

Raab: I'll quit if bullying allegations are upheld

Justice Secretary refuses to resign before inquiry ends and insists he has 'behaved professionally throughout'

By Charles Hymas
HOME AFFAIRS EDITOR

DOMINIC RAAB has said that he will resign if bullying complaints against him are upheld by an inquiry.

Although, the Justice Secretary, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, said he is confident that he has behaved professionally at all times, he added: "If an allegation of bullying is upheld, I will resign."

However, Mr Raab dismissed calls to step aside while the investigation by the senior lawyer Adam Tolley KC is still ongoing, maintaining that he is "innocent until proven guilty".

Mr Raab is being investigated by Mr Tolley over bullying allegations, with dozens of officials thought to be involved in eight formal complaints covering his time in three departments – for Brexit, the Foreign Office and Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

He refused to speculate about the outcome or to discuss the details of the allegations while the investigation was ongoing into the bullying allegations, which he has denied.

"If you believe in innocent till proven guilty, you wouldn't want to penalise people until you've got the outcome," he told *Sophy Ridge on Sunday* on Sky News. "That would politicise the process of lodging complaints, because you can effectively, for months on end, remove Cabinet members or other leading political figures."

"Of course, if an allegation of bullying is upheld, I would resign."

Mr Raab claimed that he was only aware of complaints against him from November last year, despite some complaints reportedly being lodged as early as March 2022.

Speaking later on the BBC, he denied that he was a bully but said he had learned lessons from his dealings with civil servants in the past.

Asked on BBC One's *Sunday with*

Laura Kuenssberg programme whether he had ever reflected on his dealings with staff and felt he "shouldn't have reacted in that way", Mr Raab said: "Look, in terms of working style, falling short of any of the impropriety you refer to, look, of course, we learn lessons as we go."

"That is part of the relationship with civil servants."

"But I'm confident that I've behaved professionally throughout."

"I think [that for] the lion's share of the time, the vast majority of cases and the time we spend together, civil servants and ministers work very effectively together."

Asked if there should be "more plain speaking in politics", he replied: "Yes, absolutely ... what we need, and I think this can be reconciled absolutely with having a zero-tolerance on bullying, you need ministers who come in and correctly but directly challenge assumptions, test ideas – that is the way we get the best out of government."

'If you believe in innocent till proven guilty, you wouldn't want to penalise people until the outcome'

Among the claims against Mr Raab that have been made publicly are that he would "hard stare" at staff and committed "micro-aggressions".

Dave Penman, general secretary of the FDA union, dismissed Mr Raab's comments yesterday, insisting that civil servants do not "have the confidence" to challenge bullying or harassment by senior figures in Whitehall.

He told *Laura Kuenssberg* on the same show: "The picture he paints is that everything is fine in the Civil Service and the relationship between ministers and civil servants is OK."

"That's not the picture civil servants speak of, that's not their experience."

"One in six are saying they have experienced bullying or harassment, or have witnessed that, in the past 12 months alone across 20 government departments. They don't have the confidence of challenging those behaviours."



Dominic Raab, the Deputy Prime Minister, said that the 'process of lodging complaints should not be politicised'

Labour pledges minimum seven-year jail term for rapists

By Max Stephens

RAPISTS would be jailed for at least seven years under a Labour government, the party's shadow justice minister has said.

Ellie Reeves has pledged to make tackling violence against women and girls the "number one priority" if her party comes to power at the next general election.

Among a raft of promised reforms, including specialist rape courts, a domestic violence register and legal advocates for survivors, Ms Reeves also said Labour would roll out minimum jail sentences of seven years for convicted rapists.

The crime currently has the lowest charge rate, with only 1.6 per cent of rapes recorded by police leading to prosecutions.

The MP for Lewisham West and Penge said the reform "would send a really, really clear signal that this sort of behaviour is just absolutely abhorrent and wrong".

Minimum jail sentences are already in place for other serious crimes including domestic burglary, drug trafficking and certain firearm offences.

1,000

Average number of days rape victims waited for their cases to be heard in court last year, government figures showed

Ms Reeves said although the Government says it wants to tackle violence against women and girls, "their actions tell a bit of a different story".

"They are not the party of law and order, Labour is, because we are saying we would actually do these things and get on with doing them," she said.

Figures from the Ministry of Justice released last year showed rape victims were waiting 1,000 days on average for their case to be heard in court.

Ms Reeves explained how specialist rape courts would help speed up the process. She said: "Within the courts, you would have judges who are routinely hearing rape cases, so they understand the issues, they have had training in myths and stereotypes about victims."

However, Edward Argar, the justice minister, insisted that Labour's action on serious crime "don't match their empty words".

"They have consistently voted against tougher sentences for rape and failed to properly support victims when they were in power," he said.

'High-tax' UK will be poorer than Romania by 2040, warns Starmer

By Amy Gibbons
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE UK will soon be poorer than eastern Europe if it does not fix the growth crisis, Sir Keir Starmer will say today.

The Labour leader will use a speech in London's financial district to warn that the country is "falling behind" while its European neighbours grow richer, risking a "brain drain" to Lyon, Munich and Warsaw as young people face "no option but to get out".

He will issue the warning as analysis by Labour suggests that the UK is on course to be poorer, per capita, than Poland by 2030, and both Hungary and Romania by 2040.

Fleshing out Labour's plan to achieve the highest sustained growth in the G7 by the end of its first term in charge,

Sir Keir will pledge that families will benefit directly from the boost – ensuring people feel better off, regain pride in their high streets and enjoy better public services.

This is the "only show in town" to lead Britain out of the Tories' "low-wage, high-tax doom-loop", he will claim.

However, Greg Hands, the Conservative Party chairman, shot back by warning that Labour is teeing up a plan for power with £90 billion of "unfunded spending", risking "endless borrowing and higher debt".

"The last time Labour left office, there was no money left, debt was spiralling, and unemployment soared – something the British people will never forget," he said.

Sir Keir is expected to tell voters they

'We need to be frank about the path of decline the Tories have set our country on'

will be able to "judge me on whether you feel better off after five years of a Labour government".

Seeking to contrast his party's five core "missions" with the Conservatives' "sticking-plaster policies", he will suggest it is the government's prerogative to "shape markets", rather than merely "serve them", and reform a labour market that currently "locks in low pay and productivity".

He will also claim that growth can be achieved by ensuring the planning system favours new builds, wind farms and laboratories over people who are "already wealthy".

"We need to be frank about the path of decline the Tories have set our country on," he will say.

"The British people are falling behind while our European neighbours get

richer. In the east as well as in countries like France and Germany, I'm not comfortable with that. Not comfortable with a trajectory that will soon see Britain overtaken by Poland. Nor am I prepared to accept what the consequences of this failure would mean."

Labour's analysis of World Bank data found that the UK's GDP per capita, a measure of the economy's health, was \$44,979 (£37 million) in 2021, compared with \$34,915 in Poland, \$33,593 in Hungary, and \$30,777 in Romania.

Assuming growth continues at a similar rate in real terms as it did between 2010 and 2021 – 0.5 per cent for the UK, 3.6 per cent for Poland, 3 per cent for Hungary and 3.8 per cent for Romania – then Britain will end up worse off than its European counterparts over the next two decades, the party said. A paper

'We are falling behind while our European neighbours get richer. I'm not comfortable with that'

detailing Labour's plan for meeting and measuring its progress on its growth mission will be published ahead of Sir Keir's speech.

The nine-page document, seen by *The Daily Telegraph*, says that the party would build the economy "from the bottom up and middle out".

To do so, Labour would act as a "strategic partner to industry" and provide "catalytic public investment to unlock private capital".

The party would freshen up the planning system to remove barriers to investment and offer English towns and cities the tools that they need to build bespoke growth strategies.

Labour would also "make Brexit work" by "closing the holes" in the Government's deal and cutting red tape, the document says.

There must be no surrender to the EU over who governs Northern Ireland, says DUP

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that goods destined for Northern Ireland from the UK would not undergo regulatory checks and would instead be subject to "market surveillance", where the EU has live access to a database of consignments.

"If we can scale back some of the regulatory checks that apply and some of the paperwork, that would in itself involve a significant scaling back with the role of ECJ," Mr Raab told *Sophy Ridge on Sunday* on Sky News.

Mr Raab also appeared to confirm suggestions that Mr Sunak has negotiated a means by which the Northern Ireland Assembly in Belfast will be given pre-legislative scrutiny of new EU laws so that they can be disapplied if necessary. He said the UK was looking for a "democratic arrangement" where Stormont would have the "last word" on new EU rules.

"We need to make sure that if there are any new rules in the future, there's a proper democratic check and a proper democratic check coming out of the institutions in Stormont," he added.

The DUP and Eurosceptic MPs suggested last night that Mr Sunak's deal looked unlikely to go far enough to assuage their concerns. DUP MP Sammy Wilson said it was a "red line" for his party that "no EU law" should continue to apply in Northern Ireland.

"Not only are we given those laws and have imposed those laws on us at present, but they're imposed without

any say either by British ministers or by politicians in Northern Ireland," he said.

Ian Paisley Jr, his fellow MP, warned that there should be no rush for a deal to reach a deadline as he warned Mr Sunak that "if his plan involves keeping any part of the Protocol, the DUP will not be going back into power-sharing. This is about who governs, who makes the laws – us or the EU? There must be no surrender."

Priti Patel, the former home secretary,

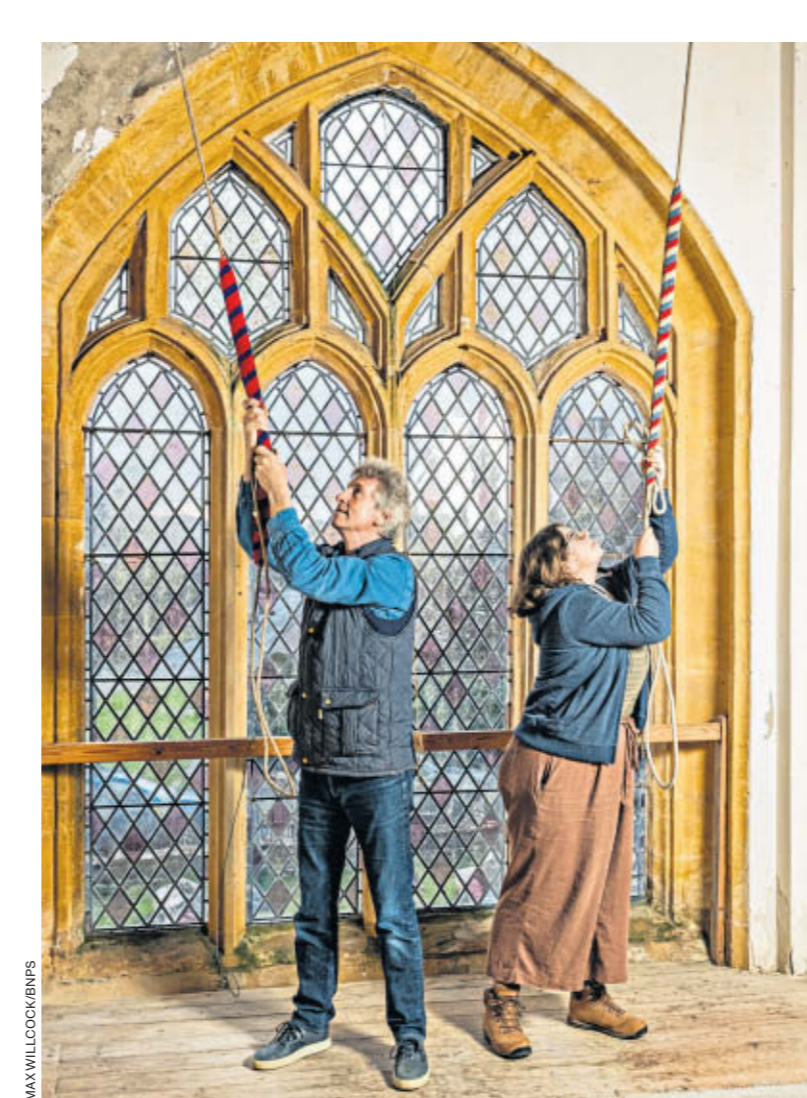


The DUP and Eurosceptic MPs have suggested that Rishi Sunak's deal looked unlikely to go far enough to assuage their fears

said: "It's not about green and red lanes, it's about, fundamentally, the efficacy and integrity of the UK in ensuring Northern Ireland is absolutely free of EU law and EU regulations."

Sir Iain Duncan Smith, the former Tory leader, said: "What isn't happening is that there is literally no change to the fact that Northern Ireland is going to be forced to be under the ECJ and EU law and regulations. I don't see how the DUP can come into power-sharing."

Mark Francois, chairman of the hardline European Research Group (ERG), said that they wanted EU law "expunged" from Northern Ireland.



Happy campanologists The bells of St Mary's Church in Frampton, Dorset, sound for the first time in 30 years after social media brought together a new team of ringers.

I'm a celebrity, get me my own TV company ... Hancock plans for life after politics

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

MATT HANCOCK has set up his own television company after appearances on two reality shows.

The MP for West Suffolk lost the Tory whip over his appearance on *I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!* and has said he will not seek re-election to Parliament.

Greenhazel, a television programming and broadcasting company, has been created, according to the *Sunday People*, suggesting Mr Hancock hopes for more television opportunities.

He is listed as the sole director of the company, which was registered with Companies House in January at an address in Newmarket, Suffolk.

Mr Hancock's stint in the Australian jungle on the ITV reality show earned him £320,000 last year, £10,000 of which was donated to charity. He also earned £45,000 for taking part in Channel 4's *Celebrity SAS: Who Dares Wins*.

Ms Coladangelo greeted Mr Hancock when he left the jungle and was in the audience for *Dancing On Ice*, ITV's skating show, this month. His appearances prompted Mo Gilligan, the host of the Brit awards, to joke, during the Feb 11 ceremony, that his next venture would be an appearance *Love Island*. "Matt

Hancock will not be here – but you'll catch him on some show," she joked. "He'll be on *Casa Amor* tomorrow night."

Mr Hancock's appearance on *I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!* was criticised by Rishi Sunak, the Prime Minister, and others and more than 1,000 complaints were made to Ofcom, the broadcasting watchdog, about it.

Mr Hancock said he made donations to St Nicholas Hospice in Suffolk and



Matt Hancock says he will not seek re-election to Parliament

the British Dyslexia Association, adding that he gave them more than his monthly salary as an MP, which is around £7,000.

The MPs' register of interests also shows he received £48,000 from the *Daily Mail* and *Mail On Sunday* for an interview and the serialisation of his book, *Pandemic Diaries*.

Mr Hancock will give evidence to this year's inquiry into the Government's handling of the pandemic. It will begin hearing evidence for its first investigation, examining the UK's pandemic preparedness on June 13 and evidence will run over six weeks to July 21.