

Minister backs Truss over transgender comments

Charlotte Wace

The housing secretary has backed Liz Truss over her comment that “women do have vaginas” amid a transgender discussion row.

Robert Jenrick was questioned about the remark made by Truss, the international trade secretary, which had implied that gender should be based on physical characteristics.

He was asked on Times Radio whether he agreed that women were

born with female genitals. “I think there’s a matter of biology, of course, what is a woman,” Jenrick replied. “I mean absolutely, I agree with Liz Truss.”

“Undoubtedly, of course we want to ensure that those people who are trans can live their life comfortably.

“I want everyone to be able to live their life the way they want to, be happy and find love wherever they can.”

Truss had made her comment in May in a conversation about a student at

Abertay University who had said “it was a fact” that women are born with female genitals. Lisa Keogh, 29, was investigated by the institution after making the remarks during a transgender discussion in an online seminar.

Questioned on the matter by Nick Ferrari on LBC radio, Truss had said: “Women do have vaginas, Nick”.

Essex University has apologised to transgender and non-binary staff and students over a review that suggested it may have unlawfully cancelled the

speaking engagements of two female academics accused of transphobia.

The report commissioned by the university over their decision to drop the speakers concluded that Stonewall had provided them with misleading and potentially illegal advice. It prompted the vice-chancellor, Professor Anthony Forster, to apologise to the academics.

His apology extended “for any harassment or bullying that has taken place and for anyone made to feel unsafe” as a result of the review.



Rock up Mick Jagger and Jimmy Page feature in a collection being auctioned in Essex by Ed Finnell, who photographed stars in Los Angeles in their 1970s pomp

Sunak ‘must keep extra £20 on universal credit’

Eleni Courea Political Reporter

The chancellor must extend the “vital” weekly £20 uplift on universal credit, six former Tory welfare secretaries have said.

Rishi Sunak is under growing pressure to make permanent the increase, introduced as an emergency measure.

A letter to Sunak was signed by Amber Rudd, Esther McVey, Damian Green, Stephen Crabb, Sir Iain Duncan Smith and David Gauke.

The former welfare secretaries said that the uplift had been “vital for protecting the incomes of many families and providing support to the economy”.

They wrote: “As former secretaries of state for work and pensions, we are writing with one voice to support those individuals and families that are struggling most in the wake of the pandemic, and to ask that the current funding envelope for individuals on universal credit be kept at the current level.

“Work remains the best way out of poverty for those who can work, but we want to make sure that those who cannot work are supported with dignity.”

The number of people claiming benefits has risen during the pandemic from three million to six million.

The letter argued that the welfare system had been “one of the greatest, but unremarked, successes” of the Tory government’s response to coronavirus.

Sunak announced in March that the £20-a-week increase would remain in place for another six months, until the end of September.

In the run-up to the spring budget cabinet ministers were divided on whether to make the increase permanent. Boris Johnson ultimately sided with Sunak over Thérèse Coffey, the work and pensions secretary, to back a temporary six-month extension.

Treasury estimates show that the £20-a-week uplift costs about £6 billion a year.

Analysis by the Legatum Institute, a right-leaning think tank, estimates that universal credit has saved a further 650,000 people from falling into poverty during the coronavirus crisis.

Baroness Stroud, its chief executive, said: “To ensure this continues as we begin to adapt to life after, or living with,

Covid-19, there is a clear need for this investment to remain in place as part of a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy. This must be placed at the heart of the UK’s Covid-recovery response.”

The Centre for Social Justice, a centre-right think tank, argued that the costs to remove the uplift would outweigh any savings.

The think tank said that for about three million new universal credit claimants, the extra £20 a week was not “a temporary uplift but the only level of welfare payment they have ever known”.

Duncan Smith said that the benefit system had been “one of the greatest, but unremarked, successes of the government’s response to Covid”.

“The extra £20 has been essential in allowing people to live with dignity,” he said. “This investment should be at the heart of what makes us Conservatives: delivering the policies needed to provide businesses and people across the UK with opportunities to prosper, whilst simultaneously providing support to those at risk of being left behind.”

Labour pledge of contracts for UK firms

Eleni Courea

Labour has set out plans to hand more public contracts to British businesses after accusing the government of taking their support for granted.

Rachel Reeves, the shadow chancellor, said that a Labour government would “make, sell and buy more in Britain” by awarding more government contracts to UK firms and effecting a culture change in Whitehall.

She told Sky: “It makes economic sense as well as common sense to ensure we are creating good quality apprenticeships in this country.”

Labour sources said it was the start of a bolder stance towards the government. One said: “Winning Batley & Spen is the start of us ramping up ahead of the next election and showing some of our big ideas like this one is crucial.”

Reeves said that under public procurement rules, a bid that creates high-paid and high-skilled jobs in the UK is given no more weight than one that creates no value in this country.

Labour said that foreign firms dominated the shortlist for £2.5 billion worth of contracts to build HS2.

Quintagram® No 1046

Solve all five clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Annoy (3)

2 Listen surreptitiously (6)

3 Sport of Hobbs and Hutton (7)

4 Avid reader (8)

5 --- Johnson, 1960s US first lady (4,4)

A	A	B	B	B	C	C	D
D	E	E	G	G	I	I	I
K	K	L	M	O	O	O	R
R	R	R	T	U	W	W	Y

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Doctor killed driver, 82

A junior doctor has admitted causing the death of an 82-year-old man by careless driving. A Vauxhall Astra driven by Dr Stamatis Tzanninis swerved on to the wrong side of the road and hit a Toyota Aygo driven by Malcolm Reynolds. The car ended up in a ditch after the collision near Fordingbridge, Hampshire, and Reynolds died the next day. At Southampton crown court Tzanninis was ordered to do 180 hours of unpaid work and banned from driving.

Church embassy plea

The Church of England has launched an appeal to raise €200,000 (£171,000) to save its embassy in Rome. The Anglican Centre acts as a de facto embassy for the Anglican Communion, of which the Church of England is the mother church, in Rome and for the Vatican. The centre is facing closure because of lost income during the pandemic.

Skateboard pair sought

Detectives investigating the killing of a 60-year-old man in a “random and unprovoked assault” in Oxford Circus, central London, want to speak to two skateboarders who intervened. The men led a group of passers-by who held down a suspect and seized a knife. A 25-year-old man who was arrested on suspicion of murder remains in custody.

IVF blood pressure link

Women who conceive via IVF are more likely to suffer serious blood pressure problems during pregnancy, according to research in France. The study found a 5.3 per cent chance of pre-eclampsia in embryos transferred by hormone therapy, which stops the formation of the corpus luteum, a dynamic gland that secretes hormones.

Tunnel opens for tours

Part of London’s transport system is to open to the public for the first time since 1952. The Kingsway tram subway ran from near Holborn to Waterloo Bridge. In 1998 the station entrance was used in the *Avengers* film as the entrance to the Ministry, an under-river bunker. What is left of the tunnel will open for tours, with tickets on sale from Friday.