

## Minutes of the OBR thinktank roundtable

31 March 2026

### Attending:

Panel members: National Institute of Economic & Social Research (NIESR), Resolution Foundation, Institute for Government (IfG), and Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS).

Budget Responsibility Committee: Tom Josephs, and Prof. David Miles CBE.

Staff of the OBR.

### **1. Long-run tax – Response from the Institute for Fiscal Studies**

OBR staff presented on planned updates to 50-year tax receipt projections, covering demographics, net zero, and policy assumptions including fiscal drag. The IFS responded with a presentation on approaches to the long-run policy baseline and the case for scenario-based framing. Questions centred around behavioural responses, treatment of specific taxes and the value of international comparisons.

### **2. Long-run spending – Response from the Institute for Government**

OBR staff presented on planned updates to long-term spending projections, covering age-related and non-age-related spending, demographic assumptions, and key policy assumptions around pensions, welfare uprating and defence. The IfG provided reflections on spending pressures not currently considered within the OBR framework and the assumptions embedded in the health spending baseline. Discussion covered potential cohort effects, climate costs, and how to communicate the long-run fiscal trajectory.

### **3. Fraud and error – Response from the Resolution Foundation**

OBR staff presented on planned work examining welfare fraud and error, focusing on the post-pandemic spike and the persistently higher rate under universal credit compared to legacy benefits. The Resolution Foundation responded with specific questions around the distinction between fraud and error, underpayments, the extent of pandemic persistence, and the methodology used to calculate the headline figures. Discussion centred around which data and topics would be most useful for further research.

### **4. Fiscal multipliers – Response from NIESR**

OBR staff presented on analysis of the OBR's use of fiscal multipliers and a wider assessment of forecast performance for 2024–25 against outturn. NIESR responded with a discussion of methodologies for estimating multipliers as well as an overview of some of the empirical literature on measuring fiscal shocks and the factors affecting multiplier size. Discussion centred around the challenges of applying these multipliers in practice.