

UK Headlines — 18 Sep 2026

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Friday 18 September 2026 · UK-wide sweep

? Top Story

Diana memoir row escalates: Charles "giddily elated", and the Queen "offered to restore her HRH"

Earl Spencer's forthcoming memoir *Swan Song: Diana, My Sister* continues to dominate the front pages, with fresh claims landing overnight:

- **The King "sounded giddily elated"** after Diana's death, Spencer alleges — the BBC leads on the quote this morning.
 - The **Daily Mail** leads on an exclusive claim that **Queen Elizabeth II offered to restore Diana's HRH status after she died.**
 - The **Daily Mirror** frames it as "**EARL'S ASTONISHING CLAIMS: WAR OF WORDS**" — a straight Spencer-vs-Monarchy conflict story.
 - Earlier claims that Charles told Spencer "*Rest assured, we'll forget her soon enough*" remain the flashpoint; the Palace has said grief can "colour memory".
 - Front-page treatment today: **Mail, Mirror, Telegraph, Times, Sun, Independent, Express** all carry it.
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?? Politics

Leaked No 10 dossier: Burnham branded "continuity Starmer"

Sky News has obtained a **50-page Downing Street dossier** drawn up by a small group of senior No 10 advisers in **late April** and marked "**official sensitive**", setting out a blueprint to save Keir Starmer's premiership from May through to next month's Budget, themed around economic, energy and national security.

- The dossier contained **around 50 ideas**; six have so far been announced by **Burnham**, with a further eight expected in weeks.
- Policies proposed: **reforms to capital and property taxes**, tax incentives for the **AI industry**, a "war effort" on **insulation and electrification**, new **bio-defence labs**, action on **foreign election interference**, and public transport discounts.
- The **Daily Mail** brands Burnham "**continuity Starmer**"; the **Independent** notes Burnham has adopted several measures from the blueprint.
- Home Office minister **Sarah Jones** defended the government on Sky in response.

Bank holds rates at 3.75% — and warns of hikes if energy prices stay high

The **Bank of England** held Bank Rate at **3.75%** for the **sixth consecutive time**, with the MPC voting **6-3** (three members wanted a rise to 4%). Governor **Andrew Bailey** said rates are likely to rise if the **Middle East war** keeps energy prices elevated, warning inflation is now on course to hit **4%**.

Reform's £72m crypto donations row continues

- Reform UK received **two £36m donations in two days** — from crypto investors **Ben Delo** and **Christopher Harborne**. Delo's is the **biggest single donation ever given to a UK political party**.
- Government plans a **£100,000 cap** on donations from British voters based overseas, **backdated to 25 March** — a measure reaching the Lords.
- **Labour peers** are pushing for a **£50,000 cap** instead.
- The **Independent** leads on "**Reform's millions in tax breaks for crypto investors**", questioning the conflict of interest with the party's own donors.
- Byline Times reports Reform could keep **nearly £500,000 in interest** even if forced to return the donations.
- Farage insists the donations are legal "today".

Badenoch instructs lawyers over Wandsworth's 94% council tax rise

Tory leader **Kemi Badenoch** has brought in lawyers to challenge the government over local funding cuts, after **Wandsworth Council** — one of her party's flagship London authorities — announced a **94% council tax rise**. She called it "outrageous"; ministers blame the council.

Other Westminster lines

- **Defence:** Nato chief **Mark Rutte** says the UK needs a "**credible path**" of annual defence budget increases to hit the target of **~£30bn more** by the mid-2030s. Burnham faces pressure to raise spending every year.
- **Healey in Europe:** the Chancellor will ask **EU finance ministers** to let the UK into the "**Made in Europe**" industry scheme.
- **Tax:** the **Telegraph** leads on "**Labour's tax raid on holiday cottages**" — Healey considering taxing holiday lets as second homes ahead of the Budget.
- **No 10 North:** Taoiseach **Micheál Martin** becomes the **first foreign leader to visit Burnham's Manchester "No 10 North"** — RTÉ says he wants to "inject further momentum" into Anglo-Irish relations.
- **Far right:** Home Secretary **Shabana Mahmood** called anti-asylum activist **Daniel Thomas** "a far-right and outright racist" who will feel "the full force of the law" if his organisation — **Patriot Platform** — commits crimes near contested asylum sites.
- **RNLI: Portsmouth lifeboat station** has been temporarily taken off service since 10 September after volunteers were abused by anti-migrant protesters.
- **Water:** cross-party MPs (Efra Committee) urge ministers to **reject the £10bn creditor rescue deal for Thames Water** and place it in temporary public ownership instead — describing a "doom loop".
- **Small business: Addison Lee's founder** owes **£20.5m in tax** after a UK tribunal ruling.
- **Lib Dems:** Ed Davey's party gathers for conference — the BBC asks whether "Nice Guy Eddie" will show a radical side.
- **Youth Parliament:** the **UK Youth Parliament** looks set to be axed within months as the government declines to commit funding.
- **Conservatives** urge Burnham to rule out tax rises at the Budget; **unions** met Healey to set out their demands.

Health & justice

- **County Durham NHS scandal: Twenty women had breasts removed unnecessarily** during breast cancer treatment, **County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust** has admitted to the BBC. They are among **hundreds of patients harmed**; nearly 50% of women treated there had a mastectomy versus a ~27% national average. Durham Police have opened an appeal.
- **Lucy Letby inquiry:** ministers have vowed sweeping NHS changes after the **Thirlwall Inquiry** report (published 15 Sept) found a "complete failure to protect babies"; the chair suggests "**cot cams**" could help parents monitor newborns.

- **'Putney pusher':** the family of suspect **Nicholas Brandram**, found dead on 15 September, say he was innocent and blame **Met Police** pressure — he told family the investigation was "murdering him". The Met defends its arrest.
- **Jagtar Singh Johal:** the Scot detained in India since 2017 has **been granted bail**, his family says.

Other UK

- **Archbishop of Canterbury** withdraws an award from a **Muslim cleric** who praised Osama bin Laden.
 - **Eurovision:** MPs will examine the UK's **"dismal" song choices**.
 - **Housing:** a couple explain how they bought a **£242,000 home without a deposit**.
 - **Wales:** learner drivers are turning to **YouTube and TikTok** to cut costs — instructors warn of risks.
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? World

Canada welcomed as EU's first "associate member"

PM **Mark Carney** told the **European Parliament** in Strasbourg that Canada "welcomes" **Ursula von der Leyen's** proposal to make it the EU's **first associate member**, calling for "deep cooperation" and saying Canada is "not a fair-weather ally". He stressed Canada is not seeking full membership. **Donald Trump** has attacked the move as a "hostile act" against the US. Analysts warn the warm words come with **no guarantees**.

South Africa: ninth woman's body found amid serial killer fears

Police confirmed the discovery of a **ninth woman's body in two months** near **Dawn Park / Kempton Park**, east of Johannesburg. Officers caution against assuming all the deaths are linked, but say they could be **"linked to a serial killer"**. **President Cyril Ramaphosa** has commented as many local women express fear.

US-Iran war passes half-year mark

- **UN experts say there are grounds to believe the US committed war crimes** in its strikes on Iran.

- The **US will allow an Iranian delegation to attend UN meetings in New York** as the war reaches its six-month mark.
- The UK has laid **Iran sanctions amendments** (financial, trade and transport restrictions) effective from **29 September**.

Other world lines

- **Sweden:** PM **Ulf Kristersson resigns** after election loss.
 - **EU:** announces plans to **restrict social media access for under-15s** across member states — including video platforms, AI chatbots and online games.
 - **Syria:** the **Assad regime planned a US journalist's kidnap for weeks**, a BBC investigation finds.
 - **Russia:** Duma elections held against the backdrop of the Ukraine war and Putin's tightening grip — few surprises expected, but they matter to the Kremlin.
 - **Turkey:** authorities moved to **shore up markets** after a fund liquidity crunch sparked a selloff; the regulator suspended trading and ordered the liquidation of several investment funds. Funds have haemorrhaged roughly **\$2.7bn in lira** since late August.
 - **Malawi:** British woman **Nusrat Osman, 47**, kidnapped nearly a week ago, has been **rescued** in a police operation that left **four suspected kidnappers dead** and a senior police chief wounded.
 - **Hawaii:** **Kaua'i remains without power** in the aftermath of **Hurricane Lowell's** rare direct hit — the first hurricane to hit the island since Iniki in 1992.
 - **Tech:** **Microsoft** warns uncontrolled AI could lead to a "**silicon species**" rivalling humans.
 - **Mali/Sahel & Mexico:** an **Aztec document** goes on display in Mexico after 186 years abroad.
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?? Weather

- The BBC says **sunshine will return to parts of the UK** with **warmer and drier weather on the way**.
 - The **Met Office** forecast: windy with showers, heaviest in Scotland, patchy rain in the south and west — **drier and brighter by Sunday**.
 - Forecasters are still floating a **late-September heat surge** with highs near **30C** in eastern areas; 2026 has already been a record-breaking summer (five heatwaves; the first year on record with three separate days at 37C).
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? Polling

Westminster voting intention — 7-poll moving average (PollCheck, updated 17 Sep 2026):

Party	7-poll avg	Latest poll (Find Out Now, 17 Sep)	Change
Labour	25.4%	25%	−1
Reform UK	23.3%	23%	=
Conservative	20.0%	18%	=
Lib Dems	11.1%	11%	−1
Greens	10.3%	12%	=
SNP	2.6%	3%	=
Plaid Cymru	1.2%	1%	=
Others	3.6%	6%	=

Labour leads Reform by 2.1 points on the 7-poll average — its narrowest sustained advantage of the year.

? Feel-Good Roundup

- **Historic Emmy double:** Welsh actor **Matthew Rhys** became the **first person ever to win two lead acting prizes in one night**, for *Widows Bay* and *The Beast in Me* — "luck and timing", he said.
- **Rescue in Malawi:** Nusrat Osman is safe after a week in captivity.
- **A new cat species** has been identified in **Bolivia** — the first new cat species found in more than a century.
- **Aztec document** returns home to Mexico after 186 years abroad.
- **Jagtar Singh Johal** granted bail in India after nine years.

? Quick Summary

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🌐 World	Canada welcomed as EU's first "associate member"; Trump calls it a "hostile act"
🇿🇦 South Africa	Ninth woman's body found — police probe possible serial killer
✂️ US-Iran	UN experts cite grounds to believe US committed war crimes ; six months of war
🏥 Health	Twenty women had breasts removed unnecessarily, County Durham trust admits
🌤️ Weather	Sunshine returning; drier and brighter by Sunday , late-month heat surge possible
🗳️ Polling	Labour 25.4% · Reform 23.3% · Con 20.0% · LD 11.1% · Green 10.3%

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Sources: BBC News (UK / Politics / World / Weather), The Guardian, Sky News, The Independent, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, The Telegraph, Financial Times, i Paper, Reuters, Al Jazeera, AP, PollCheck, Bank of England, Met Office, Paperboy / Tomorrow's Papers (front pages), GOV.UK.

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