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Vanguard Submarines

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps his Department is taking to inspect the four Vanguard class submarines following the discovery of reactor defects on HMS Sceptre and HMS Tireless. [140386]

Mr. Spellar: Vanguard Class submarines have a different design of reactor plant and are not at risk from the defect seen in HMS Sceptre. Consequently, there is no need to inspect them specifically for this defect.

Vanguard Class submarines have a component on their reactor plant that has the same function as the defective component in HMS Tireless. However, the component is of a different design and is far less susceptible to failure. Having taken advice from the Design Authority (Rolls-Royce Naval Marine) and from our independent nuclear safety advisers (AEA Technology), Ministry of Defence safety authorities are satisfied that the component is not at risk of failure and have endorsed the continued operation of these submarines. This component, on the Vanguard Class submarines, will be inspected during a maintenance period as part of the routine reactor plant in-service inspection programme.