK too reiterating that no one has joined the dots, no one has the total picture and these crimes almost certainly still going on. Badenoch referenced one victim from Telford who said she wants a national inquiry because it will hold people accountable which previous inquiries have not. Badenoch asked the PM to take forward actions while having a national inquiry which would have the power to summon witnesses.
- The PM said that the Conservative party accepted but did not act on the recommendations, saying he had called for some of the changes that the report had suggested 11 years ago whilst he was Director of Public Prosecutions, and that they still hadn't been enacted. He continued by calling out the Leader of the Opposition for her tenure as a Minister in the last government and never once raising the issue, saying that only recently has she jumped on the bandwagon. The PM said that if he is wrong and she has raised it in the Commons previously, she should say so now and he would withdraw this remark.

- Badenoch said the PM is being specific when in fact she has raised this in the past, continuing that she knows as a Minister she would not have been speaking on this specific issue due to being a Home Office matter, but reminded the PM of other victims who she did help like on the Tavistock scandal, when she was being called transphobic. Badenoch continued by saying the gang rape issue is systemic and includes many names and interlinked issues. She said the PM called for 9 inquiries in the last parliament, why not this one?
- The PM said this is important and has to focus on victims. He spoke to Badenoch raising a question of victims but outlined that some of the survivors are in different places in terms of wanting a new inquiry. He reiterated that the last inquiry took seven years and that would take us to 2031 should it occur again. He confirmed that he had also spoken with victims and amongst the issues raised with him was that it is very hard for them to come forward and they do not want to be rushed through this process, reiterating that this cannot be done in a hurry or on the cheap. The PM stated that victims want action today and outlined that he genuinely doesn't understand why anyone would vote against the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill later today.
- Badenoch responded to say it is very possible to have shorter inquiries when covering areas not yet looked at, and that the government does not need to repeat the work done already. A national inquiry would ask if there was a cultural or racist part of this. Does the PM now recognise that sacking people for telling the truth causes an effect that victims are not heard?
- The PM said that he will call those who did not tell the truth out, whoever they are outlining his role in past prosecutions of this nature.
- Badenoch said that the government needs to focus on what this is really about. This is not about the PM's work in the CPS and is not about him. The Leader of the Opposition continued to say this is about victims and called for the PM to "be a leader not a lawyer". She said that people were scared to tell the truth in case they were called a racist and said we cannot be afraid. The Labour party has adopted the islamophobia definition from the APPG and the lack of clarity means that innocent British muslims are smeared by association. Only a national inquiry will resolve this, she said.
- The PM said that he would call out any aspect of anything that has stopped any victim or survivor in coming forward. All the victims and survivors need to be in a position to give evidence and not all of them are, he stated, noting that it would take time and likely be subject to delays. His argument was that the government must proceed with the actions it can take now, as soon as possible.
- Badenoch said that the PM has effectively told the House he cannot do two things at the same time, calling the issue of a delay "a weak excuse" and that he is enabling those who wish to smear all British muslims. She called for the truth, saying he is making it all

about the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and not about the amendment calling for a new inquiry, calling MPs of these constituencies to vote against this inquiry. Badenoch ended by saying this is one of the worst scandals in recent British history and asked how the government will explain, alongside those MPs of the constituencies where these crimes happened and are happening, that following the whip is more important than doing what is right.

- The PM said this is a scandal but highlighted that not once in 8 years did she say this before. He said the Conservative party didn't act on the inquiry before. The PM said you can't kill the Bill this afternoon and protect children, and urged those on the Conservative benches to vote with the Bill instead of jumping on the bandwagon and potentially killing it.

## Questions from the House

### 1. Neil Coyle MP, Bermondsey and Old Southwark

- **Question:** Condolences to the PM on the loss of his brother. How will today's vote on Children's wellbeing help to tackle violence against women and girls.
- **Answer:** VAWG and child sexual exploitation are sickening and victims have been let down for too many years. Lots of inquiries launched and can be debated about whether a further inquiry is necessary. Met with victims who are clear they want action now not further delay. Whatever the view, what is shocking is that anyone would vote down the Bill and urge the Leader of the Opposition to remove the amendment.

### 2. Alex Baker MP, Labour, Aldershot

- **Question:** My constituent and other armed forces families are living in shabby accommodation. Welcome the MOD plan to buy back homes and will the PM confirm how the government will improve this.
- **Answer:** By reacquiring can rapidly transform this accommodation and saving the tax payer in rent too.

Sir Ed Davey MP, Liberal Democrats, Kingston and Surbiton, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party

- **Question:** Fixing the care crisis is urgent for the millions of people not getting the care they need, for family carers making sacrifices and for the NHS. the PM is right that we need a cross party approach, that needn't take three years. Will the PM speed up this work?
- **Answer:** Yes, it is right we need to get this right and invite him to work with us on this. Need some action now as well and why we have taken immediate action with immediate funding and supporting others to live more independent lives. Implementing this in stages and ensuring consensus for the bigger changes.
- **Question:** If the government does bring these reforms in this year, this parliament will fail. While the Hon Member for Clacton may miss out on his allowance, should give us all pause for thoughts. Will the PM work with us to bring in long overdue reforms to party funding so power lies with the voters?
- **Answer:** All had a smile on Sunday when he said how cool it was to have the support for Musk, only for Musk to say he should be removed. We are looking at funding more generally.

### 3. Sojan Joseph MP, Labour, Ashford

- **Question:** The trading links between the UK and mainland Europe are of particular importance to my constituency of Ashford. So would the Prime Minister support my efforts and those of other Kent colleagues to restore international train service to Ashford International Station. That will help economic growth in my constituency, Kent and wider South East.

- **Answer:** We are of course resetting and strengthening that relationship on the economy, on energy, on security to deliver the growth that we need. I know this is an issue of considerable frustration to his constituents. The decision in question is ultimately for Eurostar, but we are keen to see international services reinstated to Ashford as soon as possible. I would be happy for the Rail Minister to update him on the latest discussions.
4. Stephen Flynn MP, SNP, Aberdeen South
- **Question:** Outside of this place, temperatures continue to plummet, energy bills continue to rise and while the Prime Minister might have no regrets about any of the decisions that he has taken in office does he understand that the public do?
  - **Answer:** We took some tough decisions and they led to a budget which delivered the largest settlement since devolution began to Scotland. If he thinks we should now reverse that, then he should say so. The SNP has been given the money, so now the SNP have the money, they have the power, and no more excuses for the non-delivery that we see in Scotland. If he wants me to reverse that, he should say so.
5. Sam Rushworth MP, Labour, Bishop Auckland
- **Question:** Feeling safe in your own community is among the most basic of human needs, but after 14 years of Tory cuts to Durham's frontline police and breaking the criminal justice system, too many of my constituents are victims of violence, theft and antisocial behaviour and these crimes too often go unpunished. Now I know the Prime Minister has had a lifelong commitment to protecting victims, so what assurances can the Prime Minister give my constituents that our new government will be tough on crime and on the causes of crime?
  - **Answer:** He's right, we need to crack down on those committing vile acts in our communities and that's why our plan for change puts 13,000 extra police and PCSO officers into neighbourhood policing, 3.5% real terms increase.
6. Marie Goldman MP, Liberal Democrat, Chelmsford
- **Question:** My constituent Dipak first opened the doors to his pharmacy in 1991 and he's been serving the Chelmsford community ever since, greeting many of his patients by name. But Dipak's business is struggling. His NHS contract no longer covers the cost of the drugs he has to dispense. For example, he's sometimes been forced to pay over a hundred times more for a particular mental health drug than his contract provides. Dipak is dipping into his life savings to keep his pharmacy afloat. Many other pharmacists across the country are doing the same. Does the Prime Minister agree with me that no pharmacist should be forced to use their own money to keep their pharmacy viable?
  - **Answer:** Community Pharmacy knows the Department of Health and Social Care sets drug tariff prices and regularly assesses what pharmacies are reimbursed to ensure overall they're paid fairly. If she would prepare to share the

details further with me, I will look and have a review by the team of the particular case that she's raised with me.

7. Mark Seawards MP, Labour, Leeds South West

- **Question:** Last year I was honoured to accept an invitation from the European Jewish Association to go to Krakow and discuss the role of Holocaust education in tackling the rising tide of anti-Semitism across Europe. We also visited Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau, where we laid wreaths and paid tributes to the many victims of the Holocaust. Given that this month marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of those evil places, will the Prime Minister commit to doing more to ensure this never happens again?
- **Answer:** Anti-Semitism is completely abhorrent and has no place whatsoever in our society. Mr Speaker, I recently met with Jewish community leaders in Downing Street to discuss what further we can do to combat anti-Semitism and that includes allocating £54 million for the Community Security Trust to continue their vital work.

8. Victoria Collins MP, Liberal Democrat, Harpenden and Berkhamsted

- **Question:** Businesses like Hicks in Harpenden, charities like the Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamstead, health and social care providers like the Elms Medical Practice in Harpenden, a GP, are amongst those up and down this country who are warning the Government about the negative impact of the proposed changes to national insurance contributions. When will the Prime Minister heed those warnings and at the very least look at exemptions for health and social care providers like they have for the NHS?
- **Answer:** We had to deliver a budget to wipe the slate clean and to deliver a stable basis for our economy and at the same time repair our public services. That is why we invested £25.6 billion over two years in the NHS, including additional funding for GPs and for hospices. We are taking measures to ensure that that funding is there to support our vital work.

9. Dame Meg Hillier MP, Labour, Hackney South and Shoreditch

- **Question:** Every week I visit constituents in my Hackney South and Shoreditch constituency living in the most appalling overcrowded social housing, some with triple bunk beds in the bedroom and the parents in a sofa bed in the living room. The new homes are completely out of the working people's price band. Will the Prime Minister agree that we need clear targets for the number of social housing units so that families in Hackney can live in dignity?
- **Answer:** I'm grateful to her for raising this and she describes an appalling situation when it comes to housing and one we're familiar to a number of MPs on both sides of the House and that's why we will deliver the 1.5 million homes that we desperately need across the country. She's right and the Budget announced £500 million into the affordable homes program which is hugely important, £100 million of that going to the Greater London Authority and we will also reform the

right to buy to deliver a fairer better value, a more sustainable scheme where long-standing tenants can buy their own home.

10. Andrew George MP, Liberal Democrat, St Ives

- **Question:** In Cornwall in the last 10 years over £500 million has been handed to holiday home owners through various tax loopholes etc. Will the Prime Minister agree to meet us so we get the full backing of the government and deliver first rather than second homes for the good?
- **Answer:** We are delivering 1.5 million homes and that includes 4,500 new homes every year in Cornwall. But I do recognise the point he makes which is that excessive concentrations of short-term lets and second homes in places like Cornwall can impact the availability and affordability of homes. That's why we'll enable councils to charge a premium on the council tax bills of second homes, abolish the furnished homes let regime and introduce a registration scheme for short-term lets. But I am happy to make sure that he and his Cornish colleagues do get the meeting they want with the Housing Minister to discuss that further.

11. Josh Fenton-Glyn MP, Labour, Calder Valley

- **Question:** This government is committed to using the criminal justice system to tackle violence against women and girls. But when an abuser can use a child custody battle to continue their abuse as happened in the case of one of my constituents, it's clear that we need to raise the issue in the civil courts too. Will the Prime Minister please look at ending the absurd assumption that a domestic abuser's involvement in a child's life is advantageous to their welfare?
- **Answer:** Yes, absolutely, and he's right. Family courts must never be a tool that domestic abusers can use to continue their appalling abuse and that's why we're expanding the number of new Pathfinder courts to provide dedicated support to survivors and protect the welfare of children. We are reviewing the presumption of parental involvement and we'll set out our position in due course. I'll make sure that he meets the relevant Minister to discuss this further.

12. Christine Jardine MP, Liberal Democrat, Edinburgh West

- **Question:** Happy New Year to everyone but 2025 is already proving a challenge for many of my constituents. Pensioners, families, small businesses, the hospitality industry, GPs, social care as a whole. Others have said they know that the SNP has failed to deliver for Scotland. They hear when the Prime Minister says that the Conservatives left the economy in a mess and they know that governments make difficult decisions but what they are asking me is when is this government going to do something positive for them to overcome the negative impacts they are facing from the budget.
- **Answer:** She raises the point about the failure of the SNP and the legacy of the Tories. And I'm proud that this Labour government delivered the largest budget settlement for Scotland since devolution. And that means 100,000 workers in Scotland benefit from the increases from the national minimum and living wage each year. An estimated 3.2 million people in Scotland will benefit from the

extension of the funding cut in fuel duty. And it comes, of course, on top of the £125 million set up by Great British Energy in Aberdeen. And it reinforces the point, they've got the powers but a terrible record. They left a terrible legacy. We're getting on delivering for Scotland.

13. Josh Newbury MP, Labour, Cannock Chase

- **Question:** Last year this Labour government delivered justice for members of the Mine Workers' Pension Scheme. 45,000 members of the similar British Coal Staff Superannuation Scheme are keen to see their £2.3 billion investment reserve returned to them which could boost Coalfield communities like mine in Cannock Chase. Will the Prime Minister meet with retired miners, trustees and Coalfield MPs to discuss what could be done for BCSSS members up and down the country?
- **Answer:** I was pleased that the first increased payments to mine workers scheme members were made at the end of November. I understand the strong feeling on the British coal staff superannuation scheme, which is why the Minister for Industry met the trustees last year. We will be working with the coal staff trustees to consider their proposals once the new mine workers pension scheme arrangements have been agreed.

14. Gregory Stafford MP, Conservative, Farnham and Bordon

- **Question:** It's recently been uncovered that the Anti-Corruption Minister has been influenced by international names after the Transport Secretary had to resign after a conviction. What is the PM doing to target these scandals?
- **Answer:** The minister has acted appropriately by referring herself to the independent adviser. We brought in our new ministerial code to allow ministers to ask to establish the facts and I'm not going to give a running commentary on that important exercise.

15. Tonia Antoniazzi MP, Labour, Gower

- **Question:** I recently wrote to the England and Wales cricket teams regarding the upcoming game in the championship trophy against Afghanistan on the 26th of February. I have met with the ECB and we are calling for the game to be boycotted. I thank everybody for the support that I've had across this house and also at the other place. Will the PM agree to meet and talk to his counterparts in South Africa and Australia that they boycott the games as well.
- **Answer:** There have been huge cuts to the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan. DCMS are in touch with their international counterparts on this issue. I welcome the England and Wales Cricket Board making strong representations to the International Cricket Council on Afghanistan's women's cricket team.

16. Sir Roger Gale MP, Conservative, Herne Bay and Sandwich

- **Question:** The PM has spoken at length today about his work as a Prosecutor in the cases of sexual assault and abuse. Can he tell the House today why he did nothing on the allegations against Mohamed Al-Fayed?
- **Answer:** They did not come across my desk.

Please contact the PoliMonitor team at [info@polimonitor.com](mailto:info@polimonitor.com) for more information

