

## Mike Penning MP



**Minister of State for Home Office and Ministry of Justice**

**Constituency:** [Hemel Hempstead, Eastern](#)

Majority: 13,406

**Party:** Conservative



**Westminster**

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 3000

E-mail: [Create email](#)

Web: [Visit website](#)

### Relevant contributions

- A brief summary of his relevant contributions in the subject area are [available here](#). Much of his experience comes from addressing justice and security issues during his role as Minister of State for Northern Ireland and motor crime whilst at the Department for Transport.

### Responsibilities

As Minister for Policing, Criminal Justice and Victims his responsibilities include crime and justice policy; police reform (includes police and crime commissioners and the strategic policing requirement); police funding; police pay and pensions; police productivity; police bureaucracy; neighbourhood policing, police community support officers, special constables, and community safety partnerships; police transparency and accountability; IPCC and HMIC; Police ICT company; police professionalism, equality and diversity; College of Policing; public order (including football policing); roads policing; international policing; business partnering and value for money (including emergency services mobile communications programme); police senior appointments and

leadership; police stakeholders and online child protection (including CEOP and UK Council for Child Internet Safety).

### Parliamentary Career

Shadow Minister for Health 2007-10;  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport 2010-12;  
Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office 2012-13;  
Minister of State for Disabled People, Department for Work and Pensions 2013-2014.

### Past Select committees

Member: Health 2005-07

### Backbench committees

Member, Executive, 1922 Committee 2006-07

### All-party groups (membership)

Member, [Gibraltar](#) Group  
Member, [Faroe Islands](#) Group

### Party posts

Director, Conservatives Against a Federal Europe 1995;  
General election campaign manager, Rochford and Southend East 1997

### Political interests

Constitution, single currency (against), health, home affairs, defence

### Non-political career

- Soldier, Grenadier Guards 1974-80;
- Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) 1980-81;
- Fire officer, Essex Fire and Rescue Services 1982-88;
- Freelance political journalist, Express Newspapers and News International 1988-92;
- Politics and journalism lecturer, UK and USA 1992-2005;
- Journalist and media adviser to six Shadow Cabinet members 1996-2004;
- Deputy chief press spokesperson, Conservative Central Office 2000-04

### Profile

A former soldier, fireman, journalist and spin doctor of working-class origins, Mike Penning has prospered in a Government often derided for its “poshness”.

A Tory with a far-from-typical background, he had a long search for a winnable seat. In 2001 he had to apply to no fewer than 72 local associations before landing his first nomination, in Thurrock, a Labour seat with a 17,000 majority. But he achieved a swing of nearly 5 per cent, one of his party's best results for that year.

It helped secure him a more promising offer in Hertfordshire, this time after only three applications, where he won the seat from Labour by just 499 votes.

But he then secured one of the most spectacular results of the 2010 election with a swing against Labour of more than 14 per cent, taking his majority to 13,406.

He had cause to thank the Liberal Democrats for taking votes from Labour, and was soon in Government with them as a junior Transport Minister, in charge of roads.

It was a switch from his Opposition brief where he had been a Shadow Health Minister for three years. But as a backbencher he cast himself in the role of motorists' friend. He tabled a motion against "inappropriately-placed" speed cameras and calling for a reduction in their numbers. He tabled another motion against road charging as an attack on poor people and on civil liberties.

In 2012 he was promoted to Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, number two to Theresa Villiers, in charge of security and the military in the Province where he served as a soldier in the 1970s.

A year later he was brought home and moved sideways to a more visible role as a Minister of State for Disabled People at the Department of Work and Pensions.

His responsibilities include the Government's controversial fitness-for-work programme, and in 2014 he condemned the contract with the benefits testing firm ATOS, set up by the Labour Government in 2008, "a mess", but that the costs of terminating its agreement would fall on the taxpayer. ATOS had said it wanted to withdraw early from the contract.

He came to politics late. Born in North London in 1957, he went to comprehensive schools in Essex, joined the Army at 16 and served with the Grenadier Guards in Kenya, Northern Ireland and Germany. At home he took part in ceremonial occasions such as Trooping the Colour.

He left the army in 1981 and became a fireman in Essex, before he had to leave because of back and knee injuries. He joined the family business, about which he is rather secretive, and after a number of other career changes fetched up as a political journalist. In 2003 he started his own media consultancy, and was a familiar and convivial figure around the Parliamentary press gallery.

He is fiercely patriotic and an implacably Eurosceptic opponent of the single currency. In the 1990s, he was the organiser and spokesman for the Europhobe rebels who helped destabilise John Major's Government.

He founded Conservatives Against a Federal Europe in 1995, which at one point claimed nearly 50 MPs as supporters, including several now in the Government. He wound the organisation up in 2001, saying it was no longer needed.

His first introduction to Parliament was as a researcher to Sir Teddy Taylor who invited him to shadow him after he had to leave the fire service. He also worked for John Redwood, and was Sir Teddy's election campaign manager in Southend in 1997, before becoming a media adviser to

William Hague's Shadow Cabinet.

In 2001 he accepted what turned out to be a poisoned chalice as Iain Duncan Smith's personal press spokesman. Not even his fireman's skills could save his leader from his final conflagration. In the 2005 leadership contest he gave his support to David Davis.

He has spoken out against restrictive practices in the fire service, attacking the Fire Brigade's Union for inflexible rules and resistance to reforms of the shift system. He accuses his former union of a "1970s shop-floor" attitude, especially in its refusal to allow its members to be trained as paramedics.

Though identified with the Right over matters like Europe, he says he is well to the Left of his party on many social issues. He fought an active campaign on police underfunding, the rise in violent crime, the local hospital, council tax, the rural economy, even road humps and weeds. He called on retailers to stock Fairtrade products to help producers in the third world.

In his maiden speech, he paid an emotional tribute to Sir Teddy Taylor, from Sir Teddy's old seat in the chamber. He concentrated on threats to the local hospital, on violent crime and the overstretched Hertfordshire Police, losing officers to the Metropolitan force.

Shortly after his election, he was heavily involved in the response to the huge explosions at the Buncefield Oil Depot in his constituency. He opposed rebuilding of the plant and initiated a debate on the subject, calling for a public inquiry. He was elected to the executive of the 1922 Committee for a year.

A burly, affable type, he is extremely proud of his working-class roots, including what one snobbish commentator described as his "rough-hewn vowels".

He is married to Angela and has two daughters. One of several Ministers who opposed same-sex marriage, he is a member of the Conservative family campaign and the National Trust, and is keen on sport, especially football (Tottenham Hotspur) and rugby. He has spoken against high prices for Premiership football matches.

## Contact

### Address as: Mr Penning

#### Westminster address

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Tel: 020 7219 3000

E-mail: [penningm@parliament.uk](mailto:penningm@parliament.uk)

Web: [www.mikepenning.com](http://www.mikepenning.com)

#### Constituency addresses

Rt Hon Mike Penning MP  
The Bury  
Queensway  
Hemel Hempstead  
HP1 1HR  
Hertfordshire

Tel: 01442 251126

E-mail: [mike@penning4hemel.com](mailto:mike@penning4hemel.com)

## Staff



Secretary

Angie Penning (Constituency Office Manager)  
01442 251126

Helen Eastman (Constituency Secretary)

Janice Speaight (Constituency Secretary)

---