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**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES**
(HANSARD)

Tuesday 23 June 2020

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The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Virtual participation in proceedings commenced (Order, 4 June).

[NB: [V] denotes a Member participating virtually.]

Oral Answers to Questions

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Secretary of State was asked—

Cancer Services

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): What steps he is taking to tackle regional variations in the restoration of cancer services after the covid-19 outbreak. [903679]

Mary Glindon (North Tyneside) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to enable the resumption of cancer treatments delayed as a result of the covid-19 outbreak. [903723]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill): Essential and urgent cancer treatment has continued throughout the pandemic and cancer specialists, as always, are discussing the best treatment options with their patients. We are working to ensure that referrals, diagnostics and cancer treatment are back at pre-pandemic levels across the whole of England as soon as possible. Due to covid-19, the 21 cancer alliances in England have established hubs to ensure dedicated cancer care away from hospitals dealing with the virus. From the end of April, local systems and cancer alliances have continued to identify ring-fenced diagnostic and surgical capacity for cancer in line with issued guidance. Regional cancer senior responsible officers must now provide assurance that these arrangements are in place to help minimal regional variation.

Andrew Gwynne [V]: I thank the Minister for that comprehensive reply, but she knows that people living with cancer are experiencing cancellation and delays to treatment all over the country, and that is causing anxiety and distress to many families. In getting people urgently back into treatment, will she look at the 12-point plan for restoration, recovery and transformation of cancer services outlined by Macmillan Cancer Support, Cancer Research UK and 23 other cancer charities, to ensure that cancer does not become the forgotten C during the coronavirus crisis?

Jo Churchill: I regularly engage with cancer charities and would be delighted to look at them to see where we are making good headway and where, perhaps, we could have discussions about other things that need to be targeted. While I have the hon. Gentleman on the screen, I would also like to highlight the fact that the Greater Manchester cancer alliance has led the way in its response to this pandemic. It was one of the first to establish a surgical hub model to ensure that cancer surgery was able to continue and that the local cancer system as a whole responded well. The alliance has also been looking to accelerate the rapid diagnostic centre to help promote diagnostics, so I thank everyone for that.

Mary Glindon [V]: As the Minister knows, being diagnosed with cancer is devastating, and one of the most important things to get patients through this difficult time is for them to be able to focus on their treatment. What message does the Minister have to comfort those people who are worried and stressed because they still cannot access the treatment they need because of covid-19?

Jo Churchill: I would say that, as soon as people notice any signs that might worry them, they should seek help. We have worked at pace to ensure that services have been resumed and are able to deliver for patients. Ensuring both early diagnosis and that patients can access the treatment that they need swiftly is our key ambition. We know that, following the guidance that has been delivered, we are achieving that throughout the system. Covid-19 has upended all our lives, and some decisions have been made to ensure the safety of patients, but we are now firmly back on track and will ensure that patients get the care they need.

Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op): Yesterday, the One Cancer Voice network of 25 charities published plans for restoring vital cancer services. I wrote to the Minister on 17 April with my own suggestion. Ideas included advanced radiotherapy, new models of chemotherapy, better cancer pathways and renewed screening and communication plans. This is not just about rebuilding what we had, but about making services better. If the Government are slow to do that, we face a cancer bubble that risks thousands of lives. Will the Minister commit to working with those charities and with me and other interested parliamentarians to form a cancer recovery plan to head off this looming crisis?

Jo Churchill: I assure the hon. Gentleman that, just as we have seen from working closely on the Medicines and Medical Devices Bill that is going through Parliament, there are lessons to be learned. There have been improvements in certain areas of radiotherapy in which it has been determined that fewer treatments actually mean a quicker and—I would not use the word “gentler”—an easier path for the patient. I would be happy to continue working both with him and with the cancer charities to ensure that we can improve that pathway for patients.

Adult Day Centres: Reopening

Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire) (Con): What his timetable is for the reopening of adult day centres for people with learning difficulties after the covid-19 outbreak. [903680]

The Minister for Care (Helen Whately): I know how difficult it has been for people with learning disabilities and their families during lockdown, particularly without the back-up of day centres. I want to see those important services reopening as soon as it is possible and safe to do so, but that decision will need to be made locally. We are talking to the Local Government Association and others about what guidance and support may be needed to get day services up and running again.

Mrs Latham [V]: I thank the Minister for that answer, and I would like to wish her a happy birthday. Unlike schools, day centres such as Whitemoor in my Derbyshire constituency are normally open throughout the summer to provide desperately needed stimulation for many adults with special needs. What measures will she introduce to ensure that staff working at day centres are adequately supported to function as safely as possible, as soon as possible?

Helen Whately: I thank my hon. Friend for her birthday greetings. She makes a really important point: as day centres reopen, they need to be safe for staff and users. Risk assessments will need to be carried out, and some may need to use personal protective equipment. Public Health England is developing guidance on the use of PPE in community settings. Local authority-run services should have PPE provided by the local authority, and services provided by other organisations that struggle to get PPE from wholesalers should be able to access emergency local supplies.

Referral-to-Treatment Waiting Lists

Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth) (Lab): What recent assessment he has made of trends in the length of referral-to-treatment waiting lists. [903681]

The Minister for Health (Edward Argar): The most recent performance data published by NHS England for April 2020 shows an 8% reduction in the size of the waiting lists compared with April 2019, from 4,297,571 to 3,942,748. However, it is important to note that reduced referrals due to covid-19 are likely to be the cause of that, and there are a number of people waiting longer.

Ruth Cadbury [V]: To address the inevitable increase in waiting times for non-covid treatments, back in March the Government contracted private health providers to supply some 8,000 bed spaces at a cost of millions of pounds to the NHS and taxpayers. It was reported that a significant proportion of that capacity has been paid for but underused. The Government are now considering further contracts with private sector hospitals. How can we be confident that money will not be wasted again and that those waiting will get the treatment they so badly need?

Edward Argar: I gently say to the hon. Lady that I do not think that contracting to ensure sufficient capacity in our NHS at all times, so that it was never overwhelmed, which it has not been, was a waste of money. In response to her substantive point, we continue to work with the independent sector and the broader NHS to get elective surgery and other non-emergency procedures restarted at pace.

Covid-19: BAME Health

Ms Karen Buck (Westminster North) (Lab): What assessment he has made of the effect of covid-19 on the health of people in BAME communities. [903682]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill): There was a passionate debate on this issue last Thursday. As I said then, there is no doubt that covid-19 has upended our lives. The virus cruelly discriminates by many factors, including age, gender and ethnicity. There are still gaps in our understanding of occupational risks and co-morbidity that need attention. My hon. Friend the Minister for Equalities will be taking forward important cross-Government work with the Equality Hub, Public Health England and others.

Ms Buck: We now know the full extent to which covid and other health inequalities affect black and minority ethnic communities, and the extent to which that is reflected in regional inequalities, but does the Minister also understand how much such inequality prevails within boroughs? In my local authority, there is a 16-year life expectancy gap between the poorest communities and the wealthiest, which reflects the disparity with black and minority ethnic communities. Will she ensure that an equalities review tackles inequality within boroughs as well as between them, and will there be funding to support that?

Jo Churchill: We know that health inequalities are stubborn, persistent and difficult to change—we knew that before covid-19, but that is not a reason to accept them. We fully agree that more needs to be done to reduce the disparity in health outcomes within the BAME community and the broader community. That is why we will ensure that the work on health inequalities goes on at pace.

Test and Trace

Meg Hillier (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op): What steps his Department is taking to support local authority covid-19 test and trace services. [903683]

Lilian Greenwood (Nottingham South) (Lab): What assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the NHS test and trace service. [903685]

Dr James Davies (Vale of Clwyd) (Con): What progress his Department has made on the establishment of a test and trace service for covid-19. [903687]

Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab): What his timetable is for the operation of the NHS test and trace service nationwide. [903696]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): NHS Test and Trace was introduced on 28 May, working with local authorities to prevent and contain the spread of covid-19. I am encouraged by the early results, which show that in the first two weeks of operation 87,000 people were contacted by NHS Test and Trace and agreed to self-isolate.

Meg Hillier: The Secretary of State will recall that I wrote to him a little while ago suggesting that an approach that was a bit more Shoreditch and a little less Whitehall might be effective. Given the lack of success of the app, maybe he could have taken that advice. I am pleased that Hackney Council is one of the five areas that is piloting this, working with GPs and other health professionals in public health and so on, but the critical thing is that we are not getting the data locally that we need to do the proper tracing of those who were close to someone who has tested positive. When will that data arrive? Without it, it is like working with one arm tied behind our back.

Matt Hancock: The amount of data flowing to local authorities has increased substantially over the past few weeks since the start of the operation at the end of last month, and there will be more coming very, very soon.

Lilian Greenwood: We all want to see lockdown eased, but that reopening will only be safe if the system to test, trace and isolate is working effectively. As more people return to work, start to travel on public transport, and perhaps even go to pubs, cafés and hairdressers—albeit keeping their distance—the ability to trace contact people we do not know will become much more important. The Secretary of State initially said that the app would be rolled out in mid-May; it is now the end of June. When are we actually going to see the app in action?

Matt Hancock: Obviously, as soon as possible. I agree very strongly with the hon. Lady about the importance of contact tracing—the Test and Trace programme is one of the largest of its kind—to ensure that, as we manage to lift national measures, which we can because the disease is clearly under control and the number of cases is coming down, we can then respond through local action.

Dr James Davies: NHS Test and Trace will play an important part in our continued fight against covid-19, but efficient co-ordination across Great Britain will be vital to its success. What steps has my right hon. Friend taken to ensure effective joint working between England, Wales and Scotland?

Matt Hancock: That is an incredibly important question. Of course, I would add Northern Ireland to that group. We have regular meetings. I have a weekly call with my counterparts in the devolved Governments. Of course, the devolved Governments have a huge role to play in this. I will give whatever support I can to help the Welsh Government to make sure that they can deliver contact tracing, and indeed the wider testing programme, as well as possible.

Mrs Hodgson [V]: Will the Minister urgently set out a plan to support local authorities to implement local lockdowns if needed, along with providing them with all the resources they need to implement this?

Matt Hancock: Yes.

Mr Speaker: I call the Select Committee Chair, Jeremy Hunt.

Jeremy Hunt (South West Surrey) (Con): NHS Test and Trace is currently tracing the contacts of about 700 people every day who have the virus, but the Office for National Statistics says that 2,500 new people are being infected every day, which means that since the programme started, up to a quarter of a million people have not been asked to isolate who should have been. It is a big achievement to get the programme going, but that is also a big gap. What are the Secretary of State's plans to close it?

Matt Hancock: I am not sure I agree with my right hon. Friend's figures in terms of the assumptions that underpin them. We have had this discussion and this exchange before. There are a whole number of asymptomatic cases. The critical thing about Test and Trace is to find as many of the asymptomatic cases, and as many of the positive test result cases, as possible. We need to do that over time by expanding the programme.

Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP) [V]: While a proximity app would assist in identifying casual contacts, many people were concerned that a centralised model would harvest their data. In the trial, this one failed to detect 96% of contacts. So why did the Secretary of State persist so long with an app that simply did not work on the majority of phones?

Matt Hancock: I am afraid the hon. Lady is wrong. The trials in the Isle of Wight showed that the app worked on Android phones, but was blocked from working effectively on Apple phones; hence we are now working with Apple and Google, as we have been over the past few weeks, to find a system that can be effective. But I will not sign off on an app when we do not know and have not been told by some multinational company what it is recommending to people because, after all, the critical thing that matters in test and trace is that people isolate to break the chain of transmission.

Dr Whitford: I would gently suggest that iPhones are actually quite common, so it is important that it does work on iPhones. The boss of Serco has admitted that its contact tracing system will not be fully functioning until the autumn, and we find that actually local public health teams are carrying out the vast majority of contact tracing, so would Government money not be better spent reversing five years of budget cuts to public health?

Matt Hancock: It is very strange taking these questions from the SNP spokesman, given that I am working with the SNP Government on resolving exactly these problems in Scotland, and maybe the SNP would do better to focus there. In response to the second question, honestly, we have put £300 million of support into local directors of public health to tackle this pandemic, and I know that her colleagues in the Scottish Government are working hard with local authorities in Scotland as well in exactly the same way.

Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): The Prime Minister promised that 100,000 people a day would be tested by the end of April, so since that date, on how many occasions have more than 100,000 people been tested on any single day?

Matt Hancock: I have not got those data exactly—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps the Opposition would care to engage on the substance, rather than not taking this seriously. Yesterday, we delivered the 8 millionth test in this country. We have delivered more than 100,000 tests on almost every day since the end of April, and at the end of last week we were delivering 230,000 tests a day. I think what we need from the Opposition is support for the testing programme, because that is what people care about.

Infant Mental Health Awareness

Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): What steps he took to promote Infant Mental Health Awareness Week. [903684]

The Minister for Patient Safety, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (Ms Nadine Dorries) [V]: *[Inaudible.]*

Mr Speaker: Has the Secretary of State got the back-up, please?

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): I understand that Infant Mental Health Awareness Week was a great success. There is much to be gained from seeing the world through a baby's eyes.

Tim Loughton: I am grateful to the Secretary of State for that short answer. We have heard much about the impact of lockdown on school-age children away from school, but little on the impact on babies and new parents facing particular challenges to their emotional wellbeing. Has the Secretary of State or the Minister, if she has got her voice back, seen the research published during Infant Mental Health Awareness Week by the First 1001 Days Movement last week, suggesting that three quarters of parents with children under two are feeling the detrimental impact of the lockdown, particularly BAME parents? What are the Government doing to put this crucial cohort on the radar and provide support before they grow up and take the problems to school and beyond?

Mr Speaker: Is the Minister available? No. I call the Secretary of State.

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend is absolutely right on this. I applaud the work of the First 1001 Days Movement. It is incredibly important. I strongly support the work that it has done to highlight the importance of the early days of life and the time before the birth of children. I have seen that report. I have discussed it with the Minister and we are working very hard to put that into effect.

Social Care Sector

Lee Anderson (Ashfield) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the social care sector during the covid-19 outbreak. [903686]

The Minister for Care (Helen Whately): Social care is at the frontline of this cruel global pandemic here in the UK and around the world. We have brought together support across Government, the NHS, Public Health England, local health protection teams, the Care Quality

Commission and local authorities, and done our utmost to help care homes and home care services to look after those in their care. The majority of care providers have been covid-free. Our support includes access to testing, PPE, guidance based on evidence from around the world, improved oversight and funding.

Lee Anderson: I have received many emails from constituents who are desperate to see and visit their family members in care homes, after months of not seeing them. Will my hon. Friend assure me and care workers in Ashfield and Eastwood that the Government will do everything they can to ensure that care homes have the right support and guidance, so that they are prepared to deal with an influx of friends and family visitors as they begin to open their doors in a safe way?

Helen Whately: My hon. Friend makes an important point. I know that the current restriction on visiting is hard for residents in care homes and their families, and has a real impact on health and wellbeing. We are updating our visitor guidance and intend to publish it soon.

Liz Kendall (Leicester West) (Lab): I, too, wish the Minister a very happy birthday.

I am sure the Minister will agree that lessons must be learned from what has happened so far, because the virus is not over for social care. With 13,375 deaths from covid-19 in care homes, what does she think she should have done differently?

Helen Whately: The hon. Lady is absolutely right that there will be a time when we will look back and learn lessons, and I wish that not so many people had died in social care, but right now we are looking ahead. We are making sure that we have in place the plans to support the social care sector through the months ahead, and we are also pressing ahead with work on social care reform.

Cancer Centres: Radiation Therapy

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): If he will publish the timetable for the NHS England plan to roll out stereotactic ablative radiotherapy to all cancer centres by April 2021. [903688]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill): I thank the hon. Gentleman and the other members of the all-party parliamentary group on radiotherapy for meeting me and officials recently. It is expected that each of the 50 NHS trusts that provide radiotherapy will be able to deliver stereotactic ablative radiotherapy no later than 31 March 2021. Increased external quality assurance capacity means that we could complete the roll-out process for all commissioned indications more quickly than that. I am sure the hon. Gentleman would agree that such a result would be fantastic.

Tim Farron: I very much welcome the Minister's response and thank her personally for her excellent attention to this matter and the progress that she has helped to make possible. Of course, with a 60% drop in the number of cancer referrals and a 20% drop in the number of people starting cancer treatment, we have

late diagnoses and a backlog that could, tragically, kill more people than covid. Will the Minister therefore go further and faster and deploy expanded radiotherapy treatment this summer to clear the backlog? Will she commit to appointing a radiotherapy tsar and to a rolling radiotherapy fund, so that we can stop more lives being unnecessarily lost?

Jo Churchill: The hon. Gentleman will know which parts of that are still open for discussion between us, but we are of course driving hard to make sure that patients get their radiotherapy and other treatment as quickly as they can. The NHS has a “Help Us Help You” campaign: it is open for business and people should make sure that they attend any appointment they are called to.

NHS Workers: Mental Health

Cherilyn Mackrory (Truro and Falmouth) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the mental health of NHS workers during the covid-19 outbreak. [903689]

Jane Stevenson (Wolverhampton North East) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the mental health of NHS workers during the covid-19 outbreak. [903697]

Sir Oliver Heald (North East Hertfordshire) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the mental health of NHS workers during the covid-19 outbreak. [903703]

The Minister for Care (Helen Whately): Our NHS workers—from the doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to the healthcare assistants, porters and all those who work behind the scenes—are truly heroes. I wish to say a special thank you to students: thank you to the medical students and nursing students who courageously stepped up to work at the frontline in a global pandemic. I am determined to do all that we can for our NHS workers. We have set up a round-the-clock mental health support line, which includes a freephone helpline run by the Samaritans and an out-of-hours text support service provided by Shout.

Cherilyn Mackrory: I thank the Minister for her answer and wish her a very happy birthday.

Owing to physical challenges with geography in rural communities, such as much of my Truro and Falmouth constituency, there can be higher incidences of mental health issues, loneliness and isolation, and that has been intensified by the covid-19 pandemic. Will my hon. Friend provide an update on departmental plans for support for mental health issues in rural communities?

Helen Whately: My hon. Friend is absolutely right: we anticipate an increase in demand for mental health support, including in rural communities, as a result of the pandemic. We are working with the NHS and a wide range of stakeholders to understand the need for mental health support all over the country and to make sure that that support is in place.

Jane Stevenson: In my regular meetings with the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, the issue of staff mental health has been repeatedly raised as a serious

concern, especially among staff who are working with covid patients. Will the Minister join me in thanking those staff at New Cross Hospital and reassuring them that mental health support will be available for all staff who need it?

Helen Whately: I would be delighted to join my hon. Friend in thanking the staff at New Cross Hospital for all that they have been doing in these incredibly difficult times. Mental health support absolutely should be, and is, there. There is the mental health support helpline and the text messaging service. It is also really important that NHS trusts take steps locally to ensure that their staff have the support that they need.

Sir Oliver Heald: When we stood with our neighbours and clapped for the carers, we showed solidarity across the nation with them and recognised the strain, stress and anxiety under which many of them were working. Can the Minister assure me—and say what practical steps can be taken to ensure—that, as they work through the experiences they have had, they will get the care and support that are necessary for them, and that we care for our carers?

Helen Whately: The clap for carers initiative was fantastic because it was a moment when we showed, as a nation, our support for our health and social care workers, but my right hon. and learned Friend is right to say that clapping is not enough. One thing that I want to do in the months ahead is bring forward the people plan—work that had to be paused because of covid—and to ensure that it includes all possible support for the NHS workforce, so that the NHS can be the best place to work in the world.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting) (Lab): Even before the covid pandemic, our frontline NHS and care staff were already working in overstretched and under-resourced settings. It is heartbreaking to see how the virus has taken its toll on them. They have had to deal with redeployment, not enough PPE, a fear of losing patients and getting ill themselves. These are all factors leading to staff burnout and very poor mental health. After all their sacrifices, our frontline staff deserve to have their mental health taken seriously. Is the Minister satisfied with the Government's current package of support for frontline NHS and care staff?

Helen Whately: The hon. Member is absolutely right about how hard it has been for NHS staff stepping up, and we cannot say enough how grateful we are for what they have done. I also recognise the mental health burdens on the NHS workforce who have worked in these really stressful circumstances. It is important not only that the package of support is there now, but that it is there for some time to come, because we know that the trauma and effects of working in these environments may take a while to play through.

Cancer Targets

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): What plans he has to meet the cancer targets in the NHS long-term plan. [903690]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill): As my hon. Friend knows, one of our key commitments was to diagnose more cancers earlier. Through NHS England and NHS Improvement, the Government have committed over £1.3 billion to deliver this, including with an overhaul of screening programmes and new investment in state-of-the-art technology to transform the process of diagnosis and to boost research and innovation. I am sure that he will welcome the fact that 18 rapid diagnostic centres towards our target of 40 are already up and running, as well as the introduction of personalised care plans, which he and I both consider very important.

Steve Brine: I do welcome that; I have visited many of the centres. Before the pandemic, we were battling to meet the cancer targets that I helped to set and that my hon. Friend now looks after so ably. Would she confirm that we have not lost sight of the 75% ambition in the long-term plan, and say whether there will be a revision to the cancer section of the long-term plan in the light of the backlog of the stuff that we know? Of course, there is also plenty of stuff that we do not yet know that we know, as a result of presentations not coming forward through primary care.

Jo Churchill: There are lessons to be learned; that is the essence of my hon. Friend's question. I have met both Cally Palmer and Professor Peter Johnson throughout the crisis, and our focus on cancer has remained. Ensuring that we deliver on the long-term plan is a key objective, and I am sure that my hon. Friend will work with me on that.

Health and Social Care Workers

Paul Holmes (Eastleigh) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the health and social care workforce during the covid-19 outbreak. [903691]

The Minister for Care (Helen Whately): Our health and social care workforce are at the frontline in fighting this cruel disease. I would particularly like to talk about social care workers, who in the past have not had the same recognition as NHS workers. Let this pandemic be the moment when that changed and when we, as a society, recognised the skills, compassion and commitment of our entire care workforce. We have sought to put in place the same support for social care workers as there is for NHS workers and funding to local authorities to pass on to care providers, so that they can pay social care staff full wages for isolating because of covid-19.

Paul Holmes: I wish the Minister a happy birthday. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted how vital social care workers are to our nation, and we as a House should thank them for the job that they do. Unpaid carers in particular have borne a huge weight throughout this pandemic, so will my hon. Friend tell the House what steps she has taken to support unpaid carers during this period?

Helen Whately: Unpaid carers are vital in our society. Being an unpaid carer is hard at the best of times, but even harder during this pandemic, and my hon. Friend is right to draw attention to that. During the pandemic, we have published guidance specifically for carers. We

provided funding to extend the Carers UK helpline, we made unpaid carers a priority group for testing, and we are working with local government to support the reopening of day care services as soon as it is safe to do so.

Covid-19: Continuing Healthcare

Harriett Baldwin (West Worcestershire) (Con): What plans he has in place for the provision of continuing healthcare for people recovering out of hospital from covid-19. [903692]

The Minister for Care (Helen Whately): We know that people who have been very ill with covid will take some time to recover and may need ongoing help after they have left hospital. At the moment, as part of the covid emergency measures, continuing healthcare assessments are not required, which means that people can be properly discharged when they are well enough and have access to the ongoing healthcare they need.

Harriett Baldwin: Happy birthday to the Minister. Our wonderful NHS staff have helped so many people recover from this terrible disease and leave hospital, and many of them will have been ventilated for a long time. Is the Minister planning to set up a specialist service that helps with those very difficult cases where a lot of rehabilitation will be needed?

Helen Whately: My hon. Friend raises an important point. We are still learning about the impact of this horrible disease, but we know it may take people some time to recover and they may need extra help after they have been discharged from hospital. We are indeed doing work to ensure that the right support is there for them.

Covid-19: Next Phase

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): What plans he has to ensure that the NHS has the capacity to tackle the next phase of the covid-19 outbreak. [903693]

Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP): What plans he has to ensure that the NHS has the capacity to tackle the next phase of the covid-19 outbreak. [903694]

Simon Jupp (East Devon) (Con): What progress his Department has made on ensuring the provision of adequate critical care capacity in hospitals during the covid-19 outbreak. [903700]

Gareth Davies (Grantham and Stamford) (Con): What progress his Department has made on ensuring the provision of adequate critical care capacity in hospitals during the covid-19 outbreak. [903701]

Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East) (SNP): What plans he has to ensure that the NHS has the capacity to tackle the next phase of the covid-19 outbreak. [903705]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): Thanks to unprecedented action, we have protected the NHS. It was not overwhelmed during

the peak of this crisis, and all covid-19 patients admitted to hospital were able to receive urgent treatment that they needed. We remain vigilant.

Joanna Cherry: I thank the Minister for his answer, but after the end of the Brexit transition period, all four health services in the UK and Northern Ireland will face increased bureaucracy and increased costs to import drugs from Europe. On top of that, it has been estimated that a trade deal with the United States of America could increase the drugs bill from £18 billion to £45 billion. How will the Secretary of State prevent these extra costs from hampering NHS capacity?

Matt Hancock: First, there is no reason at all why the exit from the transition period should have the impact that the hon. and learned Lady describes. We have put in place a huge amount of work to ensure that Brexit works positively for our life sciences industry and indeed, as we do now, that we can buy pharmaceutical products from around the world, not just from within the European Union. As for the idea that somehow a trade deal will increase prices of drugs, that is flatly wrong.

Gavin Newlands [V]: With the need for additional infection control measures, how can the Secretary of State ensure that there are sufficient staff to support parents to spend time with their babies in special care baby units, when covid-19 is creating additional barriers to parents, being with their baby as much as they want and need to be? Moreover, will he look at an emergency form of neonatal leave and pay, or a subsistence fund similar to Scotland's, to allow parents affected by covid-19 to have the time they need with their baby?

Matt Hancock: We are putting in a huge amount of support for maternity services and other services across the NHS in England. Of course, when it comes to the hon. Gentleman's constituents in Glasgow, he will have to ask the SNP Government.

Simon Jupp: Local construction firms are working around the clock to build the NHS Nightingale hospital in Exeter, based in my constituency of East Devon. I am sure the Secretary of State will agree that we all hope it will never have to be used. Can he assure my constituents that the Nightingale will help the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, our community hospitals and our health and wellbeing hub to continue to focus efforts on delivering the superb services that they are well known for across East Devon?

Matt Hancock: Absolutely. My hon. Friend is a great advocate for Devon, and for East Devon in particular. The Nightingale Hospital in Exeter will have more flexible uses than the previous Nightingales, so, for instance, it will be usable should there be extra winter pressures. This is all part of protecting our NHS. It was at the heart of our response to this dreadful disease that we protected the NHS, making sure it was always there for everyone. That has been down to, and is a testament to, the work of so many people, who delivered on that requirement.

Gareth Davies: Yesterday, our local NHS trust, the United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust, temporarily downgraded and closed emergency admissions at Grantham

and District Hospital, in response to covid-19. After many years of uncertainty, there is understandable scepticism about this latest move by the trust. Will the Secretary of State join me in calling on the trust to ensure that these changes are indeed temporary and that covid is not used as cover to make them permanent?

Matt Hancock: Thanks to my hon. Friend's assiduous work on behalf of his constituents in Grantham, and at his suggestion, I discussed this issue directly with NHS officials. Grantham's unit will be open, 24/7, as an urgent treatment centre; this is part of plans to ensure that covid and non-covid services are kept as separate as possible. In addition, thanks to his intervention, we will ensure that that position will be reviewed quarterly.

Tommy Sheppard [V]: The NHS in England had more than 40,000 nursing vacancies at the start of the covid pandemic, but student nurses stepped forward to contribute to the response. So why are many of their contracts now being terminated, given that they may well be needed this autumn? Would a better approach not be to increase nursing bursaries to £10,000, as they are in Scotland, where nursing vacancies are half those of England?

Matt Hancock: We have increased by about 10,000 the number of nurses in the NHS in the past year, and during the crisis that number increased further. We also set out at the start how we are paying student nurses, as they stepped up to the mark, as the hon. Gentleman rightly said. I am delighted that so many of them did, and we are sticking to the agreements that we set out with the student nurses at the start of the crisis.

Covid-19: Testing Kits for Care Homes

Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con): What progress his Department has made on delivering covid-19 testing kits to care homes. [903695]

The Minister for Care (Helen Whately): We are doing all we can to help care homes to control and prevent covid outbreaks, and the majority of care homes have not had outbreaks. Testing is an important part of that. On 11 May, we launched a programme of testing all staff and residents in care homes, starting with older people and those with dementia, based on public health guidance. We met our target of offering tests to all these care homes by 6 June, which involved sending more than 1 million test kits to 9,000 care homes. We are now getting tests out to all the other Care Quality Commission-registered care homes for adults that ordered them on the testing portal.

Sir David Amess: Further to what my hon. Friend has said, will she confirm that there is a rolling programme to test for covid-19 in our care homes? Recently, a care home in my constituency had a whole-home test and found that someone was positive. When it then asked for another test for everyone, it was told by NHS England that it was not eligible, and that cannot be right.

Helen Whately: I will say two things on that. First, when a care home has a new outbreak, either for the first time or having recovered from a previous outbreak, it should contact its local health protection team to

arrange for initial testing of symptomatic residents, in order to confirm the outbreak. The local health protection team or the director of public health can then refer the care home to the national testing team so that it can be prioritised for whole-home testing.

Mesh Treatment

Giles Watling (Clacton) (Con): What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of NHS services for the treatment of mesh complications. [903698]

The Minister for Patient Safety, Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (Ms Nadine Dorries) [V]: Departmental officials have been working with NHS England and NHS Improvement to establish means of specialist support for those women requiring it. NHS England is in the process of commissioning a number of mesh removal centres, which it hopes will be operational later this year. We urge anyone who has concerns about their treatment to speak to a clinician.

Giles Watling: I thank my hon. Friend for her answer, but I understand from constituents that many women have to travel miles for their operations in great discomfort, and that when they get there, they are told they are not eligible. As the Minister said, the mesh recovery centres have not yet been opened. I have met women who are going through utter pain and torment as a result of surgical mesh surgery. There are concerns that English and Welsh patients do not get the same monetary help as their Scottish counterparts. What is the Minister doing to address these issues?

Ms Dorries: On access to services, NHS England advises that it is aware of the negative impact that covid-19 is having on patients during what is a very challenging period. As a result of my hon. Friend's question, I will ask officials to look into why women may or may not be eligible for services during this time. As healthcare is devolved, the Scottish element of his question is a matter for the Scottish Government. I would advise anyone who intends to make a claim for compensation, or is having difficulty seeking services, to seek independent advice or see a clinician. It is important to reiterate that NHS England is currently in the process of commissioning those specialist services for mesh removal, which it hopes will be operational later this year.

Covid-19: Vaccine

Craig Williams (Montgomeryshire) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to support the development of a vaccine for covid-19. [903699]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): Vaccine development is progressing well, with human clinical trials being undertaken by both the University of Oxford and Imperial College London. We are also exploring how other vaccines, both from the UK and internationally, can be deployed here should they show promise.

Craig Williams: Can my right hon. Friend reassure me, the House and my Welsh constituents in Montgomeryshire that if and when a vaccine for covid-19 is developed, it will be rolled out in a UK-wide partnership? Will he work with the devolved healthcare systems but ensure that the vaccine is UK-accessed?

Matt Hancock: Yes, of course. That is an incredibly important question for anybody living in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, like my hon. Friend's constituents. The vaccine programme is being taken forward on a UK-wide basis. Of course people living in the devolved nations should have access to vaccines according to a prioritisation that is clinical and not based on where people live. We will absolutely work with the devolved authorities on the delivery and deployment of that vaccine. Of course, we want the whole country to get the vaccines, if they become available, according to clinical priority.

Topical Questions

[903649] **Edward Timpson** (Eddisbury) (Con): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Matt Hancock): Yesterday, clinicians set out our advice for those who are shielding because they are clinically extremely vulnerable. The whole House will want to pay tribute to the enormous sacrifice of that group, who are among the most vulnerable to covid-19. Very shortly, the Prime Minister will set out to the House the next steps to get the country back on her feet.

Edward Timpson: There is no doubt that lockdown has taken its toll on the mental health and wellbeing of many children of all ages, whether by way of social isolation, physical inactivity or a sense of loss. I know that my right hon. Friend is very exercised by that, so, as we understand more about the impact, will he look again at the long-term NHS plan to establish whether it is really able to meet what will be a more acute challenge in the future?

Matt Hancock: That is a very important question on supporting children's mental health. We absolutely reiterate the long-term plan ambitions for service transformation and expansion. Indeed, one of the things we have learned during coronavirus is that when it comes to paediatric mental health, telemedicine can actually have a better and more effective impact than face to face. That is a good thing to have learned and will help the roll-out further.

Jonathan Ashworth (Leicester South) (Lab/Co-op): On the app, the Secretary of State told us it was crucial and would be ready by mid-May. Experts warned him it would not work. He spent three months, wasted £12 million and has got nothing to show for it. It is a good job he is a tech-savvy expert on apps; otherwise, this would be a right shambles now, wouldn't it?

Matt Hancock: On the contrary, ensuring that we use technology to its best possible effects is incredibly important. I would have thought that the shadow Secretary of State would want to side with and support the efforts of all those, including in the NHS, who are doing the work to ensure that we can get this up and running as quickly as possible.

Jonathan Ashworth: In the past few days, I have been listening to the Secretary of State's excuses. He is the Eric Morecambe of the Commons: he has been playing all the right notes, just not necessarily in the right order.

On test and trace, local areas such as Leicester, which has had a spike, still do not have local data; GPs still cannot refer people for testing; and NHS staff are still not tested regularly. He has spent £100 million on a Serco and Sitel call centre where the tracers are saying they have nothing to do. This is not a “world-beating” system; it is more like a wing and a prayer. When are we going to get a functional test, trace and isolate strategy?

Matt Hancock: The shadow Secretary of State is far better when he supports the Government than when he pretends to oppose them. We have all seen him explaining why the steps that the Government are taking are the sensible ones, why it is important to move from a national lockdown as much as is safely possible to local outbreak control, and why test and trace is important. When he gets on to saying that the money we have spent to protect the NHS and put in place the actions needed to get us out of the lockdown is wasted, I think that that is opposition for opposition's sake.

[903653] **Robert Courts** (Witney) (Con): Maintaining safe and healthy food standards is essential for public health. As we leave the European Union and sign trade deals around the world, what are Ministers doing to ensure that the system maintains public confidence?

Matt Hancock: As we sign trade deals around the world, we will have enhanced animal and food standards in this country, and of course the Food Standards Agency plays a vital role in ensuring that those standards are upheld.

[903650] **Richard Thomson** (Gordon) (SNP): On 21 May, the Prime Minister bowed to pressure and agreed to abolish the immigration health surcharge for NHS workers. However, NHS workers applying to renew their visas are being told by the Home Office that this policy is still being applied and is still in place. Why is this immoral and mean-spirited policy still being applied, in light of the Prime Minister's clear promise?

Matt Hancock: We are putting this policy into action and it will be retrospective to the date of the announcement by the Prime Minister.

[903654] **Philip Dunne** (Ludlow) (Con) [V]: Yesterday's announcement on easing restrictions for those like me who are among the 2.2 million people who have been shielding for months is very welcome. What reassurance can my right hon. Friend give on the scientific evidence that supported the decision to ease restrictions for shielders from 6 July and to finish them on 31 July?

Matt Hancock: I am absolutely delighted that my right hon. Friend will be able to follow guidance and take more steps out after 6 July. The decisions on shielding were all based on the best clinical advice. Dr Jenny Harries, the deputy chief medical officer, has led the medical advice on this programme with great élan and wisdom. The reason we are able to make these changes and recommend these steps to my right hon. Friend and the 2.2 million others in his situation is that we have protected the NHS and got the virus right under control.

[903651] **Alex Cunningham** (Stockton North) (Lab): My constituent Jonathan e-mailed me to say:

“Today for the first time my partner will see our baby and hear their tiny heartbeat. However, I'm writing to you from the car outside as she attends our 12 week scan. I'm banned from attending due to government guidelines.”

Jonathan says he is being robbed of enjoying these special moments with Emma, yet they can shop together, travel on public transport and even visit the beach. What does the Secretary of State have to say to expectant fathers like him?

Matt Hancock: Of course it has been necessary to have tight controls over visitors in hospitals during this crisis, because people picking up nosocomial infections in hospital has been one part of the epidemic that we need to get under control. My heart goes out to those many people who have made sacrifices, including the hon. Member's constituent, and of course we always keep this under review.

[903655] **Laura Farris** (Newbury) (Con): As we return to normality, we inevitably run a risk of a second wave of the virus. What infection threshold would my right hon. Friend consider sufficient to warrant further lockdown, and what criteria would be applied to determine the geographical ambit of any future lockdown?

Matt Hancock: My hon. Friend makes an important point. She may have seen this morning that in Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia has been put back into lockdown because of a local outbreak. So far, the local outbreaks we have seen have essentially been clusters in very small areas, and we have been able to bust those clusters and tackle them. We do, of course, hold the powers to have wider local lockdowns. Those will be based on judgments based on the epidemiological advice and the advice of the joint biosecurity centre, working with all the relevant agencies.

[903652] **Munira Wilson** (Twickenham) (LD): The Secretary of State rightly says that black lives matter. The time for action is now, yet the latest figures show that black African and black Caribbean people are four times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act. When will he bring forward the White Paper on the mental health Bill? Will he please ensure that that legislation enshrines the four principles laid out in the Wessely review, including treating the patient as an individual, so that we can start to tackle racial disparities in mental health treatment?

Matt Hancock: We will bring forward that White Paper. The work has been ongoing even while we have been dealing with coronavirus. As far as I am concerned, the Wessely review is one of the finest pieces of work on the treatment of mental ill health that have been done anywhere in the world.

[903657] **Simon Baynes** (Clwyd South) (Con): We have just marked Loneliness Awareness Week. Does the Secretary of State agree that combating loneliness is vital to ensuring the health and wellbeing of elderly people? I have seen excellent work at the Rainbow Centre in Penley in my constituency and by the charity

I helped to set up, the Concertina Charitable Trust, which provides live music in care homes and day centres.

Matt Hancock: Absolutely. When we set up the loneliness strategy in 2018, when I was the Culture Secretary, I had no idea that covid-19 would make it so vital. I very much hope that, in England at least, the measures the Prime Minister is due to set out very shortly might help in that regard. Covid has underlined the importance of loneliness as an issue that we must directly and actively tackle.

[903659] **Karin Smyth** (Bristol South) (Lab): At the start of the crisis, as a former emergency planner for the NHS, I thought the Government would trust the local well-established emergency planning systems that were in place, and they had my support. However, they have wasted time and money. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester South (Jonathan Ashworth) is quite right to criticise the Government, because that has led to excess deaths and time lost. It is welcome that we are now supporting the local, but will the Secretary of State tell me why, when his friends at Deloitte have been set up to do the testing at Bristol airport, the complaints process is run through an NHS trust?

Matt Hancock: Because this is a big team effort by a combination of public and private sector partners. I pay tribute to Deloitte, without which the testing programme would not be possible. I pay tribute to all the pharmaceutical companies and I pay tribute to Amazon, which has delivered the home testing with remarkable success. Instead of trying to divide, we should unite and bring people together.

[903662] **Gary Sambrook** (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con): Dr David Rosser and his team at the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust have done amazing work during the pandemic to make sure that people in Birmingham are safe and cared for. Will

the Secretary of State give them all the flexibility and support they need to ensure that services at hospitals like Queen Elizabeth can go back to normal as quickly and as safely as possible?

Matt Hancock: Yes. David Rosser is a great leader of a very, very impressive trust. I was speaking to him only last week. There is an important lesson from covid, which is that many of the NHS central rules and much of the bureaucracy were lifted to allow local systems to respond as a health system. That has worked well. We need to learn from that. We need to not only make that permanent, but see where we can go further in that sort of system working.

[903660] **Bambos Charalambous** (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab): My borough of Enfield has been allocated the equivalent of £4.58 per head to support the NHS test and trace programme. That is a third of what other London boroughs have received, despite the fact that it has the 12th highest number of covid-19 cases in London. That exacerbates the unfair share of public health grant received by Enfield and fails to take account of its health inequalities. Will the Secretary of State meet me to discuss the allocation of funding for Enfield's needs?

Matt Hancock: We were scrupulously fair in the allocation of funding to local authorities, ensuring, for instance, that the support for social care went according to the number of beds. We have taken a great deal of care to make sure we get this right.

Mr Speaker: To allow the safe exit of hon. Members participating in this item of business and the safe arrival of those participating in the next, I am now suspending the House for three minutes.

12.30 pm

Sitting suspended.

Covid-19 Update

12.33 pm

The Prime Minister (Boris Johnson): Before I begin, I am sure the whole House will join me in sending our deepest condolences to the families and friends of James Furlong, Joe Ritchie-Bennett and David Wails, who were brutally killed in Reading on Saturday. To assault defenceless people in a park is an act not simply of wickedness, but of abject cowardice. We will never yield to those who would seek to destroy our way of life.

With permission, Mr Speaker, I will update the House on the next steps in our plan to rebuild our economy and reopen our society, while waging our struggle against covid-19. From the outset, we have trusted in the common sense and perseverance of the British people, and their response has more than justified our faith. Since I set out our plan on 11 May, we have been clear that our cautious relaxation of the guidance is entirely conditional on our continued defeat of the virus. In the first half of May, nearly 69,000 people tested positive for covid-19 across the UK; by the first half of June, that total had fallen by nearly 70% to just under 22,000. The number of new infections is now declining by between 2% and 4% every day.

Four weeks ago, an average of one in 400 people in the community in England had covid-19; in the first half of June, the figure was one in 1,700. We created a human shield around the NHS, and in turn our doctors and nurses have protected us. Together, we have saved our hospitals from being overwhelmed. On 11 May, 1,073 people were admitted to hospital in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with covid-19; by 20 June, the figure had fallen by 74% to 283.

This pandemic has inflicted permanent scars, and we mourn everyone we have lost. Measured by a seven-day rolling average, the number of daily deaths peaked at 943 on 14 April. On 11 May, it was 476 and yesterday the rolling average stood at 130. We have ordered over 2.2 billion items of protective equipment from UK-based manufacturers, many of whose production lines have been called into being to serve this new demand. And yesterday we conducted or posted 139,659 tests, bringing the total to over 8 million.

While we remain vigilant, we do not believe that there is currently—currently—a risk of a second peak of infections that might overwhelm the NHS. Taking everything together, we continue to meet our five tests, and the chief medical officers of all four home nations have downgraded the UK's covid alert level from 4 to 3, meaning that we no longer face the virus spreading exponentially, although it remains in general circulation.

The Administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland hold responsibility for their own lockdown restrictions, and they will respond to the united view of the chief medical officers at their own pace, based on their own judgment. But all parts of the UK are now travelling in the same direction, and we will continue to work together to ensure that everyone in our country gets the support they need.

Thanks to our progress, we can now go further and safely ease the lockdown in England. At every stage, caution will remain our watchword, and each step will be conditional and reversible. Given the significant fall in the prevalence of the virus, we can change the 2 metre

social distancing rule from 4 July. I know that this rule effectively makes life impossible for large parts of our economy, even without other restrictions—for example, it prevents all but a fraction of our hospitality industry from operating. That is why almost two weeks ago I asked our experts to conduct a review; I will place a summary of their conclusions in the Libraries of both Houses this week.

Where it is possible to keep 2 metres apart, people should. But where it is not, we will advise people to keep a social distance of 1 metre-plus, meaning that they should remain 1 metre apart while taking mitigations to reduce the risk of transmission. We are today publishing guidance on how business can reduce the risk by taking certain steps to protect workers and customers. Those include avoiding face-to-face seating by changing office layouts, reducing the number of people in enclosed spaces, improving ventilation, the use of protective screens and face coverings, closing non-essential social spaces, providing hand sanitiser, and changing shift patterns so that staff work in set teams. We already mandate face coverings on public transport.

While the experts cannot give a precise assessment of how much the risk is reduced, they judge that those mitigations would make 1 metre-plus broadly equivalent to the risk at 2 metres, if those mitigations are fully implemented. Either would be acceptable, and our guidance will change accordingly. That vital change enables the next stage of our plan to ease the lockdown.

I am acutely conscious that people will ask legitimate questions about why certain activities are allowed, when others are not, but I must ask the House to understand that the virus has no interest in such debates. Its only ambition is to exploit any opportunities to recapture ground that we might carelessly vacate, and to reinfect our communities. There is only one certainty, which is that the fewer social contacts someone has, the safer they will be, and our duty as a Government is to guide the British people, balancing our overriding aim of controlling the virus against our natural desire to bring back normal life.

We cannot lift all the restrictions at once, so we have to make difficult judgments. Every step is scrupulously weighed against the evidence. Our principle is to trust the British public to use their common sense in the full knowledge of the risks, remembering that the more we open up, the more vigilant we will need to be. From now on, we will ask people to follow guidance on social contact, instead of legislation, and in that spirit we advise that from 4 July, two households of any size should be able to meet in any setting, inside or out. That does not mean that they must always be the same two households; it will, for instance, be possible to meet one set of grandparents one weekend, and the other set the following weekend. We are not recommending meetings of multiple households indoors, because of the risk of creating greater chains of transmission. Outside, the guidance remains that people from several households can meet in groups of up to six, and it follows that two households can also meet, regardless of size.

Mr Speaker, I can tell the House that we will also reopen restaurants and pubs. All hospitality indoors will be limited to table service, and our guidance will encourage minimal staff and customer contact. We will ask businesses to help NHS Test and Trace respond to any local outbreaks by collecting contact details from

[The Prime Minister]

customers, as happens in other countries, and we will work with the sector to make that manageable. Almost as eagerly awaited as a pint will be a haircut—particularly by me, Mr Speaker—and we will reopen hairdressers with appropriate precautions, including the use of visors. We also intend to allow some other close-contact services such as nail bars to reopen as soon as we can, once we are confident that they can operate in a covid-secure way.

From 4 July, provided that no more than two households stay together, people will be free to stay overnight in self-contained accommodation, including hotels and bed and breakfasts, as well as campsites, as long as shared facilities are kept clean. Most leisure facilities and tourist attractions will reopen if they can do so safely, including outdoor gyms and playgrounds, cinemas, museums, galleries, theme parks and arcades, as well as libraries, social clubs and community centres.

Close-proximity venues such as nightclubs, soft play areas, indoor gyms, swimming pools and spas will, I am afraid, need to remain closed for now, as will bowling alleys and waterparks, but my right hon. Friends the Business Secretary and the Culture Secretary will establish taskforces with public health experts and those sectors to help them to become covid-secure and reopen as soon as possible.

We will also work with the arts industry on specific guidance to enable choirs, orchestras and theatres to resume live performances as soon as possible. Recreation and sport will be allowed, but indoor facilities, including changing rooms and courts, will remain closed, and people should only play close-contact team sports with members of their household.

I know that many have mourned the closure of places of worship, and this year Easter, Passover and Eid all occurred during the lockdown. I am delighted that places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services, including weddings, with a maximum of 30 people, all subject to social distancing.

Meanwhile, our courts, probation services, police stations and other public services will increasingly resume face-to-face proceedings. Wraparound care for school-age children and formal childcare will restart over the summer. Primary and secondary education will recommence in September with full attendance, and those children who can already go to school should do so, because it is safe.

We will publish covid-secure guidelines for every sector that is reopening, and slowly but surely these measures will restore a sense of normality. After the toughest restrictions in peacetime history, we are now able to make life easier for people, so that they can see more of their friends and families, and to help businesses get back on their feet and get people back into work.

The virus has not gone away, however. We will continue to monitor the data with the joint biosecurity centre and our ever more effective test and trace system. I must be clear to the House that, as we have seen in other countries, there will be flare-ups, for which local measures will be needed. We will not hesitate to apply the brakes and reintroduce restrictions, even at national level, if required. I urge everyone to stay alert, control the virus and save lives. Let us keep washing our hands; staying

2 metres apart wherever feasible, mitigating the risks at 1 metre where it is not; avoiding public transport where possible and wearing a mask when we have to use public transport; getting tested immediately if we have symptoms; and self-isolating if instructed to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Today we can say that our long national hibernation is beginning to come to an end. Life is returning to our streets and to our shops, the bustle is starting to come back and a new but cautious optimism is palpable, but I must say to the House that it would be all too easy for that frost to return. That is why we will continue to trust in the common sense and the community spirit of the British people to follow this guidance, to carry us through and to see us to victory over this virus. I commend this statement to the House.

12.50 pm

Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) (Lab): I thank the Prime Minister for advance sight of his statement. I join him in sending our condolences to the families and friends of those who died or were injured in Reading on Saturday. This was a truly appalling attack, and I extend our thanks to the police officers and members of the public who showed incredible bravery in response. I spoke to my hon. Friend the Member for Reading East (Matt Rodda) at the weekend and I am sure that I speak for the whole House in saying to the people of Reading that we stand with them at this incredibly difficult time.

When I was elected leader of the Labour party, I said that I would offer “constructive opposition”

with the courage to support the Government

when they are doing the right thing. We will, of course, scrutinise the details of the announcement and study the guidance, and there are obviously a number of questions that need to be answered, but overall I welcome the Prime Minister’s statement. I believe that the Government are trying to do the right thing, and in that we will support them.

There are no easy decisions to be made here. Any unlocking carries risks. It has to be phased, managed and carefully planned; it needs to be based on scientific evidence, properly communicated and accompanied by robust track and trace systems; and there must be support for local councils and communities to respond quickly and decisively if there are any fresh outbreaks. But there are risks of inaction as well—of keeping businesses and schools closed, of keeping our economy closed, and of keeping families apart. We all need to recognise that today.

I have a number of questions about the basis for these decisions, which I hope the Prime Minister will address in a constructive way. First, on the scientific evidence, I listened carefully to what he said about the 2 metre rule and the 1 metre rule. Can he assure the House that the package of measures is agreed by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, the chief medical officer and the chief scientific adviser? What assessment has been made of the overall impact on transmission of the virus and on the R rate, both nationally and regionally?

On preventing a second spike and reintroducing measures as needed, the Prime Minister knows that local authorities will have to be central to that, but they need the resources

and the powers. What additional support is he providing to councils? What new powers for swift local lockdown will be needed should there be a spike in infections?

On protection of those working, particularly on the frontline, we all want people to go back to work, but it has to be safe and standards have to be enforced. What enforceable measures will the Prime Minister put in place to give confidence to those who are returning to work?

On support for businesses, these changes are necessary, but they will be complex. Many businesses have already spent thousands of pounds preparing to operate at 2 metres. These changes will particularly be felt by small businesses and those on the high street, so what support can be given to them to address that?

On schools, I do think that it is safe for some children to return. I completely support that; the question is how quickly we can get all children back to school safely, the sooner the better. It was the Education Secretary who told the House on 9 June that it would not be possible to bring all children back to school before the summer. One of the reasons we support today's announcement is that it will make it more possible, and easier, to get children back to school more quickly. We will support that, and my offer to work with the Prime Minister on that stands.

Finally, on test, track and trace, the Prime Minister will know that we have very serious concerns about the gaps in the current system, including the absence of an app. Getting this right is essential to unlocking in a safe manner, and it is important that the Prime Minister clarifies when the full track, trace and isolate system will be in place.

Today is an important step in the fight against this virus. We will scrutinise the detail, and we do want more clarity, but we welcome the thrust of the statement.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for the spirit, the manner and the constructive way in which he has responded. On his points, we do believe that all five tests have been met. That means that the chief medical officer and the chief scientific adviser have been intimately involved in every stage of developing the programme, and they believe it to be a step in our plan that allows us to go ahead while meeting that crucial test of not triggering a second wave.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman asked about support for local councils, and I have said that we are putting in another £3.2 billion to support them, as well as £600 million to support their responsibilities for social care. Clearly their responsibilities have not ended, but neither has our support. We will get this country through this crisis by doing everything it takes.

That brings me to the right hon. and learned Gentleman's question about businesses. I do not think there is another country in the world that has done quite so much to support our workforce and our employees. Under the coronavirus job retention scheme, we have supported 11 million people. We have supported 2.6 million self-employed people and £26 billion in bounce back loans alone has been given out by the Government, to say nothing of the huge support in grants. We are very confident that it is one of the most extraordinary packages to be provided by any Government around the world, and we will continue to support our businesses.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman mentions track and trace and isolate. Of course it is perfectly true that it would be great to have an app, but no country currently has a functioning track and trace app. The great success of NHS Test and Trace is that, contrary to some of the scepticism that we heard—alas—from those on the Opposition Benches, so far it has contacted 87,000 people who have been in contact with those who have coronavirus, and they have elected voluntarily to self-isolate and stop the disease from spreading in the community. That is a fantastic success by our NHS Test and Trace operation, and we will continue to develop and improve that so as to crack down on local outbreaks and enable our country to go forward.

May I finally say how welcome it was to hear from the right hon. and learned Gentleman that he actively supports children returning to school and that he believes that returning to school is safe? I think he said that.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury (Mark Spencer): U-turn!

The Prime Minister: I do not want to accuse the right hon. and learned Gentleman of making a U-turn, but there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth and so on. It is good to have his support on that matter today. I welcome the spirit and the manner in which he has responded to this statement today.

Richard Fuller (North East Bedfordshire) (Con): With continuing relatively high rates of infection across Bedford borough, I welcome the Prime Minister's balanced transition from over-reliance on regulation to greater reliance on the common sense of British businesses and employees. Will the Prime Minister now build on the exceptional programme of economic support provided to businesses with an ambitious acceleration of his levelling-up programme, in particular drawing on and unlocking the creativity of our entrepreneurs, our small businesses and our innovators?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is on the money on that point. He will be hearing a lot more about exactly that in the course of the next couple of weeks, not only from me, but from my right hon. Friend the Chancellor.

Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber) (SNP) [V]: May I associate myself with the remarks of the Prime Minister and the leader of the Labour party on the outrage that took place on Saturday in Reading? Our thoughts are very much with the family and friends of James Furlong, of Joe Ritchie-Bennett and of David Wails. We give grateful thanks to all our emergency services for the work that they continue to do. On this day, we also acknowledge the sad death of Harry Smith, the former political reporter for ITV and Scottish Television. He will be sadly missed.

I thank the Prime Minister for an advance copy of his statement. Today's announcement will be understandably welcomed by many, but for every word of welcome, there must follow words of caution. The virus has not gone away. The margins for ensuring it does not take off again remain tight. Keeping people safe remains the first priority. We cannot put a price on human life. China and Germany are right now dealing with spikes

[*Ian Blackford*]

in cases as a result of significant outbreaks. Health officials in South Korea have said they think the country is now experiencing a second wave. A similar experience here would amount to not just a health disaster, but an economic disaster. It would wipe out all the hard-won progress and self-sacrifice over recent months. It is vital that our collective efforts remain focused on preventing the disaster of a second spike.

We must remain cautious, too, because the public are well used to hearing grand announcements from the Prime Minister, only for a U-turn to follow days or weeks later. Not only have the UK Government wasted precious time on introducing a botched test and trace system, but they have wasted millions of pounds of taxpayers' money in the process. That is why it is essential that the next steps are directed solely by the science, rather than political pressures. Can he confirm, therefore, that he will publish not just the conclusions but the full review on social distancing measures and the scientific advice given?

We know that a review of quarantining measures following foreign travel was due next week. Will the Prime Minister confirm that the introduction of any air bridges will be based on public health assessments, not economic assessments? Can he also confirm that the devolved Governments will be closely involved and party to any arrangements with any country on air bridges? Finally, to maintain full clarity, will he reaffirm that the announcements today are solely for England and that the citizens of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland should continue to follow public health advice from their own Governments?

The Prime Minister: On that last point, of course I can confirm that, as indeed I said in my statement, although I observe that the harmony between all four home nations is much closer than one might sometimes believe from listening to the right hon. Gentleman. But I agreed with a great deal of what he said. He is right to express caution and to anticipate the risk of second spikes. We will, I am afraid, see future outbreaks. I must be absolutely clear with the House about that. We will see future outbreaks and we will be in a much better position now to control them. I will of course publish the measures on social distancing and how the decision was reached on social distancing, and as I said we will place that in the Libraries of both Houses.

Mr Speaker, the right hon. Gentleman had one more question, which I am afraid I cannot remember. What was it—about public health? I cannot remember. I will write to him. [HON. MEMBERS: "Air bridges."] Air bridges! Thank you. Sorry, Mr Speaker. He asked an important question about air bridges. We will ensure that the devolved Administrations are kept in close contact as we develop our plans, and our plans for quarantine will be based entirely on public health, as he rightly suggested they should be. That will be our criterion. We will not be led by any excessive desire to risk life by opening up the economy too fast. We will have a policy on air bridges that is based on public health, as he rightly says we should.

Theo Clarke (Stafford) (Con): I very much welcome the changes that my right hon. Friend has announced to the 2 metre rule, which is great news for pubs and

restaurants such as the Moat House and the Staffordshire Bull, which are at the heart of the community in Staffordshire. Can he give me an assurance that, as we move to 1 metre-plus, it will be safe for us to trust in the common sense of the British people to reduce transmission? May I take this opportunity to invite the Prime Minister to have a pint in my constituency?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, and I am happy to take up her invitation.

Sir Edward Davey (Kingston and Surbiton) (LD): I join the Prime Minister in sending our condolences to the family and friends of the victims of the appalling attacks in Reading.

The Prime Minister wants to reassure us that lockdown can be safely eased, while rightly warning that there is a danger of a second wave of coronavirus later this year. If he is right and there is breathing space now, surely it is urgent that we learn the lessons. So I ask him this again: will he urgently set up an independent inquiry into the Government's handling of this pandemic?

The Prime Minister: I am sure there will come a moment when lessons need to be learned—indeed, we are learning them the whole time—but I do not consider at the moment that a full-scale national inquiry is a good use of official time.

Greg Clark (Tunbridge Wells) (Con): I warmly welcome the Prime Minister's statement, which reflects very closely the advice that my Select Committee has taken. He has a new advisory group, which I am glad about, because the best role for SAGE is on broad questions of science rather than every minute policy. Can he specify whether the ban on cricket has come to an end? Cricket is perhaps our most socially distanced team sport. We have lost half the summer, but there is another half left to be enjoyed by players and spectators alike.

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. This goes to the point that I was trying to make to the House earlier—everybody will want to add something to the great wheelbarrow of measures that we are taking, and at a certain point, there will come a straw that breaks the camel's back. The problem with cricket, as everybody understands, is that the ball is a natural vector of disease, potentially at any rate. We have been round it many times with our scientific friends. At the moment, we are still working on ways to make cricket more covid secure, but we cannot change the guidance yet.

Sir Jeffrey M. Donaldson (Lagan Valley) (DUP): May I echo the comments in relation to the victims of the terrible atrocity in Reading? Our thoughts are with their families.

I support the Prime Minister's contention that a four-nation approach is very important. In that context, will he commit to share the rationale, data, scientific evidence and advice upon which these decisions are based with the Northern Ireland Executive and our chief medical officer and chief scientific adviser, to ensure that we continue to take that co-ordinated approach?

The Prime Minister: As I informed the House, the chief medical officers of all four home nations were unanimous in their view that the alert level should go down from 4 to 3, and we will continue to work together and share information as we go forward.

Sara Britcliffe (Hyndburn) (Con): This news will be a relief for so many pub owners in Hyndburn and Haslingden, whether it be the Green Squirrel or the Heys Inn. The relaxation of the 2 metre rule will make it that little bit easier for micropubs such as the Vault, Hustle Bar and the Knuzden Tap. Can the Prime Minister assure me that the Government will work closely with local authorities so that pubs and restaurants are able to utilise their outdoor space, and will he visit Hyndburn and Haslingden?

The Prime Minister: There is hardly any area of the country that I do not intend to visit in the course of the reopening of pubs and hostelrys. There is a massive opportunity now for our pubs, with all their inventiveness, to think of ways of making their businesses covid secure, exploiting hitherto unloved and unvalued outdoor spaces that may become havens for tables and chairs and using their ingenuity to open up in all the ways that they can.

Liz Saville Roberts (Dwyfor Meirionnydd) (PC): People crave confidence and competence. With England's so-called world-beating app scrapped before it was even launched, contact tracers unable to reach a third of positive cases and no financial scheme to support workers when public health requires them to self-isolate, what assessment has the Prime Minister made of the risks to business and public confidence if local lockdowns or a second peak prove beyond his Government's ability to manage?

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Lady knows very well that the Government have invested record sums in protecting businesses, in comparison with any other country. We have done more to protect businesses around the whole of the country, including in Wales. I said that we are proceeding as one UK, and we are. I have my doubts about the 5 mile rule in Wales and wonder whether that might be something that was reviewed. But she makes a very important point about the need to protect against a second outbreak and to make sure that we are in good shape to crack down on flare-ups. I believe that we are and I believe to an extent that perhaps we did not think possible a month ago we are able to do local whack-a-mole in the way that she has described.

Damian Green (Ashford) (Con): May I congratulate my right hon. Friend? What he has announced, particularly the reduction of the distancing rule, will save hundreds of thousands of jobs, so he has already done a good day's work today. May I ask him to ensure the practicality of future guidance? Complex rules about who can do what and where and when they can do it may seem rational when discussed around a table in Whitehall, but if they are too complex and too unclear, people will not obey them, so can he make sure that the rules for the future are as clear, simple and understandable as possible?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend is entirely right. A message such as "Stay at home. Protect the NHS" is very simple. Everybody can see what they have to do. Getting into the easing of the lockdown is much more complex, but I think that the guidance that we have set out today is intelligible. People will understand what they need to do. The British people have shown massive common sense so far and I am sure that they will continue to do so.

Tracy Brabin (Batley and Spen) (Lab/Co-op): Last week in my constituency, in Cleckheaton, we had a covid-19 outbreak in a meat processing factory. Kirklees Council acted swiftly and efficiently. My concern is with the Government's easing of lockdown. We will see these localised outbreaks. With the Health and Safety Executive having its budget cut by 50% since 2010, can the Government ensure that Kirklees and other councils will have all the money they need to keep our communities safe? And what investigations are going ahead from Government to look at why meat processing particularly is exposed to covid-19 outbreaks not just in this country, but around the world, so that we can keep those members of staff safe?

The Prime Minister: We will certainly look into what is happening to meat processing, and the hon. Member is right to draw attention to that phenomenon. We have seen it in Anglesey and in Germany. We need to get to the bottom of what is happening. We are putting more into the Health and Safety Executive, as she knows. We are giving another £14 million to bolster it, and local councils will be fortified in implementing local lockdowns by central Government and the joint biosecurity centre so that we are able to crack down very efficiently on these flare-ups as they happen.

Gareth Johnson (Dartford) (Con): Going to the pub is a great British institution and vital if we want to get our economy back on track. Will the Prime Minister therefore join me in calling on people from the 4th of July to do their patriotic best for Britain and go to the pub?

The Prime Minister: Yes. I do encourage people to take advantage of the freedoms that they are rightly reacquiring, but I must stress that people should act in a responsible way. I know that that is where the public are and that that is what people want to see. They want to see this reopening happening gradually. They want to see the frost leaving the tundra slowly. They understand the risks that we still face. So yes, I want to see people out in the shops—it is a fantastic thing to see. Yes, I want to see people taking advantage of hospitality again—a wonderful thing. Yes, I want to see people enjoying friends and family again, but they have to do it in a responsible way and observe social distancing.

Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde) (SNP) [V]: As we attempt to move people back into the workplace, the job retention scheme is being abused by some companies to make employees redundant before August, when employers would have to pay a percentage of their salary. Moreover, others, like British Airways, are threatening to fire tens of thousands of loyal workers and rehire them, some on slashed pay and poorer conditions. The Prime Minister said that he was looking at what we can do, so will he back my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire North (Gavin Newlands), whose Employment (Dismissal and Re-employment) Bill addresses this iniquity?

The Prime Minister: I will of course study the Bill to which the hon. Gentleman alludes. [Interruption.] I will cause it to be studied. He knows very well that this country has given unprecedented and unequalled support to workers and to businesses. I think that 1 million companies have taken advantage of the job retention

[The Prime Minister]

scheme, and 2.6 million self-employed people. There is nothing like it around the world. We should be very proud of what the UK has done, and we will continue to ensure that no one is penalised for doing the right thing to beat this virus.

Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con): As my right hon. Friend has said, the primary aim of policy was to stop the NHS being swamped, and that was met, which is a great achievement. But will he take this opportunity to restate that in the absence of a vaccine or a cure, the virus will stay in circulation? What people refer to as a second wave is in fact a continuation of the first wave—it has not gone away. We can expect flare-ups, as we have seen in Germany. While the measures today are welcome—incidentally, they give a whole new meaning to the phrase “safe drinking”—their observation will be vital if we are to avoid a widespread second lockdown, which would be an economic and social disaster for the country.

The Prime Minister: That is absolutely right. There have been two important changes in our arsenal in the past six weeks or so. The first has obviously been NHS test and trace, which is getting better the whole time, and is invaluable in fighting the disease. The second is the treatments. Dexamethasone, which was tested in this country, really does make a big difference to the mortality of the disease, and I have no doubt that other progress will be made. He is right to be reserved about the possibilities of getting a full vaccine; that is going to be very difficult. But in the meantime, we will have to remain extremely vigilant and extremely cautious.

Claire Hanna (Belfast South) (SDLP) [V]: Today, despite a strong test and trace regime, a region in Germany had to impose a specific lockdown on several hundred thousand people owing to a dangerously high R number. We know that unfortunately, while we are progressing, we are only at the end of the beginning of our restrictions. The Prime Minister is right to say that the job retention and self-employed schemes have been vital to many people. What contingency does he have in place for ad hoc localised lockdowns that may be required, and will he roll out localised versions of job retention schemes for those areas?

The Prime Minister: I shall repeat my previous answer: we do not want to see anybody penalised for doing the right thing.

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab): There are approximately 1 million 16 to 18-year-olds in England, and some 700,000 study in colleges. Astonishingly, this week's education catch-up plan omitted those colleges, including many in my constituency of Cambridge. Can the Prime Minister explain the Government's thinking behind this, and will he sort it out?

The Prime Minister: We will of course do everything we can to ensure that not just our schools but our colleges get the attention that they need. As the hon. Gentleman knows, there is massive investment now going into the rebuilding of further education colleges and ensuring that our FE college sector gets the investment it deserves.

Simon Jupp (East Devon) (Con): I warmly welcome the news from the Prime Minister regarding the tourism sector, which will be especially well received in East Devon. Of course, he is more than welcome to visit any time. Can he confirm that the Government will publish full guidance to ensure that businesses can keep themselves and their customers safe while keeping the virus under control?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. The guidance, as I say, will be published later today.

Richard Thomson (Gordon) (SNP): The Prime Minister has highlighted examples around the world where restrictions have been relaxed and where there has been a subsequent resurgence of the virus, and he has said that he will not hesitate to reintroduce restrictions if required. I would just like to get an unambiguous commitment from him about not seeing anyone penalised for doing the right thing to combat this virus. If it were necessary to continue with the furlough and self-employment support schemes beyond October, would his Government do so?

The Prime Minister: We have said what we have said about the furloughing scheme. It is our intention, obviously, to make sure that we are not in a situation where we have to keep those national schemes going. That is why the furlough scheme is tapering off in October. But, clearly—and I have said what I have said—if there are localised outbreaks or, indeed, if it is nationally necessary to put the brakes back on, then nobody should be penalised for doing the right thing.

Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con): In the last few weeks, we have seen a real outpouring of love and kindness across our communities across the country for our older citizens, and that is quite right, but we have not seen the same thing for our youngest citizens. Can the Prime Minister tell me what the Government are doing for those who have had a baby during lockdown or, indeed, who are struggling to cope—as he might be—with the challenge of having a new baby with so little face-to-face support?

The Prime Minister: Oh, I am grateful to my right hon. Friend. I am personally coping fine, thank you—[*Interruption.*] Well, thank you. What we are doing, as she will have heard in my statement, is that wraparound childcare is coming back for the summer and, as she knows, early years is open and reception is open—and would it not be a fine thing to hear from the Labour party that it is safe for all young kids to go back?

Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab) [V]: This morning, I met those from Disability Rights UK who are worried that support for shielded people is being removed too quickly. In their words, “If Government can be sensitive to business until October, why can't they be sensitive to personal needs?” Throughout this crisis, communication with shielded and disabled people has been poor. Will the Prime Minister commit to working closely with these groups to ensure clearer, more regular communication as we move out of lockdown and towards planning for a second wave?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member raises a very important point. In fact, we have extended the shielding programme, as you know, Mr Speaker, till the end of July, and 3 million food parcels have already been delivered

to shielded people. What we want to see is a situation in which the prevalence—the incidence—is so low that the shielding programme no longer needs to continue in its current way, and I think that should be a shared ambition around the House and around the country. Too many elderly, vulnerable people have been kept in close confinement for too long, and we must help them to a new way out.

Richard Graham (Gloucester) (Con): This statement paves the way for Britain to bounce back with most of the hospitality sector reopening, and it gives us more confidence for the 10th anniversary Gloucester history festival in September. Does my right hon. Friend agree with me that, while many of us want to see cricket played again safely and air bridges established as soon as possible, the absolutely crucial goal is for all children, and pupils and students at FE colleges and universities, to be able to go back to school, college and university in the autumn absolutely safely?

The Prime Minister: Absolutely. A point I perhaps could have made to the hon. Member for Cambridge (Daniel Zeichner), who I think is no longer in his seat, is that it is our intention to get not just schools but FE colleges back as well in September, and get our young people back where they need to be—in education and preparing for their future.

Anna McMorris (Cardiff North) (Lab): It seems the Prime Minister has given up working with all four nations. Cobra has not met for weeks, daily communications have ended and I am pretty sure the First Minister of Wales has forgotten what the Prime Minister even looks like. Does he not believe that his actions are leading to a disjointed rather than a united Union, and given that recent data suggest that the people of Wales have far more confidence in the Welsh Government's handling of this pandemic than the people of England do in his, should he not perhaps be following the strategy championed by the Labour Government of Wales?

The Prime Minister: I make no comment on the blessed amnesia that has descended on the First Minister of Wales, except to say that, actually, when we look at the facts and what the UK is doing together, we can see that we are in much closer harmony than someone would suspect from what the hon. Lady says. One detail—one wrinkle—to which I respectfully draw her attention is that I am not sure that the 5 mile limit rule is entirely necessary; perhaps that needs to be rethought.

Sir Gary Streeter (South West Devon) (Con) [V]: I thank my right hon. Friend for the clarity he has given today to the hospitality and tourism sector in the great south-west. Will he also give a glimmer of hope that the Government will look sympathetically at more support over the winter, if necessary, to ensure that this very seasonal sector can survive such a restricted season?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed—although, as my hon. Friend already knows, we are doing a massive amount to support businesses of all kinds, particularly by getting rid of business rates for the whole of next year. One thing that I would say, respectfully, to all those who represent tourist areas of this country, is that now is perhaps the time to send out a welcoming signal

to those from other parts of our country and to roll out the welcome mat, rather than the “Not welcome here” sign. That is something that we could do together.

Miriam Cates (Penistone and Stocksbridge) (Con): My right hon. Friend's announcement will be welcome to hospitality businesses in Penistone and Stocksbridge, which are keen to reopen after a difficult period, but many workers and business owners are parents as well and cannot return to work until their children are back at school. Does my right hon. Friend agree that in order for those businesses to recover, we need all children to be back at school in September? Also, will he confirm that this announcement means that in the meantime people can start to ask friends and family for help with childcare?

The Prime Minister: Yes, it does mean that, but we are also committed, as my hon. Friend knows, to getting all our schools back in September. I do believe it that will be possible, if we stick to the plan and the guidance, to do so in a safe way.

Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk) (SNP) [V]: We are witnessing even countries such as Germany, with good control of covid-19, develop outbreaks that centre around meat processing plants. What explanation has the Prime Minister been given for this trend, and how on earth does he think it will be improved by cutting the safe distance from 2 metres to 1 metre?

The Prime Minister: That is a very good question. We are looking at exactly what is happening in meat processing plants. Currently, two theories have been advanced to me: one is about the cold environment in the plants, which may be propitious to the virus, and the other is the possibility that staff are congregating in such a way as to spread the virus. We do not know what it is, but we are investigating. Wherever outbreaks take place, we will use local cluster-busting techniques to stamp them out.

Sir Graham Brady (Altrincham and Sale West) (Con): I warmly welcome the statement and strongly endorse the move to relying on common sense and the responsibility of the British people from 4 July. However, the blanket quarantine proposal is not common sense when it applies to countries that are entirely safe and have no coronavirus. I urge my right hon. Friend to ensure that air bridges are in place no later than 4 July.

The Prime Minister: The House will have heard what I have had to say about air bridges repeatedly since the quarantine announcement was made. We do understand the balance, but we also understand the vital necessity of protecting our country from reinfection from abroad. Every serious country that has got this disease under control has had to introduce a quarantine for people coming into or back into the country.

Mr Ben Bradshaw (Exeter) (Lab): A number of countries will be surprised by the Prime Minister's claim that they do not have a functioning track and trace app.

Given that it is costing Britain thousands of jobs and millions of pounds a day and has no basis in the science, why is the Prime Minister waiting another two weeks to scrap his disastrous blanket quarantine policy?

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer that I just gave. We have a very sensible policy and we do not wish to see our country reinfected, after all the efforts of the British people, by travellers coming in from abroad.

Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con): The Marina and Seagull theatres in Lowestoft, and the Fisher theatre in Bungay, play lead and irreplaceable roles in their local communities and economies. I welcome the Prime Minister's statement that the Government will work with the arts industry so that theatres can reopen as soon as possible. However, they are really struggling, so may I urge him to look at putting in place specific support until the time that viable reopening is possible?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. I know how valuable the theatre sector—and the whole entertainment sector—is to our economy. My hon. Friend should be in no doubt that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is talking to those sectors right now to see what we can do to help them, while ensuring that they can come back in a covid-secure way.

Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab) [V]: What is the public health message that the Prime Minister is conveying by opening pubs ahead of the full opening of schools?

The Prime Minister: I think that most people will understand that we want as much to open of our business sector and economy as possible, in a covid-secure way. The hon. Lady will also understand that we want our schools to open in a safe way. That is why we have done what we have done and made the announcements that we have made. It has only been possible to open schools to some classes before the summer break, alas; but we are ahead of many other countries in Europe in doing so. As she will know, there are other countries that are not opening any of their schools. I must say that I welcome the logic of what she is saying, because if she is now actively going to encourage kids to go back to school and stop the long silence of the Opposition on this matter, that will be a great thing.

Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con): Will the Prime Minister cause his experts to be worked night and day until they find the fix and, when they have got it, to straight away allow spas and nail bars to reopen? And when there are flare-ups, will he eschew the temptation to return to collective punishment?

The Prime Minister: That is a very good way of putting it. We want, so far as we possibly can, to confine our action to the localities where the flare-ups have happened. That is why it is vital that everybody listens to the balance of this guidance today, follows the guidance on 2 metres and on 1 metre-plus, and continues to observe social distancing—and we will get this thing done.

Peter Kyle (Hove) (Lab): It is good news that people can start socialising and meeting in public again, but what is the Prime Minister going to do to ensure that destination communities, such as the one I represent in Brighton and Hove, are extra safe? People will be meeting and drinking at places such as the seafront and in parks, where it will be impossible to get the name and address of every customer. There will be other pinch points

where lots of people from various destinations will be rubbing up against each other. What will he do, in the absence of the promised app, to ensure that these communities are destinations for investment and not destinations for covid?

The Prime Minister: I will be calling on local representatives such as the hon. Gentleman to show some guts and determination, and to champion their communities as venues for people to return to and support. He can do that with confidence because, as I say, we are introducing a sensible package of measures that allows businesses gradually to reopen while ensuring social distancing. It is that mixture—plus the NHS test and trace scheme—that allows us to go forward; that is the formula that I believe works. As for the issue of putting names behind the bar or registering in restaurants, I do think that that is something that people get. As far as possible, we want people to do that and businesses to comply with it. We believe that it will be very important for our ability to track back and stop outbreaks happening. The hon. Gentleman should encourage all businesses in his constituency to take the names of customers.

John Lamont (Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) (Con): I very much welcome the statement from the Prime Minister, but he will be aware that my constituents will not get the benefit of the measures announced today, as the First Minister of Scotland is delaying Scotland's release from lockdown. Does the Prime Minister agree that the First Minister should share the evidence to justify why Scotland has taken a different approach from the rest of the United Kingdom?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who has his finger on the pulse. I was earlier informed that the First Minister of Scotland was about to make a statement uncannily similar to the one that I have just made, as she has done several times before, but I may be misinformed about that. It remains none the less the case that the similarities between our approaches greatly outweigh the differences.

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): The Prime Minister referred to support for local authorities. The Rhondda, during this period, has had three very severe bouts of flooding, including last week. Many homes have lost absolutely everything because they have no insurance. The local authority now faces a bill of somewhere in the region of £67 million to repair culverts, drains, pumping stations and gullies, and replace many bridges. We also have a landslide from an old coal tip, which is in danger of doing very significant damage if we cannot remove the 60,000 tonnes of earth. That is still a Westminster responsibility. The Prime Minister may not have the answer now, but will he please make sure we get the £2.5 million very swiftly so that we can do that work quickly? We do not want another Aberfan.

The Prime Minister: The right hon. Gentleman is absolutely right, and I am aware of those risks. We are working with Mark Drakeford and the Welsh Government on those problems. As he knows, we are putting £4 billion into flood defences. If we face real problems of unemployment—no doubt we will—getting to work on putting in better flood defences for the future will be an important way of driving job creation.

Holly Mumby-Croft (Scunthorpe) (Con): My right hon. Friend will know that many people have been unable to attend routine hospital appointments throughout the lockdown. The reasons for that are many and varied. As the lockdown eases, what measures can be put in place to support hospital trusts as they work hard to catch up? Will he work with me to secure an upgrade for Scunthorpe General Hospital, which is needed now more than ever before?

The Prime Minister: I congratulate my hon. Friend on the way she represents her constituency. We will do whatever we can for Scunthorpe General Hospital. I have no doubt that it is on one of the lists of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. As she knows, we are investing record sums: £34 billion into the NHS—the biggest ever cash boost for the NHS. We are going to do 40 new hospitals—that remains an undimmed ambition. If anything, we are going to double down on our ambitions for the NHS, so she should watch this space, particularly as regards Scunthorpe General Hospital.

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab) [V]: Published evidence indicates that indoor environments account for 97% of the spread of covid across the world. The closer the contact and the greater the length of time of the contact, the greater the risk of virus transmission. SAGE said that the evidence indicates that it is inappropriate to reduce social distancing at this stage of the infection, when there are typically more than 1,000 new covid cases a day. Rather than making decisions behind closed doors on unpublished evidence, why will the Prime Minister not publish his exit strategy with threshold approaches on infections, and wait until the test, trace and isolate system is fully operational, as countries that have successfully emerged from lockdown have done?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to the hon. Lady, but I must repeat what I have said to the House several times now. We will of course be putting the argumentation about the change in the 2 metre rule—the 1 metre-plus rule—in the Libraries of both Houses. I must say, I am not at one with her on her view of NHS Test and Trace. I think it is a massive achievement by this country. It is starting to work better and better, and it will be indispensable to our future success.

Mr David Jones (Clwyd West) (Con): The operators of pubs, hotels and restaurants in England will be feeling considerably relieved by the Prime Minister's statement, but that relief will not be shared in Wales, where hospitality is an enormously important part of the economy and yet the Welsh Government have yet to make a statement of their own. That is, of course, legally the consequence of devolution, but the practical consequence is despair and frustration. Will my right hon. Friend say what work the Government are doing with the devolved Administrations to try to secure a more uniform approach as we depart from the lockdown restrictions?

The Prime Minister: I say to my right hon. Friend—I should have said this to the right hon. Member for Dwyfor Meirionnydd (Liz Saville Roberts)—that we are in very regular contact with all the devolved

Administrations. We are much more in lockstep than might be thought. On the particular matter of hospitality in Wales, I hear him loud and clear, and I think that point will be heard loud and clear in Cardiff. We look forward to hearing further announcements.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): If people are to take advantage of this freeing of restrictions, they must have confidence in the judgment of the Prime Minister and those around him. He must surely realise that recent events have done some damage in that regard. If he wishes to repair some of that damage, will he end the much-ridiculed quarantine period for people coming here from overseas?

The Prime Minister: First, may I apologise to the right hon. Gentleman for last week mistakenly believing him to be someone who wanted to break up our United Kingdom? I unreservedly withdraw that aspersion. I know that he and I want to keep our Union together. On the quarantine issue, however, I must say to him that I think it is very sensible for this country to have measures in place to protect our population from vectors of disease coming back into the UK from abroad. That is the right thing to do.

Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con): I assure the Prime Minister that there will be a warm welcome for his measures today in Rugby, not only from the pubs and restaurants but in particular from the town centre traders. To accommodate 2 metre social distancing, there are works under way to provide an unwelcome one-way system and the removal of on-street parking. The welcome move to 1 metre on 4 July means that those measures will no longer be necessary and that it will be easier for customers to get into our town centre and spend money with our fantastic local retailers.

The Prime Minister: I certainly encourage customers to go to the fantastic local retailers in Rugby, and I am delighted that these measures obviate the need for the cursed one-way system that my hon. Friend describes.

Florence Eshalomi (Vauxhall) (Lab/Co-op): We do welcome the restrictions being eased up, and a number of businesses across my constituency and along the south bank, including those in the hospitality, leisure and cultural sectors, will see this as a step in the right direction, but it will still be hard for them. Businesses need to see detailed guidelines now. Research by the Federation of Small Businesses shows that the vast majority of small businesses say they will need to make changes in their premises for this to work, but there will be significant costs attached to that. What can the Government do to help small restaurants, cafés, hairdressers and other small businesses employing 10 or fewer people, whose balance sheets have been so impacted over the last few months, to make necessary adjustments to keep their staff and customers safe?

The Prime Minister: As the hon. Lady knows, businesses have been eligible for £25,000 in grants. We have had 11 million people supported under the coronavirus job retention scheme and spent huge amounts of money—£26 billion in bounce back loans alone. We will support businesses large and small for the duration of this crisis, but the best way to get all the hairdressers and nail

[*The Prime Minister*]

bars—all these businesses—back on their feet as fast as possible is to make sure that we continue to depress the virus, keep it under control and keep the incidence down, and that way we will go forward. Our vision for the country is to try to get back to normality for as many as possible as fast as possible.

Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con): I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend's statement. I am looking forward to dropping in at the Wheatsheaf in Ewell on 4 July to thank them for moving from being a great hub of the local community to being a great virtual hub of the local community in the last few weeks. However, my right hon. Friend and I both represent a large number of people who work in the creative industries, and although today's announcement is very welcome, it is inevitable that many parts of those industries, such as the exhibitions sector and small theatres, will still be held back for a period of time. Can my right hon. Friend assure me that he, the Chancellor and other Ministers will continue to look at ways in which we can ease the pressure on one of our most essential sectors?

The Prime Minister: My right hon. Friend is a great champion of those industries and, as I have said to colleagues in the House already, we are doing a huge amount to engage with them and to support them.

Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West) (SNP) [V]: The Prime Minister said in his statement that he is keen to get people back into work, but we have also seen the benefits of home working, particularly in Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, with staff having gone the extra mile to support business through the schemes. However, the Prime Minister will be aware that HMRC has now launched a massive redundancy scheme, which could affect 2,000 staff. What message does he believe he sends when he says that people should get back to work but Government Departments want to put people out of work?

The Prime Minister: I think that people have to work from home if they can. That remains the guidance, and of course it is up to employers and employees to decide whether they need to get back to their workplaces to do their jobs. On HMRC and the sad redundancies that the hon. Gentleman mentions, I will certainly look at that, though I think that, obviously, it is also important to cut the cost of government.

Edward Timpson (Eddisbury) (Con): It will come as no surprise to Members to hear that I wholly endorse the Prime Minister's announcement on the end of the hairdressing hibernation. That has been made possible by the change in the social distancing rules, which will help hundreds of thousands of businesses across the country. To help them further, will my right hon. Friend look at reducing VAT and national insurance contributions for employers, so that we are not just cutting hair, but cutting taxes, too?

The Prime Minister: I will certainly look at all such measures, but I do not wish to anticipate anything that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor may say,

Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab): The Prime Minister will be aware of The Deep, in Hull, which is a landmark centre for marine research and the world's only "submarium". No mention of aquariums was made in his speech, but I noted that he talked about a taskforce, so when will it give reports? How quickly can we get the aquarium open? In the meantime—if that cannot happen—will he look at providing it with extra, specialised financial support?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Lady has heard what I have had to say. We will do everything we can to get all such venues—aquariums and seaquariums—open as fast as we can and make them covid compliant. I am sure we can get there.

Julie Marson (Hertford and Stortford) (Con): People and businesses across Hertford and Stortford will rightly welcome the Prime Minister's announcement. Does he agree that we should also continue to support the development of new technologies and those already in use, such as apps and QR—quick response—codes, which will help many companies, especially those in the arts and technologies sector, and the hospitality sector, to benefit from the measures he has outlined today?

The Prime Minister: Absolutely. I know I can rely on the incredible ingenuity of every sector in the UK, including the arts, retail and hospitality sectors, to use technology now to bank the changes and to make further progress in taking our economy forward and letting this country bounce back.

Mr Speaker: I call Lloyd Russell-Moyle.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op): Thank you, Prime Minister. Sorry, thank you, Mr Speaker—it would perhaps be much better if you were Prime Minister.

Let me thank the Prime Minister for a welcome statement. We have a plethora of small businesses in Brighton. I have just spoken to our lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender businesses, along with *Gscene*, our LGBT magazine, and they, and, in particular, our bars and clubs, are keen to open. However, they are worried at the moment that the furlough scheme, which will rightly be closing for new entrants this month and which will allow part-time working, will not allow people to come off furlough to see whether the business is viable and then be put back on it. Will he consider some flexibility, such as a two-week trial, with people then able to be put back on furlough for the remainder of the scheme, so that businesses can test the water? Many businesses say that otherwise, they will just stay shut completely, which would be a real disappointment.

The Prime Minister: I hope that businesses will recognise that now is the moment to get going and to get their valued staff back working again, doing what they want to do and love doing. I have no doubt that all the bars in Brighton have every reason to be confident, provided that we do this in a sensible way. I think everybody in the House understands the balance of what we are trying to do today and can join together in expressing that balance to the public.

Mr Speaker: Heading to lovely Lancashire, with Mark Menzies.

Mark Menzies (Fylde) (Con) [V]: It is lovely Lancashire, Mr Speaker. May I welcome the measures that the Prime Minister has announced today, which will be a real boost to the visitor economy? Other Members have invited him to come for a drink in their constituencies, but may I invite him to Fylde to get his hair cut? While he is here, he will have an opportunity to realise why it is very important, as part of the levelling-up agenda, to give the green light to projects such as the Lytham St Annes M55 link road, which will ensure that the visitor economies of areas such as Fylde are connected and well served for years to come.

Mr Speaker: Carrie will be upset.

The Prime Minister: I am not sure I can wait until I get to Fylde to have my hair cut. Certainly, my hon. Friend's appeal for the M55 relief road is well judged and has been heard by those on the Government Benches, and of course he should look forward to the further steps in the infrastructure revolution that we will be unveiling.

Lucy Powell (Manchester Central) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: Hairdressers, restaurants and pubs in Manchester will warmly welcome today's announcement. If the Prime Minister does not mind, I will not follow suit in inviting him to join me for a drink in one of them. He will be aware, however, that 80% of the more than 3 million people who work in hospitality and leisure are currently furloughed. How does he expect businesses such as gyms, nightclubs, theatres and others that have to remain closed to contribute to the furlough scheme at the beginning of August without causing mass redundancies?

The Prime Minister: That is why we have set up the various taskforces that we have, to ensure that we work with everybody in the sectors to enable them to open as fast as possible in a covid-compliant way; that is our ambition.

James Wild (North West Norfolk) (Con): This announcement will be warmly welcomed by the pubs, restaurants, holiday parks and attractions that, along with the stunning coastline, make North West Norfolk the ideal place to visit and take a staycation; but alongside these measures, does my right hon. Friend agree that Hunstanton and other coastal areas in Norfolk need to benefit from investment, as part of our levelling-up agenda, so that we can bounce back for the long term?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed, and we will be doing a huge amount for coastal communities that have been left behind, as my hon. Friend knows. But one thing I think we can all do now is ensure that we send out a very positive and welcoming message from coastal communities around the UK. Now is the time, folks, to have a staycation in the UK—in Hunstanton or elsewhere.

Catherine West (Hornsey and Wood Green) (Lab): The fastest-growing languages in Hornsey and Wood Green are Mandarin Chinese and Latin American Spanish. The diversity within Hornsey and Wood Green is a real strength; they even chose an Australian-speaking MP—but my question is serious. What personal steps will the Prime Minister take to stop black and minority ethnic communities getting covid, so that we can save more lives in the next few months? It has been a really tragic few months for my constituency.

The Prime Minister: I thank the hon. Lady, and she is absolutely right to raise the point that she does. She will have heard that we want enhanced, greater, more immediate and more efficient testing for those high-contact groups. Over the past few months, we have seen black and minority ethnic people very, very substantially represented in trades and professions that have been very much exposed to coronavirus, and we want to make sure that we help immediately, by targeting those groups with extra testing. But I think there are more lessons to be learned for the future, and that is why we have set up the commission that we have and will be drawing further conclusions in due course.

Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe) (Con): Wycombe will rejoice. I want to thank the experts who have guided us through this crisis, but I observe that when information is incomplete, when information and knowledge are uncertain, experts disagree with one another. For the sake of the public, the Government and, indeed, the experts themselves, will my right hon. Friend have a meeting with me and with Professor Roger Koppl, a scholar in the field of expert failure, to discuss how things can be done better in the future?

The Prime Minister: I think I know Roger Koppl and I would be very interested to hear what he has to say, but I must say I think that the guidance from our scientists has been incredibly valuable. It has helped us throughout the period. But be in no doubt—I am sure my hon. Friend will understand—that the decisions that we have taken are decisions that we as Government have taken, and for which we take full responsibility.

Clive Efford (Eltham) (Lab): I have many large leisure facilities in my constituency that could open now—gymnasiums, swimming pools and even an outdoor lido, but they fear that they have been lumped in with smaller facilities that would find it difficult to open. They could open now, meeting social distancing regulations, whether 2 metres or 1 metre. How long will they have to wait for the taskforce to enable them to open?

The Prime Minister: The hon. Gentleman makes a very powerful point, and I am sure that that kind of point will be echoed in multiple ways around the country today, as people look at apparent inconsistencies. All I can say is, we will work as fast as we can with him, with the gyms and swimming pools that he mentions, to try to get them into a state where they can open as fast as possible.

Huw Merriman (Bexhill and Battle) (Con): The 2 metre social distancing rule has meant that only 15% of tube passengers are able to travel. That figure will now rise to 25%, with the Prime Minister's welcome reduction of the rule to 1 metre. In the event that demand exceeds that 25% supply, the R rate continues to fall, and PPE is used, will the Prime Minister look again at the distancing rules, to ensure that our economy and customers can move around?

The Prime Minister: Absolutely. The guidance remains that people should avoid public transport if they can, but if they must use it, they should wear a face covering. I think that is the right balance at the moment.

Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) (SNP) [V]: The Prime Minister has just spoken about making difficult judgments, but it was his judgment not to sack Dominic Cummings. Does his judgment extend to understanding the damage that that decision did to confidence in England's public health messaging, and the consequences of that for people's lives? What is his judgment now of how he can repair that damage?

The Prime Minister: I must say that, in spite of the kind of comment we have just heard, I have been overwhelmingly impressed and fortified by the common sense of the British people, who heard our messages and understood what to do. Let me remind the House of one statistic that shows the power of community spirit in this country at the moment: 87,000 people have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace, and they have voluntarily agreed to self-isolate to prevent the transmission of the disease. That is a fantastic thing. People understand what to do, they are doing it, and the common sense of the British people is going to get us through this.

Fay Jones (Brecon and Radnorshire) (Con): Last week I spoke to hospitality and tourist businesses in my constituency. They have worked extremely hard to implement social distancing measures, and they are desperate to get back to work. Will the Prime Minister continue to work closely with the devolved Administration in Wales, and ensure that Wales joins up with the rest of the United Kingdom? In particular, will he encourage the Welsh Government to scrap the 5 mile rule?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that point, and the House will have heard what I have already said on that matter. We will continue to work closely with our colleagues in Wales and across the DAs.

Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): Now that we are moving to 1 metre-plus, which, I understand, applies only where 2 metres is impossible, what does the Prime Minister say to all those businesses that have expended considerable sums to comply with the 2 metre guidelines? Should they stick with 2 metres, or can they move to 1 metre? Will we see any changes in this place?

The Prime Minister: The second point is, of course, a matter for you, Mr Speaker, and it is for the House authorities to establish how to proceed, but I would encourage as much progress to be made as possible. For businesses, the guidance is there and will be published later today. I hope they will take advantage of that guidance, and that it will make those businesses more manageable.

Andrew Jones (Harrogate and Knaresborough) (Con): I welcome this statement. Harrogate and Knaresborough is in the top 10% of constituencies in this country for the hospitality sector, as measured by the number of people employed in it, which is almost 9,500 in our case. Many local authorities are looking to use streets and pavements for cafes and other hospitality businesses, which I support. Does my right hon. Friend agree that councils should be encouraged to use available spaces to help the hospitality sector reopen, while of course ensuring social distancing?

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is totally right: this is the moment for ingenuity. I hope that councils will be broad-minded and creative, as there is plenty of space to be found.

Jessica Morden (Newport East) (Lab) [V]: Welsh councils are reporting a shortfall of around £170 million in the first quarter of this financial year, due to the crisis, and we will need the UK Government to step up and provide more funding to the Welsh Government, to ensure that we do not suffer big cuts to services just when they are needed most. Will the Prime Minister commit to that?

The Prime Minister: It is, of course, up to the Welsh Government to spend money properly, but the hon. Lady should be in no doubt that this Government continue to commit sums to help all the devolved Administrations. As I think our friends from the SNP will know, the UK Exchequer has already contributed £3.7 billion extra in Barnett consequential for Scotland alone—[*Interruption.*] I am sure that point is seldom off the lips of the hon. Member for Gordon (Richard Thomson). We will continue to support every part of the United Kingdom.

Bill Wiggin (North Herefordshire) (Con): I got covid-19 on the same day as my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. Yesterday, I was given a free test by a company called Pysier Testing, which is an excellent company run by military veterans. Many of us have had the disease. Does my right hon. Friend agree that, if we can be identified to make sure we are in those statistics, we can move faster and more efficiently? We have to get tested.

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I am delighted to see him looking so well, having made such a great recovery. At the moment, one of the difficulties the country faces is that it looks as though only 6% or 7% of the population have had the virus, which raises questions about the risk of a second spike and the disease coming back. The answer is: testing, testing, testing. He will be pleased to know that this country is now testing roughly twice as many people per head of population as any other European country.

Richard Burgon (Leeds East) (Lab) [V]: The former chief scientific adviser has said that tens of thousands of lives could have been saved if the Government had acted differently. If we had had the same death rate as South Korea, a country whose population and income are not very different from ours, we would have had a few hundred deaths, not the many tens of thousands we have had. Is not today's announcement, which is really just about appeasing right wingers on the Tory Back Benches, once again a case of this Government gambling with people's lives?

The Prime Minister: I understand why the hon. Gentleman makes that point, but he is wrong. By contrast, I welcome the more constructive approach from the Labour Front Bench.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): I welcome the statement and its caution but also its optimism, which the country badly needs right now. Many thousands of our constituents should be heading to Somerset this weekend—perhaps the

Prime Minister was going as well—for the 50th Glastonbury festival. Will he speak to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport about working with the independent festivals sector over the summer to ensure that that thriving industry, which is worth about £2.6 billion to the economy each year, still exists in 2021? Right now, many people working in the sector fall foul of the generous schemes put in place and for obvious reasons cannot trade their way out of their situation.

The Prime Minister: Having performed briefly at Glastonbury myself many years ago—not to much acclaim, I may say—I am a keen admirer of that wonderful festival and of the whole sector that my hon. Friend identifies. As I have said several times in this statement, we are doing whatever we can to support that very valuable sector.

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab) [V]: I welcome the Prime Minister's statement, particularly on the support for hospitality, which has been a concern raised by many small businesses in my constituency, but I want to ask about schools. He will know that even with 1 metre social distancing, some small Victorian school buildings in my constituency, which often have limited outdoor space too, will find it difficult to educate all children returning in phases. How will he work with those schools, the local education authority and the academy trusts to ensure that in these circumstances all children can get the education they deserve and need?

The Prime Minister: Between now and 1 September, when all pupils and students of schools and colleges will return, we will work with the sector to ensure that we have a clear understanding of how to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. Our objective, as the House will understand, is by then to have got not just the rate of transmission but the incidence down so far that we can go forward in a much more normalised way. As for what we can do in the next few weeks, I am glad the hon. Gentleman supports schools returning. Those classes that can go back now should go back.

Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con): This statement will be widely welcomed in Britain's premier resort, Scarborough. I hope that Scarborough will very soon be firing on all cylinders, as the Prime Minister is today. One sector that has been disproportionately affected by lockdown is that of pleasure cruises and charter angling vessels. Will the Prime Minister assure me not only that the sector will have covid-secure guidelines for operating with 1 metre social distancing, but that those guidelines will be applied consistently around the country?

The Prime Minister: Yes, indeed. We will make sure that the valuable sector of pleasure cruises and charters is helped to become covid compliant as fast as possible.

Dave Doogan (Angus) (SNP)[V]: The Prime Minister has spoken with great pride about the 2.6 million self-employed people who have been supported through

covid by Government, but, scandalously, his Treasury has excluded a greater number—3 million—of self-employed entrepreneurs, taxpayers and owners of small companies. That includes many in my constituency who have been excluded from Government help with no income for three months. Will the Prime Minister please offer an urgent financial lifeline to these blameless victims and their families?

The Prime Minister: We have done a huge amount to support employees and the self-employed across the country with loans, grants and the coronavirus job retention scheme, as I have said. I am conscious that the hon. Gentleman makes a fair point. There are some people who perhaps have not got the support that they felt they needed, because of the difficulties in identifying what is appropriate and because of technical difficulties of all kinds. The single best solution is to get our economy moving cautiously and safely forward, and that is what this package is intended to do.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con) [V]: The statement from the Prime Minister will be warmly welcomed right across the UK, particularly in London. During the lockdown, many of my constituents have followed the advice to work from home where they can to avoid unnecessary travel. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that the advice to those constituents is still to work from home if they can to cut out unnecessary travel, so that those who have to travel to work can do so in the safest possible manner?

The Prime Minister: Yes, my hon. Friend is completely right; as I said earlier, people should avoid public transport if they can. In determining whether they need to go to work, it is important for employers to discuss it with their employees as we go forward, but of course people should work from home if that is possible.

Lucy Allan (Telford) (Con): On behalf of my constituents in Telford, I welcome this fantastic statement, and I am grateful to the Prime Minister. Will he devote his wonderful energy, enthusiasm and optimism to ensuring that we now have a bold, confident recovery plan so that we can rebuild our economy and safeguard jobs, opportunities and livelihoods in Telford and across the country?

The Prime Minister: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her description of the plan that we are about to unveil. In the next few weeks, she will be hearing a lot more about how the UK intends not just to bounce back, but to bounce forward.

Mr Speaker: In order to allow the safe exit of hon. Members participating in this item of business and the safe arrival of those participating in the next, I am now suspending the House for three minutes.

2.8 pm

Sitting suspended.

Windrush Compensation Scheme

2.11 pm

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel): With permission, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will make a statement on the Windrush compensation scheme.

Yesterday, we celebrated Windrush Day, which marks the 72nd anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury docks. The ship carried hundreds of people who had left their homes to build a new life in the United Kingdom, and to help this country rebuild following the destruction of the second world war. These men and women built their lives and went on to build their homes in the United Kingdom. They, with many thousands of others who made similar journeys, and their descendants, have made an immeasurable contribution to the social, economic and cultural life of our country. When Britain was in need, they answered the call.

Yet as we all know, they were the very people who went on to suffer unspeakable injustices and institutional failings spanning successive Governments over several decades. I have apologised for the appalling treatment suffered and, on 19 March, I made a statement after I received the long awaited Windrush lessons learned review from Wendy Williams. I have apologised for the appalling treatment suffered by the Windrush generation.

The review was damning about the conduct of the Home Office and unequivocal about the

“institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards the...race and the history of the Windrush generation”

by the Department. There are serious and significant lessons for the Home Office to learn in the way it operates. The permanent secretary and I are currently reviewing its leadership, culture and practices, and the way it views and treats all parts of the community it serves.

These reforms are only the start. I was clear that when Wendy Williams published her lessons learned review, I would listen and act. I have heard what she has said, and I will be accepting the recommendations that she has made in full. I am committed to ensuring that the Home Office delivers for each part of the community it serves, and I will come back to update the House before the summer recess on how we will be implementing the recommendations. I look forward to discussing the plans further with Wendy this week.

We have been working tirelessly to support the most urgent cases and those most in need. In April 2018, the Home Office set up the Windrush taskforce to ensure that those who needed documentation immediately could get it. A month later, the Windrush scheme was launched, providing free citizenship to those eligible for it.

The Home Office has a dedicated vulnerable persons team in place to provide immediate support to people suffering with a range of vulnerabilities, including the financial hardships and destitutions that have been well documented. The team also administers the urgent and exceptional payments scheme, which provides immediate financial payments. To the end of March this year, the team has made 35 payments, totalling more than £46,000.

Work is continuing unabated to ensure that those who suffered receive the documentation and the compensation that they need. So far, more than 12,000 people have been

granted documentation by the Windrush taskforce, including more than 5,900 grants of citizenship, and the compensation scheme continues to make payments to compensate the losses and impacts that individuals suffered as a result of not being able to demonstrate their lawful status. The scheme was set up and designed with the backing of Martin Forde QC, in close consultation with those who were affected by the scandal, and in February I announced that I would extend it until April 2023 to give those who need our help as much time as they need to apply.

We are continuing to process individual claims as quickly as possible. The first payment was made within four months of the scheme's launch, and many interim awards are being made where parts of the claim can be resolved more easily and more quickly than others. But let me be clear: it is not a blanket one-size-fits-all scheme. It was deliberately designed with community leaders and Martin Forde QC so that the claimant is at the heart of each and every claim.

Cases deserve to be processed individually with the care and sensitivity that they deserve, so that the maximum payment can be made to every single person. I simply will not call for targets when it comes to dealing with claims. These are incredibly personal cases—individual cases—that must be treated with the care, the dignity and the respect that they deserve.

I want everyone who has been wronged to get the maximum compensation to which they are entitled, and through this bespoke scheme, we are working to achieve that. This compensation covers a very wide range of categories—far more than any comparable compensation scheme. It covers immigration fees; it covers loss of earnings; it covers benefits; it covers homelessness; it covers destitution. Overall, it covers 13 separate categories. Assessing claims in this way is ultimately beneficial to those who are making them, but it takes time to assess them and it takes time to get it right. While claims are being processed in full, many interim and exceptional payments have been made to make sure that people have access to money—to the funds that they need now.

Clearly, I share the desire to see more claims completed. The rate of claims has already increased significantly in the past few months: as of the end of March, more than £360,000 had been awarded, and further offers have been made of approximately £280,000. I can confirm today that more than £1 million has been offered in claims so far, and more payments and offers are being made each week, but we can—and of course we must—do more. My determination to right the wrongs and the injustices suffered by the Windrush generation is undiminished, and I will do all I can to ensure that more people are helped and more people are compensated in full. If additional resources are needed, they will be provided.

Now is the time for more action. We all have a duty to help those affected by this terrible injustice. Individuals will benefit from the compensation scheme only if they are sought out and encouraged to apply. We are working extensively with community groups and leaders to raise awareness of the Windrush taskforce and the compensation scheme, including among vulnerable people through the vulnerable persons team. Anyone who needs help or support to make a claim will receive it. The Home Office has funded Citizens Advice to provide free independent advice and support, and has hosted or

attended more than 100 engagement and outreach events throughout the United Kingdom. As Members know, my door is always open, so I urge them to ensure that their constituents' cases or concerns are raised immediately with my team and me so that they are progressed and resolved.

Throughout the coronavirus pandemic, I have made sure that no one is left behind. Working with community leaders, I have launched a digital engagement programme so that outreach can continue despite the current social distancing measures. The first virtual support event was held on 21 May, and on 19 March I announced a dedicated new communications campaign to promote the Windrush schemes, as well as a £500,000 fund for community organisations to run outreach, promotional and support activities to increase awareness.

We know, however, that there are a range of other issues and injustices affecting the Windrush generation and their families. Yesterday, I announced a new Windrush cross-Government working group, which I will co-chair with Bishop Derek Webley. The group brings together community leaders with senior representatives from a number of Government Departments to address the challenges faced by the Windrush generation and their descendants, spanning programmes on education, work, health and much more. The Prime Minister and I spoke to members of the group yesterday to discuss many of the actions needed and to deliver solutions. The first formal meeting of the group will take place this Thursday. I look forward to taking the work of the group forward, alongside the inspirational co-chair, Bishop Webley.

Nothing can ever undo the suffering experienced by members of the Windrush generation. No one should have suffered the uncertainty, complication and hardships brought on by the mistakes of successive Governments. Now is the time for more action across the Government to repay that debt of gratitude and to eliminate the challenges that still exist for them and their descendants. Only then can we build a stronger, fairer and more successful country for the next generation. I commend this statement to the House.

2.21 pm

Nick Thomas-Symonds (Torfaen) (Lab): I am grateful to the Home Secretary for her statement and for advance sight of it.

I would like to start by celebrating the enormous contribution the Windrush generation and their families have made. The arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury docks in 1948 was an important moment in our nation's history: people from the Caribbean answering the call to help to rebuild a nation recovering from the second world war. Since then, the Windrush generation and their families have had a huge impact on every facet of national life: our NHS, our transport system, across public and private sectors, the arts, culture, religion and sports. But we also know that many who made new lives here did not get the welcome they were expecting. Many faced appalling racism, were locked out of jobs and homes, and were subject to terrible abuse in the streets.

We may have hoped that all aspects of that had been consigned to the past, but 70 years later we have seen an incredibly strong reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement's call for change here in the UK, and little wonder. Compounded injustices over generations have created deep frustrations and hurt. The brave testimonies

that black people have shared about the impact racism has on their lives and their family histories has underlined that there is an undeniable case for action. Addressing unfairness and injustice begins at the door of the Home Office, with the appalling mistreatment of the Windrush generation.

The Windrush scandal is a cause for national shame and the Wendy Williams lessons learned review is a damning indictment. It exposes callousness and incompetence that caused deep injustice, while making clear the impact of jobs lost, lives uprooted, and untold damage done to many individuals and families. The review sets out 30 important and urgent recommendations, a number of which speak to a deeply worrying culture that has been allowed to develop over the past 10 years. Frankly, it is shameful that one of the recommendations called for the Department to develop

"a clear purpose, mission and values statement"

rooted in

"fairness, humanity, openness, diversity and inclusion",

and that such a statement was not in place already. There are also recommendations which show the work required on issues relating to race and the need for better community outreach and engagement. It is, frankly, shocking that it took a scandal on this scale to bring such core failings to light.

I welcome what the Home Secretary said about accepting all 30 recommendations, but the reality is that we need yet another statement before the summer recess before we even move towards implementation, when this report has been available since March. I welcome the commitment to appointing Bishop Derek Webley as co-chair of a cross-party working group, but that cannot be a substitute for action. The truth is that we have to see far more in the way of action from this Government to give the impression that they actually take this issue seriously. That is why we will be looking very carefully at the Government's response to the recommendations of the Williams review. As with the Lammy review, I am afraid that the Government too often call for reviews; they are too slow to act and too slow to right the wrongs. The Government's Windrush compensation scheme managed to compensate just 60 people in its first year of operation. The Home Secretary talked about more progress today, but she must know that that rate of progress is just too slow, given the number of years that have elapsed since the scandal first came to light and the fact that the scheme has already been in operation for over a year.

It is little wonder that the reception was so bad for the Prime Minister's recent announcement of yet another review on racial inequality, when the case for urgent action and the steps needed are abundantly clear. The reality is that, yet again, the Prime Minister was found wanting; in an important national moment, it is always words, not action. The anniversary of Windrush is an opportunity to celebrate and thank the Windrush generation, but while injustices persist, this is not enough. To ensure that such a national scandal never happens again, surely the Home Secretary must accept that the time for action is now.

Priti Patel: As I outlined in my statement, I have been unequivocal on the change that is required at the Home Office. When I made my original statement following the publication of the Windrush lessons learned review,

[Priti Patel]

the hon. Gentleman was not in his current role, so he would not have heard the full statement that I gave then, or the answers that I gave to the many questions. I apologised for the absolutely appalling scandal that took place, and I will continue not just to apologise but to ensure that the Home Office in particular learns the lessons and fundamentally changes its culture, the leadership and the way in which it treats people, and becomes far more representative of the communities that it serves. I said that back in March and I will continue to say it until the Home Office fundamentally shifts its own way of working and ultimately learns the lessons.

Of course, that will take time. There is no silver bullet to do this overnight, but the first step that we can take is to ensure that we continue to work together collaboratively across our society and across Government to tackle the injustices that were suffered. That is my mission, that is my aim and that is why I am accepting the recommendations. I think it is right, as I said back in March and as I have said in previous statements, that I continue to speak to Wendy Williams, which I am doing this week, and to work with her and with people in the Home Office to implement the recommendations in the right way. In fact, when the report was published earlier this year, Wendy Williams herself said that we should not just come out and accept the recommendations, but work through them. That is exactly what we are doing. That is the right response. That is the responsible way in which we do this, to understand the delivery.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the compensation scheme, and I agree: the payments and the way payments have been made have been far too slow. I am not apologising for that at all. I have outlined in my statement that it is right that we treat each individual with the respect and dignity they deserve. These are complicated cases. In fact, last week when I was here in the House answering oral questions, the issue came up and I put the offer to many hon. Members on the Opposition Benches to come into the Home Office and to spend some time with our casework team in order to understand the complexities of the various cases, particularly constituency cases that they themselves may have raised. That offer is absolutely open to each constituency Member of Parliament. They should come in and look at the case handling. These are bespoke cases, and each one is handled in a sensitive way.

For the benefit of Members who are not aware of this, let me explain that when offers of payments are made to individuals, those individuals have a period to consider the payment they are being offered. If they would like to discuss the payment or if they decline it and want a review, that review is conducted not by the Home Office but by HMRC, an independent body. Again, it takes time for HMRC to do the review, but that is the right approach. It was agreed with Martin Forde and the individual stakeholders who were consulted before the scheme was set up.

My final point in response to the hon. Gentleman is that, although we know that the Windrush generation has faced many, many injustices, recent events have shone a spotlight on a whole range of injustices across many communities in our country. The Prime Minister's new commission is very much looking at how we can level up and at how we can address and tackle those injustices.

We should be doing that collectively as a House, working together in a responsible way to look at how we can support individuals, communities and minority groups of all faiths and backgrounds. That is the right thing to do, and I hope that all Opposition Members, including the hon. Gentleman, will work in a collaborative and constructive way to move forward on these issues.

Bob Seely (Isle of Wight) (Con): I commend the Home Secretary for her typically robust, no-nonsense approach of taking control of this issue and for her personal dedication to righting the wrongs of the past, which is extremely important. I welcome the cross-Government working group. Can she confirm that the work of this group will complement the race equality commission, headed by the highly competent Munira Mirza?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. That commission is absolutely complementary to the work that we are doing with the Windrush lessons learned review. We must look at all these issues in the round, in a consistent way, to develop the right approaches so that we can work together and solve the root causes of many of these issues and social injustices. I am here, with the Home Office, to work across Government, and that is our aim and objective.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): The Windrush scandal brought shame on the United Kingdom and shame on the Conservative Government, who caused it to happen. Make no mistake about it, Mr Deputy Speaker, what happened was a direct result of the hostile environment policy. The Government must know that, and yet, before dealing with Wendy Williams' recommendations, they have pressed ahead with plans to extend the reach of the hostile environment policy to European Union citizens in the immigration Bill.

I am concerned that, in today's statement, the Home Secretary does not unequivocally commit to the sort of root and branch review of the hostile environment policy recommended by the lessons learned review. It is all very well to agree that black lives matter, but actions speak louder than words, and the reality is that many of this Government's immigration policies continue to have disproportionate impacts on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. If the Home Secretary does not carry out a root and branch review of the hostile environment policy, this will continue.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants has correctly identified that policies such as the right-to-rent scheme, which outsource the enforcement of immigration control to untrained members of the public, cannot be adequately reformed in such a way as to avoid the sort of discrimination that we have seen result. It is these policies that have resulted in real suffering for people from the Windrush generation and beyond, with people losing their jobs, unable to rent their homes and denied hospital treatment, including treatment for serious diseases such as cancer.

Can the Home Secretary tell us, in direct terms, that she will be carrying out the review of the hostile environment that was recommended by Wendy Williams? Wendy Williams said that the review should approach the measures of the hostile environment individually and cumulatively and demonstrate a plan to mitigate any particular cohorts impacted. She said that the review

must be carried out with reference to equality law and the public sector equality duty. There have been calls for the right-to-rent scheme to be paused in the meantime and for the Government to consider pausing all other hostile environment measures until their effectiveness and impact can be evidenced. Will the Home Secretary state unequivocally for the record that this review of the hostile environment policy will happen, and will she give us a timescale today? Will she tell us whether the measures, such as the right-to-rent scheme, will be paused pending the outcome of the hostile environment policy? Finally, if assisting victims of the Windrush scandal is so complicated, why not extend legal aid to the lawyers who are trying to help them? That would be far more effective than inviting Members of Parliament into the Home Office.

Priti Patel: I am sorry that the hon. and learned Lady takes that tone. We have resourced third-party organisations, stakeholder groups and citizens advice bureaux to provide outreach and help and support. She may have constituents who have suffered from Windrush injustices, but I appreciate that she does not want to take up the offer to work in a constructive manner to find justice for her constituents.

The point that I make to the hon. and learned Lady is that Wendy Williams was clear in her report that lessons must be learned at all levels by all political parties. She described very clearly—I appreciate that the hon. and learned Lady is selectively quoting and reading from Wendy's report—a set of measures that evolved under Labour Governments and the coalition and under Governments covering decades.

The reasons the scandal occurred are more complex and can be traced back not just to the Department. The root causes can be traced back to legislation from the 1960s and 1980s, much of which is complex. I appreciate that the hon. and learned Lady has not fully read the report and is quoting selectively. As I said, I will come back to the House before the summer recess to discuss the specifics as to how we will be implementing—

Joanna Cherry: Answer my questions.

Priti Patel: As I have said, I will return to the House to outline how we will be implementing the recommendations from the lessons learned review.

Brendan Clarke-Smith (Bassetlaw) (Con): The UK has always welcomed those from other nations, and we can rightly be proud of our open and inclusive society. *[Interruption.]* We can also be thankful for the contribution of those who have chosen to make the UK their home and who add greatly to our society. I speak as somebody who is married to one such person who emigrated here to work for our fantastic NHS. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that improving the uptake and awareness of the schemes supporting those who were directly affected is a priority for her Department? Will she outline the steps she is taking to achieve that?

Priti Patel: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments and his questions, and he is right. I am really sorry that Members on the SNP Front Bench want to belittle my colleagues when they are speaking on these very important and sensitive issues.

My hon. Friend is absolutely right when it comes to the compensation scheme, which is complex. The Home Office is spending resources and time looking at how cases can be delivered and dealt with in a respectful way to ensure that individuals' situations are fully assessed and that there is an accurate assessment of how they themselves experienced the injustices that took place through the Windrush scandal. It is right that we treat everybody with respect and dignity in the handling of their case. That is my objective, and he will have heard today that the money that has already been offered has now reached £1 million. Significant sums of money are being offered to individuals.

It is right that we take the time to provide the compensation in the right way. We have a good scheme in place. We have a scheme that was developed by Martin Forde, QC, in consultation with other stakeholders, and many of those stakeholders suffered the injustices of the Windrush scandal themselves.

Yvette Cooper (Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford) (Lab): May I warmly welcome the Home Secretary's commitment to accept all of Wendy Williams' recommendations, but also ask her about the compensation scheme, because she did not include the latest figures in her statement? She will know that in our Home Affairs Committee report on Windrush two years ago, we raised four personal cases of injustice. Sadly, two of them have since died without receiving anything at all. I have heard from several people who were told in January that their case was nearly finalised and was in quality assurance, but have seen no progress since, including Anthony Williams, who served in our armed forces for 13 years, and Andrew Bynoe, who was made homeless as a result of the Windrush scandal.

Does the right hon. Lady accept that keeping people in hardship and waiting in limbo like this compounds the injustice that they have already felt? Will she tell the House how many cases have now received payments? What proportion are still outstanding? Is it true that that is still over 90%? How many people have been waiting more than a year? Will she increase the staffing of the compensation unit, so that we can urgently get people support and compensation for the injustice that was so wrongly meted to them?

Priti Patel: The right hon. Lady is absolutely right. I have seen her letter, for which I thank her, and she will get a response to the specific points that she has just raised. She is right about the two claims she mentioned, and I have the details of one of them in front of me. The claim is going through the quality assurance process, which has taken time. As she will have heard in my statement, where individuals are waiting for a final settlement through the vulnerable persons scheme, we are still able to release financial assistance and cash directly before the final claim is assured and accepted. But she is right in terms of the process. I am reviewing all the claims myself, and I have here a bundle of individual claims that Members have raised with me directly.

I have been specifically told by the permanent secretary overseeing this at the Home Office that additional resources are not required for the Windrush compensation claim team. I check that every single week. These claims take time, for the reasons that I have outlined. The right hon. Lady is right about the gap in time for people who need

[Priti Patel]

help and support, which is why we have the vulnerable persons team, who are resourced to effectively triage and provide support, equipment, help and funds in the way I have outlined. I will get to her the details for which she asked for her Committee, and if she wishes to raise any specific cases with me, which I think she outlined in her letter, I will be more than happy to look at those and see what stages those claimants are at.

Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con): We debate in this place how firm an immigration system should be and the exact parameters of it, and sometimes we take that debate out to the country, as we did in December. But I think it is common cause across the House and the country that an immigration system must be fair, and that is why what happened to the Windrush generation was such a scandal—it was manifestly unfair. I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement. Can she reassure me, and my constituents, that, while the Home Office under successive Governments has failed the Windrush generation, it is her highest priority and that of the Government to put this right?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is right. For all Members who have read the Wendy Williams report, it is devastating reading—there are no two ways about that. That is why we should all come together to understand the sense of injustice, because the cases in the report are absolutely devastating. It is my priority to ensure that we give people the justice and support that they desperately need and deserve. My hon. Friend touched on the future immigration system. We have to make our system less complicated; it is far too complicated. The review touches on immigration policy throughout the '60s, '70s and '80s, as more legislation and more complexities were put in place. We need to start streamlining that, to make it firm but fair.

Rushanara Ali (Bethnal Green and Bow) (Lab): The Windrush generation gave so much to rebuild our country. The Government's hostile environment policy, "Go Home" vans and disgraceful treatment of the Windrush generation, deeming thousands of them illegal immigrants, is tantamount to institutional racism. Is it not time that the Home Secretary called it out for what it is? Is it not time that she took urgent action to implement the review—not in the months ahead, but right away—and ensure that the many thousands who have not received compensation get it as a matter of urgency?

Priti Patel: I refer the hon. Lady to my statement and the comments I have made already. I am sure she has heard my commitment to getting compensation to individuals—she sits there and shrugs her shoulders, but that is exactly what I am doing. She may have particular cases that she would like to raise with me. I am more than aware of what has happened. That is why I am here today, and that is why I have been unequivocal in my commitment to ensuring that the injustices suffered are addressed and dealt with. We have to right many of the wrongs. We cannot do that in a perfect way, but we will work hard to ensure that we get people the justice and compensation that they deserve.

Steve Double (St Austell and Newquay) (Con): I join the Home Secretary in paying tribute to the Windrush generation, and thank her for her statement and for the

approach she is taking to addressing this matter. I welcome the emphasis on community engagement in this process. Back in 2018 when this appalling treatment first came to light, I met a group of church leaders who impressed on me the role that churches play in many of these Caribbean communities, and the way in which they can help their congregation members to find redress and closure. Will the Home Secretary confirm that church leaders—and other faith leaders, where appropriate—will continue to be engaged in the process?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I have been humbled by many of the representatives I have met from community groups and churches. I mentioned Bishop Webley, who will be co-chairing the new working group with me. It is absolutely right that we work with communities. Engagement and outreach have to be from the bottom up, and I make no apology for that. When I came to this Dispatch Box in March to give my view on the Wendy Williams lessons learned review, I clearly said that there had been a fundamental and inevitable breakdown in trust between the Windrush generation and the Home Office because of the treatment that these individuals and the community had received. To rebuild that trust, we have to work with the community—with the leaders of the community and with trusted representatives from the community. It is by building those bridges that we will achieve some justice for those individuals, and, importantly, address a wide range of inequalities and issues around social justice in addition to compensation.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): The immoral Windrush scandal occurred because of the Tory Government's hostile environment policy. Despite hon. Members and community organisations demanding justice for more than two years for the tens of thousands of victims, of the mere 1,275 people who have claimed compensation thus far only 60 have received payments, and 529 people have had to wait for more than a year. Does the Home Secretary concede that this neatly sums up the attitude of the Government and the contempt in which they hold long-suffering individuals? Just as with the hapless victims of the deadly Grenfell fire tragedy, this callous Government have no intention whatever of delivering full, proper and timely justice for those who have been so unconscionably wronged.

Priti Patel: I dispute and disagree with the hon. Gentleman's tone and his comments. I am not sure whether he has read Wendy Williams's review; I do not think so.

Joanna Cherry: Cut the constant ad hominem comments.

Priti Patel: Would the hon. and learned Lady let me respond to the question from the hon. Member for Slough (Mr Dhesi), without intervening?

There are plenty of examples in the report, as stated by Wendy Williams, showing that lessons should be learned by all political parties. In fact, the report contains quotes attributed as far back as 2009—to a previous Labour Government—on the hostile environment. There are many quotes with regard to members of the then Labour Government who expressed a desire to make the UK a hostile environment, including wanting to make those living here illegally ever "more uncomfortable" and referring to the need to flush out illegal immigrants. That is the type of language that, right now, we should not be using.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman, having listened to my statement, understands the complexities around individual cases, and how we are working to get justice and provide compensation to individuals. That approach is the right one. It has been based on stakeholder engagement with victims from the Windrush generation. I am very sorry that he has chosen to politicise the issue in such an unhelpful and unconstructive way.

Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham) (Con): I welcome the way in which the Home Secretary has acknowledged the seriousness of this scandal and taken personal ownership of finding solutions. I particularly welcome the fact that she is taking on board Wendy Williams's 30 recommendations; her report was honest and robust. I note one comment from it, in which she said:

"What will make this review different is if, in 12 to 24 months' time, we can see evidence of deep cultural reform, with changes in behaviour at all levels and functions throughout the organisation"—the Home Office. What does the Home Secretary think that reform and change will look like? How confident is she of the capacity in the Home Office actually to deliver it, particularly given the other current pressures?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right to speak specifically about the changes required in the Home Office. We have already set that work in train—we did so straight after the publication of Wendy's review—primarily because the review itself is called the "Windrush Lessons Learned Review". It was a very humbling moment for the Home Office, in which to reflect on the previous conduct and the approach that the Home Office has taken, even in terms of corresponding with individuals, the way people were treated, and the way in which the Department and representatives have spoken to people, whether face to face or on the telephone. There are many, many stories—too many—of individuals who have been treated appallingly. In fact, when the Prime Minister and I met representatives of the working group yesterday, we heard awful examples of individuals being treated in a really inappropriate way, with the wrong kind of language, and being dismissed and belittled. That is simply not acceptable.

There is a long way to go internally in the Home Office. The review will lead not only to culture changes but to changes in working practices. At a leadership level, I feel very strongly about ensuring that the Home Office is far more diverse and representative of the community that it serves. Sadly, at this particular stage, across all leadership functions, it simply is not. There is a long way to go in terms of making that change, and that is something that I am absolutely determined to make sure happens.

Kate Osamor (Edmonton) (Lab/Co-op) [V]: If anyone wants to see a masterclass in institutional racism, they should just go and watch "Sitting in Limbo", a shocking BBC drama based on the experience of my constituent Anthony Bryan, who was wrongfully detained by the Home Office and threatened with deportation. Even with that treatment, he has received only a partial payment from the compensation scheme. Will the Home Secretary publish the criteria used by the Department to determine compensation claims? Will she announce a deadline by which all compensation will be paid up in full?

Priti Patel: The hon. Lady refers to a dreadful programme that was aired just 10 days ago which, as she says, involved her constituent. I understand that an interim compensation payment has been made to her constituent and he has accepted it. I am sure that her constituent has discussed the process around the actual claim itself. I would be very happy to share the criteria—I think they should be in the public domain—and the hon. Lady is very welcome to come into the Home Office to discuss any details, if she would like to.

I come back to my core point: there is more work to do in terms of compensation. I am determined to make sure that people get the compensation they deserve, but to achieve that, we have to work with each and every individual to understand the circumstances that have affected them.

Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con) [V]: Will my right hon. Friend join me, as one of the Members of Parliament for Thurrock, where the Empire Windrush landed, in expressing serious regret that this injustice was ever allowed to happen? Will she assure me that her Department is committed to ensuring justice for members of the Windrush generation, who have given so much and been so badly treated?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right. I have clearly outlined today the work that is required, not only by the Department but culturally, in terms of leadership and dedicating the resource to and the focus on getting justice for individuals, not only through the compensation scheme but through our wider work in Government to make sure that social injustices and inequalities are addressed and that people from the Windrush community in particular are given the support that they deserve.

Tonia Antoniazzi (Gower) (Lab): The banner that we saw flying over the Etihad football stadium in Manchester last night, the response of the hard right and even the Foreign Secretary to the legitimate Black Lives Matter protests, and the disgusting replies to the Conservative party Father's Day tweet that showed a black father and son: the light of the Prime Minister's previous racist comments and the hostile environment created by this Government, deep cultural reform is indeed needed, and not only in the Home Office. Why should the public believe that this Government have really learned their lesson?

Priti Patel: Because I am here today giving an unequivocal commitment to ensuring that the recommendations are implemented, and to ensuring that we bring about justice for those individuals who suffered great injustice and hardship.

Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth) (Con) [V]: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for the tone that she is taking in this matter and the fact that she is taking it head-on to implement all the outcomes of the review. I have a constituent who was involved in Windrush. She spent her life since coming to the UK working in the NHS. Fortunately she was successful in her case and has had compensation. However, it took weeks for decisions to be made. What assessment has my right hon. Friend made about the progress the Home Office is making with successfully resolving cases? What further measures

[Dr Luke Evans]

have been identified to ensure that decision making and awarding compensation are done with minimal delay and minimal issues?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend has heard what I have said about the compensation scheme. He is right: there is a process. That process already has 13 separate categories where considerations are given to looking at every single claim. As ever, we can obviously try to speed up processes, but at the end of the day we have to work with the individual to provide background to the injustice they have suffered, such as issues around their employment or any financial hardship they have experienced. I know that my hon. Friend will understand that it is right that we have this bespoke process to ensure that the right level of compensation is awarded. We want the maximum levels to be awarded to individuals. That does take time. We are working through this right now to ensure that we can speed up processes to make them as fast as we can.

Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West) (SNP) [V]: My constituent is a grandfather who came to the UK as a child. He lost his job in 2015 when he was asked to produce a passport. The Home Office's prejudices were clear. It said that his parents' marriage was a "customary one, and not a legally recognised one".

When it found out that his siblings had passports, it said:

"If it transpires that the passports were issued in error, then it will ultimately be a decision for Her Majesty's Passport Office as to whether or not the passports can be retained".

The Home Secretary blames consecutive Governments, but blame lies firmly at the feet of this Tory Government. My constituent is over £60,000 out of pocket. He has had his claim in for compensation for nearly two years. When will he receive his money?

Priti Patel: If the hon. Lady would provide the details of that claim, I will look at it. My door is always open, as I have made quite clear every time I come to the House of Commons.

James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con): Members will know that a relatively small number of foreign and Commonwealth armed forces veterans have slipped through the net in applying for indefinite leave to remain, despite otherwise being entitled to do so. May I thank the Home Secretary for her gracious work to find a solution and ask, in the spirit of her statement today, whether she would be able to update the House on that when she is ready to do so?

Priti Patel: I thank my hon. Friend for his comments, but also for the work that he is doing in support of our armed forces on this issue. He would be more than happy to follow it up with him. I know he has had conversations about it. There is work taking place on it. In due course, when we are able to progress it, I will of course update him and the House.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): I welcome the recognition by the Home Secretary that the problem with regard to the Windrush generation is not a single decision or series of decisions but a cultural

and systemic problem within the Home Office. We have all seen it for years in our own casework, right down to the attitude that entry clearance officers take towards applications in-country. The right-to-rent checks to which the hon. and learned Member for Edinburgh South West (Joanna Cherry) referred were criticised in March last year in the courts, but they are still there. The arbitrary refusal to allow foreign crews from outside the European economic area to work on fishing vessels inside our own waters is a case that has been clear for years but just ignored by the Home Office. So when the Home Secretary returns, will she bring back the list of utterly irrational immigration policies that we now have, along with a commitment to get rid of them?

Priti Patel: First and foremost, my priority is to implement the Windrush recommendations. As the right hon. Gentleman and the House have heard me say, there are many complexities in the immigration system, and I want to simplify it and ensure it is firm but fair. That is the Government's objective with the immigration reforms that we are undertaking.

Darren Henry (Broxtowe) (Con): As the son of people of the Windrush generation, I have witnessed the huge contribution that they have made to our society. Will my right hon. Friend join me in thanking my parents' generation for their contribution to this country? Will she assure the House that lessons have been learned so that the mistakes that were made in relation to that generation are not made again?

Priti Patel: I thank my hon. Friend. As ever, he succinctly and clearly highlights the contribution that his family and his parents' generation made to our incredible country. As Members have heard me say previously, we live in an open and tolerant society. It says a great deal that the children of immigrants are now represented in the House of Commons, given the hardships that our parents and previous generations dealt with when they came to this country. They made a great success of their time here. We should celebrate the successes of all communities, and yesterday Windrush Day was a celebration. We should not lose sight of that.

Mohammad Yasin (Bedford) (Lab) [V]: My constituent Dorian Green came to the UK 52 years ago at the age of nine. In 2008, the Home Office wrongly told his employer that he did not have the right to work. He has been in a battle with the Home Office ever since, and crucial documents were lost or deleted. I am pleased to say that he finally has his British passport, but only after suffering the shame of being unable to work and the indignity of being treated as a second-class citizen. Does the Home Secretary think that £1,000 is enough to compensate Mr Green for his ordeal in proving what was always true: that he was and is a British citizen?

Priti Patel: The hon. Gentleman has just highlighted a case going back to 2008. If he would like me to look at it in further detail, I would be very happy to do so.

Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on her commitment to this issue and her tone in setting out this statement. What happened should never have happened, and her commitment to righting wrongs is very welcome indeed. The reality is

that this country has benefited enormously from the contribution of the Windrush generation and those who have arrived since. We have seen that in recent weeks in our health service, where the work of people from different migrant communities has been invaluable in fighting this dreadful virus, which has raised all kinds of other issues that need addressing. Will the Home Secretary confirm, for a more recent arrival to the country, the Prime Minister's commitment that those who have arrived and are applying for visas will not pay the immigration surcharge on health, and that those who are already mid-application will get that money refunded?

Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. That work is under way, as the Prime Minister instructed, with the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care. He is right to highlight the great contribution that individuals from migrant communities are making to the NHS. That work is under way right now, and we will be publishing more details on that and how the scheme of refunds will work.

Nadia Whittome (Nottingham East) (Lab): People of the Windrush generation were deported as a result of the Government's hostile environment policies, including the healthcare surcharge, no recourse to public funds, the illegal working offence, immigration detention and the right to rent checks, which have been found to cause racial discrimination. The Home Secretary has not answered the question yet: why are those policies still in place, and when will they be abolished?

Priti Patel: I refer the hon. Lady to my earlier comments. I have already made it clear to the House that our immigration system is far too complicated. The work that we are taking forward in the Home Office is to simplify the immigration system, which will mean changes in our policy to make the system firm but fair.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con) [V]: I warmly welcome the statement from the Home Secretary. When we think of the Windrush generation, we naturally think of the arrivals from the Caribbean, but, of course, the generation was not limited only to the Caribbean—it included the wider Commonwealth. Will my right hon. Friend set out clearly that those from other Commonwealth countries who feel that they have been wrongly treated can also apply for the compensation scheme, and will she set out the numbers of people who have applied from other Commonwealth countries under the scheme?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is right to recognise that this scandal affected people from Commonwealth countries. We do have that information, and I can confirm that people were affected from Pakistan, India and a range of Commonwealth countries. I would be very happy to share that information with the House.

Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab): His school had been demolished more than 30 years before and he had never been in trouble, so there was no record of him with the police either. We searched the archives at Kew, the central NHS and Brent Council. It was difficult going back 54 years, because most records had been destroyed or the systems had changed, but after three years, the Home Office accepted that Mr Breedy had arrived—as he said, freely landed—aged nine in 1962 and had paid his national insurance contributions for 45 years until

the Home Office had written to his employers in 2016 and put him out of a job. I will accept the Home Secretary's offer to come in and work with her officials, because it is unforgivable that after accepting that he was right all along, the Government have still not sent him the British passport that he applied for five years ago, and they have not even begun to compensate him for his lost earnings or lost pension entitlement, let alone his pain or suffering. If the compensation team at the Home Office does not need more staff, as the Home Secretary has just assured the House, why has my constituent still not been contacted? He is now 68 years of age. How long will he have to wait?

Priti Patel: I would be very happy to work with the hon. Gentleman. If he can provide me with the background that he just shared with the House and some contact details, we will pick that up, and I will absolutely get some answers to his question.

Mr Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab): First, the Home Secretary, in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Slough (Mr Dhesi), conflated something that the previous Labour Government had apparently said about people who were here illegally with the Windrush generation. One of the reasons that what happened with the Windrush generation caused such public outrage was that they were all here legally, and it is important that we do not conflate those two matters. Secondly, on the time that it is taking, the Home Secretary is clearly committed to this and is taking on these cases herself, but can she do more to convince us that she has the resources at her disposal? Frankly, she should not have to have a file with all these cases on her desk; she should have people who are working for her who can process them.

Priti Patel: I wholeheartedly agree with the hon. Gentleman's comments about the cases. I have been categorically told that by the Department, but I do feel, in terms of the scale of the injustices and the scandal that has taken place, that it is my responsibility as Home Secretary to look at these cases. It is simply not good enough for me to return to the House of Commons each time when we have these discussions to hear of further cases and further injustices. I want to make sure people receive the compensation, which is why I am giving this my personal attention. It is too important to delegate to others. I just conclude by saying that the Williams review goes back over several decades. It does refer to a previous Labour Government, but we should not conflate language at this particular time, and I think that was the point that I was trying to make. We want to get on and get justice for these individuals, and that is why I am giving this so much of my personal attention.

Caroline Nokes (Romsey and Southampton North) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for her hard work on the compensation scheme. She has acknowledged this afternoon that it has been too slow, but equally, she has made a very firm commitment to increasing rates of claims being decided, which has to be good news. I well recall that some of the most important, most moving and most difficult meetings I have had since I have been in this place have been with members of the Windrush generation. I hope that she will undertake to continue that engagement. It is absolutely crucial, and we have heard this afternoon about cases outstanding since 2008.

[Caroline Nokes]

Will she consider extending the scheme beyond April 2023 if it still looks as though there are cases that need to be decided?

Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend understands some of the challenges associated with the Windrush generation and the compensation scheme, and the exceptional work of community representation and organisations whose passion and commitment are incredible. That work will absolutely continue, primarily because it is important for the Home Office to continue that engagement and dialogue with the community. If cases have not been resolved by the deadline of April 2023, of course we would look to extend it, but my objective is to ensure that we find these claimants. The rates are still incredibly low. Hon. Members have referred to individual cases they know of, but there are many we still do not know enough about, which is why we have this extensive community engagement. It is the right and proper approach.

Deidre Brock (Edinburgh North and Leith) (SNP): The Home Secretary has just admitted that successive UK Governments were institutionally racist and that the hostile environment resulted directly in the Windrush scandal. What exact actions will she take to change the culture of government in Whitehall to ensure it never happens again, and will she unpick the odious and repressive hostile environment?

Priti Patel: I refer the hon. Lady to my comments earlier.

Mr Robert Goodwill (Scarborough and Whitby) (Con): I thank the Home Office and in particular staff in Sheffield for resolving the case of a constituent who came to the UK not long after he was born, not from the island of Jamaica, but from Tasmania, after his parents changed their mind about emigrating. Despite a paucity of documentation, not only was a face-to-face meeting quickly organised, but the Home Office even paid for the rail ticket to Sheffield. Does the Home Secretary agree that this clearly demonstrates that we have learnt the lessons of Windrush and that where such cases emerge we can react sympathetically and quickly?

Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right that this is a bespoke scheme. We have to treat individuals on a case-by-case basis and to understand their circumstances and the injustices. He mentioned the Home Office paying for travel. That also includes flights in some cases. Everybody has a different experience and story, so it is right that we work with every individual to make sure they get the justice they deserve and the support they need.

Dame Margaret Hodge (Barking) (Lab) [V]: My constituent Sarah O'Connor, one of the Windrush generation, came to Britain when she was six. At 56, having always worked, she was made redundant and told she had no right to live here. She lost the right to work and had no income. She sold her car, was issued with a notice to quit, and even had to stop the precious swimming lessons that meant so much to the granddaughter she cared for. In 2018, she was finally granted British citizenship, but she tragically died last September, at just 57 years old. In one email, she wrote:

"I don't think I have the strength to keep going any more".

We have been pursuing her compensation claim for almost two years. Complexity is not a good enough explanation for the delay. Can the Home Secretary please tell me: is it a deliberate element of her Government's hostile environment policy, or is her Department simply dysfunctional?

Priti Patel: First, I am aware of the case the right hon. Lady refers to. I understand that the claim on behalf of the deceased's estate is under consideration right now. There is nothing deliberate about complexity. She will have heard me say in my statement and in my explanations to other hon. Members that the compensation scheme was set up in conjunction with the Windrush generation based on the needs they themselves outlined. It is the right approach to have that bespoke scheme. It takes time, but every claim is handled in a very bespoke way by an individual case handler. If she has specific points she wants to make about this compensation claim, which is under consideration right now, she is welcome to speak to me directly.

Andrew Griffith (Arundel and South Downs) (Con): Given what we saw in Wendy Williams's report about the failings of administration, together with what we learned from the Post Office Horizon programme and, before that, Equitable Life, does my right hon. Friend agree that we should fully and fairly compensate all those affected, but remember with humility the limits to the effectiveness of Government and reduce the size and scope of the state wherever possible?

Priti Patel: This compensation scheme is not comparable with any other type of compensation scheme that has been constructed by Government. I have explained already to the House how the scheme came about and what type of consultation was involved; obviously, members of the community were part of that. That was all led by Martin Forde QC. My focus is to ensure that this scheme works and that money goes to people. It is complex—that has been the basis of our discussion this afternoon—but fundamentally, we need to make sure that it is done case by case, that people are treated in the right way and that their particular circumstances are reflected in the final compensation that they receive.

Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab): I am pleased that the Home Secretary accepts Wendy Williams's call for "major cultural change" in the Home Office. One of the things that need to change is the over-dependence on immigration detention, which many Windrush victims experienced. It has been too easy to detain, and for too long. Will the Home Secretary update the House on the Department's work on community-based alternatives to detention? Does she agree that ending indefinite detention, for which there is support on both sides of the House, would contribute significantly to that cultural change in the Home Office?

Priti Patel: The hon. Gentleman makes a thoughtful comment about community-based detention and detention as a whole. Detention is there for a reason. Obviously, other discussions and debates have taken place around this, but importantly when it comes to the Windrush lessons learned review, the way in which people were treated and, through the Home Office and immigration enforcement, put in detention was completely wrong.

We have to make sure that that does not happen again and that we do not have cases like that again. Clearly, that is part of the wider work with the lessons learned review.

Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP): The recommendations state that the Home Secretary should urgently review all “compliant environment”—in other words, hostile environment—measures “individually and cumulatively”. Will she apologise for the hostile environment’s role in this and follow the recommendation to review it to the letter?

Priti Patel: I have spoken about the recommendations and implementing the report, and obviously I will update the House on how we will implement those recommendations.

Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab) [V]: Two years ago, the then Home Secretary promised that the victims of the Windrush scandal would get citizenship and receive compensation. We have heard today that only 60 people have received compensation, with thousands waiting. The Home Secretary agreed earlier that the compensation scheme is incredibly slow; it relies on lengthy forms and documentation without access to legal aid. What will she do to make it easier to access compensation? It must seem to the Windrush generation that the bureaucracy that was part of the hostile environment is now being used to delay or avoid compensating them.

Priti Patel: The hon. Lady’s last point is absolutely incorrect. The compensation scheme was designed in conjunction with representatives of the Windrush community—the Windrush generation. They themselves contributed to the design of the scheme. That was the right way forward at the time. My predecessors worked very hard on developing the scheme with Martin Forde QC.

As for how we continue to engage with members of the community, that is exactly why we have such extensive outreach work. We are supporting Citizens Advice and other third-party organisations, and funding community activities and groups to have outreach to ensure that people feel they can come forward. The House has already heard me say that, in addition to the cases that Members have raised directly, there are many other individuals who have yet to come forward. That is why we are doing extensive community engagement and outreach work.

Robbie Moore (Keighley) (Con): I welcome my right hon. Friend’s statement and the proactive approach she is taking. Will she join me in expressing serious regret that this injustice was ever allowed to happen to the Windrush generation, and will she assure me that her Department is absolutely committed to ensuring justice for all members of the Windrush generation who were so badly treated?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is absolutely right, and I have spoken extensively about the scale of the injustice, the issues specific to the Home Office, the cultural change that is required and, importantly, the lessons that have to be learned collectively if we are to move forward and make sure justice is served.

Steve McCabe (Birmingham, Selly Oak) (Lab): I appreciate what the Home Secretary has said about the complexities of the scheme, but what assessment has she made of how much, on average, a victim can expect to have to spend on obtaining medical records, Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs records, Home Office records and other documentation in order to support a compensation claim?

Priti Patel: That is a legitimate point about the documentation and evidence that has to be provided, but every claim is different and so there is no one-size-fits-all or simple figure for this. Of course if we can find ways in which we can simplify the process, we will do that. This is an iterative process and if we have to make changes, we will look at that.

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): I find so many of these cases really sad and incredibly distressing. It is shocking and unacceptable that so many Windrush families were treated appallingly by successive Governments, so I urge the Home Secretary to make it clear that nothing like this can ever be allowed to happen again.

Priti Patel: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right about that. The review shows so many aspects of every strand of the Windrush generation and the injustices that are just so awful. It is my priority to ensure that we can implement the recommendations, deliver compensation for the victims and move forward in a constructive way. That involves all of us working in a responsible way to look at the number of injustices across society, which cover all communities, and how we can give voice to people who feel that they do not have a voice on many of these challenging issues.

Rachel Hopkins (Luton South) (Lab): The contribution of the African and Caribbean communities to my constituency is invaluable; our rich diversity is our strength and we are very proud of it. The review’s sixth recommendation sets out the need to accurately teach Britain’s colonial history, as part of a wider strategy to tackle institutional racism. What action has the Secretary of State taken so far regarding such a colonial history education programme in the Home Office? How many additional resources have been committed? By what date will such a programme be in place? By what date will the annual review be available to Parliament?

Priti Patel: First, I say to the hon. Lady that I will come back on the recommendations and the implementation. She makes an important point about the institutional thoughtlessness that Wendy highlighted in her report when it came to an understanding of race and history within the Department. Progress has been made since the report was published in March, and work has taken place on awareness, education and sharing history. That is being done internally with our staff, through all the usual channels, not only the internet, but engagement sessions as well, where we are able to put those on through this restricted period. That work will be accelerated, and will grow and develop.

Gary Sambrook (Birmingham, Northfield) (Con): I thank the Home Secretary for inviting Bishop Derek Webley, a well-respected Birmingham church leader, to

[Gary Sambrook]

engage as co-chair of the working group. May I ask that as part of the group's work people such as Bishop Desmond Jadoo, a well-known Birmingham campaigner, will be reached out to, so that we can all work together to tackle the issues that so disproportionately affect those in black, Asian and minority ethnic communities?

Priti Patel: My hon. Friend is right about that and we will do exactly as he suggests. Bishop Webley has a significant standing within the local community and he has worked on many issues, such as youth gangs and individuals, and a range of social justice issues. These are exactly the type of leaders we want to work with. I will continue to work with anybody who wants to make a difference and who leads the community as a figurehead in the community, because we absolutely need to pull people together at a community level so that they can help inform our approach, to ensure that we provide the justice that individuals are looking for.

Point of Order

3.24 pm

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. On 8 June, the Minister responsible for children, the Under-Secretary of State for Education, the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Vicky Ford), advised that the data regarding the number of children who have been reported missing from care since lockdown would not be available until 2021. On 10 June, the same Minister assured this House that she was closely monitoring the relaxation of legislation under statutory instrument No. 445, which weakened the statutory timescales for visits to children in care. Yesterday, in education questions, she advised that the number of children missing from care had decreased throughout this pandemic.

These are children in the care of the state. Charities are reporting a significant rise in missing children, particularly those who are unaccompanied and trafficked. They are also reporting that these children are missing for longer periods than they have been historically. These children are vulnerable to criminal gangs and sexual exploitation. Mr Deputy Speaker, do you know how I can get some clarity from the Minister regarding whether she does or does not know how many children are missing from care; if she does know, how many; and what exactly she is doing to find them?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I am grateful to the hon. Member for her point of order and for giving me advance notice of it. I trust she has also given notice to the Minister to whom she has referred. While it is not a point of order as such, she has taken the opportunity to draw the House's attention to the matter, and I will make sure that those on the Treasury Bench pass on her views to the Minister so that she can respond. If she does not respond in the usual way, I am sure that the hon. Member will find other ways to pursue this particular matter.

I will now suspend the House for three minutes.

3.26 pm

Sitting suspended.

Desecration of War Memorials

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No.23)

3.29 pm

Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con): I beg to move

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to create the offence of desecrating a war memorial; and for connected purposes.

I find myself in the unique position of standing here presenting this Bill, with the Government in support of the cause and aims behind bringing such legislation before the House. It is the week of Armed Forces Day, and I say to all our servicemen and women: I salute you.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bracknell (James Sunderland) and I have had constructive discussions with our right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice and my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary about the potential for this Bill to be put into statute. Such a Bill should not be contentious, and I and my hon. Friend the Member for Bracknell, my “co-sponsor” of the Bill, are delighted to have support from across the House for our ambitions.

I stress that this Bill should not be perceived as a knee-jerk reaction to recent events, as some in the media have suggested. Back in 2009-10, the former hon. Member for Enfield, Southgate, David Burrowes, introduced a similar Bill, with the same intention of protecting our war memorials. My hon. Friend the Member for Bracknell and I wish to place on record our thanks to him for his efforts, and for having reached out to us and thrown his full support behind our work. We also wish to thank Lewis Fielder and James Clark, members of Conservative Friends of the Armed Forces, for their efforts in researching, drafting, and aiding my hon. Friend and me in putting this Bill to the House.

Every war memorial in every village, every town and every city across our country is sacred and serves to remind us of the immeasurable gratitude that we must afford to our armed forces, both past and present. The passage of time always presents the danger of dimmed collective recollections. Let us not forget the sacrifice and bravery of those who paid the ultimate price: young men and women who gave up their futures, loves, lives and dreams to ensure that the freedoms they once knew were protected from tyranny—for us, the unborn generations, who now sit idly by as monuments dedicated to their eternal memory are desecrated. I will not sit idly by, and neither will I be silent.

A lack of comprehensive reporting on vandalism of this nature means that it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of incidents each year, although the War Memorials Trust does an excellent job of documenting such incidents. It reports that seven memorials have suffered from criminal activity since April, including the Cenotaph in Whitehall which has been graffitied and climbed on, and recently the Union Flag was nearly set alight. In 2017, a woman was arrested for urinating on a war memorial in Essex for the second time. During her arrest she became abusive towards emergency workers, and was sentenced to one month's imprisonment for the first count of outraging public decency, three months for the second count, and three months for assault and abusive language. How that punishment fits the crime, I do not know.

The Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park has been attacked four times since Her Majesty opened it in 2012. In 2013, it was desecrated with graffiti that referenced the murder of Fusilier Lee Rigby. The perpetrator was sentenced to just 12 weeks' imprisonment. Those who vandalise and abuse these monuments do not have the capacity to comprehend the strength, courage and bravery that it must have taken for, in this case, teenage boys to overcome the terror of midnight missions across occupied Europe in a tin can thousands of feet in the sky. More than 50,000 British, American, Canadian and Commonwealth young men lost their lives under Bomber Command to preserve and protect the liberties of democracy. Had the allied forces not been successful in their mission, let us make no mistake: we would be living under the tyranny of totalitarian, fascist insanity.

The price of war is immeasurably high. I saw that first hand when a young man from Stratford-upon-Avon, Private Conrad Lewis, lost his life in Afghanistan back in 2011. The pain felt by friends and the community stays with me to this day. Those of us who value freedom of thought, speech and expression know that we can never repay the debt we owe to these men and women; all we can do is immortalise their memory, and display our gratitude for their sacrifice.

Memorials stand in great, solemn, eternal remembrance of the glorious dead. We cannot bring back those lives, or erase the grief of families and communities, but the least we can do is ensure that memorials are adequately protected, and punish those who would deface, urinate on, spit on, defile, or graffiti them. Such actions, which have included swastikas spray-painted on statues, and Nazi salutes in 2020 before the Cenotaph, are the price we pay for ignorance and inaction.

A blessed bond is formed between our present and our past through memorials. We see ourselves in the names and images of our fallen heroes, and perhaps we pause to reflect whether we would have had their courage and their nerves of steel in the face of evil itself.

My great-great-uncle Allan Gullis, who still lives today, is a D-day veteran. I could not possibly speculate whether I would have had the sheer guts and bulldog spirit that he and his brothers in arms embody so fully, but the least that I can do is stand before the House today and try to secure the protection of their memory. My grandfather, Terrence Gullis, served in the Royal Marines during the Suez canal crisis, and my grandfather on my mother's side, William Beacham, served in the RAF, undertaking his national service in Egypt. It is an honour to have such brave and committed men in my family. I would have liked to follow in the footsteps of those heroes but, alas, due to deafness in one ear, it was not my destiny.

I am delighted, however, to represent the great town of Kidsgrove, where the Royal British Legion, on its own initiative, has set up a beautiful war memorial garden that is used every November to lay wreaths and remember our fallen. It has been an undoubted pleasure to attend the veterans breakfast club in Smallthorne, run by Martyn Hunt and Paul Horton, which serves all veterans across Stoke-on-Trent as a way of bringing our heroes together to share their stories and lend support to one another. Dotted across this country are extraordinary examples of individuals and community groups banding

[Jonathan Gullis]

together to honour the dead. Every year, as I don my poppy, it brings me a great sense of pride and joy to see so many others doing the same.

I am asking the House to do the respectable thing—the right thing—and back this Bill to create an explicit offence, distinguishable from damage to public property. Let us join our friends in Australia, the United States and Canada, and pay the respect that we owe to those who died in the freedom fight against tyranny. Although there is provision in existing legislation to hold criminals to account for damage to property, and offenders have been successfully prosecuted, relatively few are held to account for the severity of the aggravating circumstances that come with criminally damaging something as sacred to the nation as war memorials.

In addition to the designation of a specific offence relating to unlawful damage to a war memorial, the Bill proposes the exemption of damage to war memorials from the £5,000 damages threshold required under the Criminal Damage Act 1971; the removal of a maximum fine in favour of an unlimited fine; and the establishment of a maximum custodial sentence of 10 years' imprisonment. Despite some media reports, we are not calling for all offences to be met with 10 years' imprisonment; we are enabling our judiciary to use their discretion over whether the offence is worthy of being moved to a Crown court, without the £5,000 threshold barrier blocking its way.

Finally, I take the opportunity to praise my partner in this proposal, my hon. Friend the Member for Bracknell. He has an outstanding record as a public servant, with 27 years of military service under his belt. In this House, he serves as chair of the all-party parliamentary group on the armed forces covenant, and he remains unrivalled in his passion for veterans, the Commonwealth and remembrance. It is a privilege to know him and work with him as a fellow member of the 2019 intake. My hon. Friend will perhaps be blushing at such unreserved praise, but it is certain that he is cut from the same cloth as those whose memories I stand here advocating to protect and preserve. I thank him wholeheartedly for his service and for his help in laying the Bill before the House.

I want to see the deterrence of criminal damage to the memory of our glorious dead. I hope that the House will support me in that endeavour.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered.

That Jonathan Gullis, James Sunderland, Andrea Leadsom, Bob Seely, Esther McVey, James Gray, Tracey Crouch, Mr Peter Bone, Theo Clarke, Jim Shannon, Tom Tugendhat and Lee Anderson present the Bill.

Mr Jonathan Gullis accordingly presented the Bill.

Bill read the First time; to be read a Second time on Friday 11 September, and to be printed (Bill 144).

James Sunderland (Bracknell) (Con): On a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. May I thank my great friend, my hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-on-Trent North (Jonathan Gullis), for his kind words and his outstanding speech? I was very humbled to hear it.

While preparing to submit this ten-minute rule Bill, we became aware of a perceived anomaly in parliamentary procedure. Given that such Bills require a minimum of 12 signatures, it seems odd that only one Member is permitted to present one to the House. As a member of the Procedure Committee, might I place on the record my aspiration for a review of parliamentary procedure whereby co-sponsors of ten-minute rule Bills could be allocated a discrete share of parliamentary time?

May I also record my thanks to all who have supported us through this undertaking, and in particular to the Conservative Friends of the Armed Forces?

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I thank the hon. Member for that point of order, and for giving me notice of it. I have been a Member of Parliament for 28 and a bit years—[*Interruption.*] I know; I thank the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer) for that reaction. Some procedures seem to go back centuries, and others 10 weeks. I hope that I can give the hon. Gentleman some hope, at least, that when it is discussed by the Procedure Committee, what he desires can be analysed and, if it is the will of the House, those procedures can be changed.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): Further to that point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. As a former long-standing member of the Procedure Committee, may I say, when it comes to changing procedure, “Be careful what you wish for”? In my experience over 37 years, the ten-minute rule procedure has worked extremely well. It allows a Back Bencher to set out his case over 10 minutes, and it might be quite dangerous to muck around with it.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): When my right hon. Friend said, “37 years”, Marie Rimmer did not gasp—I do apologise for that! As James Sunderland can see, the discussion has already begun.

Medicines and Medical Devices Bill

Consideration of Bill, as amended in the Public Bill Committee

New Clause 1

INFORMATION SYSTEMS

(1) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision about the establishment and operation by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (“the Information Centre”) of one or more information systems for purposes relating to—

- (a) the safety and performance, including the clinical effectiveness, of medical devices that are placed on the market;
- (b) the safety of individuals who receive or are treated with a medical device, or into whom a medical device is implanted;
- (c) the improvement of medical device safety and performance through advances in technology.

(2) The regulations may (among other things) make provision—

- (a) specifying descriptions of information in relation to medical devices which may or must be entered or retained in an information system established under subsection (1);
- (b) requiring information to be provided to the Information Centre for the purposes of its functions under the regulations;
- (c) about the use or disclosure of information contained in an information system established under subsection (1);
- (d) requiring the Information Centre to have regard to specified matters in exercising its functions under the regulations.

(3) The provision mentioned in subsection (2)(b) may include provision—

- (a) requiring specified persons or descriptions of persons to whom subsection (4) applies to provide information of a specified description to the Information Centre;
- (b) about the manner in which, and the time at which, those persons must provide that information;
- (c) enabling the Information Centre to require specified persons or descriptions of persons to whom subsection (4) applies to provide to it in a manner, and at a time, determined by the Information Centre—
 - (i) information of a specified description;
 - (ii) information for specified purposes;
 - (iii) any other information that the Information Centre considers it necessary or expedient to have for the purposes of its functions under the regulations;
- (d) about any procedural steps the Information Centre must follow in requiring a person to provide information to it;
- (e) requiring specified persons or descriptions of persons to whom subsection (4) applies to record or retain information which they are, or may be, required to provide to the Information Centre under the regulations;
- (f) in relation to the enforcement of any requirement imposed by or under the regulations.

(4) This subsection applies to any person who provides services, or exercises any powers or duties, relating to medical devices.

(5) The descriptions of information specified in the provision mentioned in subsections (2)(a), (3)(a) and (3)(c)(i) may include—

- (a) unique identifiers associated with medical devices;
- (b) information in relation to individuals mentioned in subsection (1)(b);
- (c) information about any procedure carried out in relation to a medical device (including information about any person involved in carrying out the procedure).

(6) The provision mentioned in subsection (2)(c) may include provision about—

- (a) the analysis by the Information Centre of information contained in an information system (whether alone or in combination with other information) for the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) or for other purposes;
- (b) the publication by the Information Centre of information contained in an information system;
- (c) the disclosure (other than by way of publication) of information contained in an information system to specified persons or descriptions of persons, or for specified purposes;
- (d) the use or further disclosure by any person of information disclosed to them under the regulations.

(7) The provision mentioned in subsection (3)(f) may include provision applying any provision of Chapter 2 of this Part (enforcement), with or without modifications, in relation to a requirement imposed by or under the regulations.

(8) In this section, “specified” means specified in regulations under subsection (1).”—(*Jo Churchill.*)

This new clause would give the Secretary of State power to make regulations providing for a database of information in relation to medical devices to be established and managed by the Health and Social Care Information Centre. The clause would be inserted after Clause 15.

Brought up, and read the First time.

3.41 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Jo Churchill): I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): With this it will be convenient to discuss the following:

Amendment 21, in clause 1, page 2, line 6, at end insert—

“(5) In making regulations under subsection (1), the appropriate authority must give primary regard to the safety of human medicines.”

This amendment requires the appropriate authority to consider patient safety first when making regulations under subsection (1).

Amendment 20, page 1, line 5, at end insert

“for a period of three years following the day on which this Act is passed.”

This amendment provides a sunset provision for the Bill requiring the Government to return with primary legislation.

Amendment 19, in clause 2, page 2, line 26, at end, insert—

“(o) the origin and treatment of human organs used in the process of developing or manufacturing medicines”.

This amendment empowers the appropriate authority to make provisions on the process of developing or manufacturing medicines in relation to the origin and treatment of human organs.

Amendment 22, in clause 8, page 5, line 34, at end insert—

“(5) In making regulations under subsection (1), the appropriate authority must give primary regard to the safety of veterinary medicines in relation to animals, humans and the environment.”

This amendment requires the appropriate authority to consider animal, human and environmental safety first when making regulations under subsection (1).

Amendment 23, in clause 12, page 7, line 27, at end insert—

“(3) In making regulations under subsection (1), the appropriate authority must give primary regard to the safety of medical devices.”

This amendment requires the appropriate authority to consider safety first when making regulations under subsection (1).

Government amendments 1 to 18.

Jo Churchill: This Bill is an opportunity. It is necessary to ensure that we have the ability to continue to update our regulatory frameworks after the end of the transition period. We must ensure that we continue to be able to respond swiftly to pressing need. This is not a standstill Bill, however. It is designed to underpin the way in which the UK approaches the life sciences sector and innovation in health from 2020 onwards—an approach whereby we promote, to the best of our ability, patients' access to cutting-edge treatments and encourage the cultivation of new, safe and patient-focused technology, balanced with the need to take swift and effective regulatory and system action, to ensure that patients do not experience adverse outcomes.

I put on record my gratitude to Members in all parts of the House. On Second Reading and in Committee, they have approached the Bill with a consensus that I hope will continue in the other place. We have all understood the principles behind the Bill, and any differences of opinion and scrutiny have been firmly in the best interests of patients and in the interest of ensuring that the Bill goes to the other place in good shape.

Our experience of the health system is a personal one. We have relationships with our GPs and clinicians, and some of us have long-term health conditions or short-term immediate needs that require surgical intervention. We all want to know that the health system is taking all possible steps to prevent harm to patients and that the regulator and the health system work in partnership to identify when something is going wrong and to take swift corrective action. We would hope that in the event that we experienced an adverse outcome or reported concerns to our doctor, GP or surgeon when something was not working properly, the patient, system and statistical significance of that outcome would be understood and properly addressed; and the clinician, the system and the regulator would engage with the patient on required action.

We also want to ensure that, where required, the regulator will continue proactively to engage with the manufacturer of a medical device and ensure that information is supplied alongside that device or improvements are made so that we learn from the patient experience. Finally, we want to ensure that data is available to drive regulatory or system action, to limit the use of that device or remove it from the system so that our experience as patients results in changes to prevent future harm and suffering, even if that risk cannot be removed completely.

I will first speak to the amendments tabled in the name of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, before I move on to those tabled by hon Members present. I thank all those who have shown an interest in this area, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Newton Abbot (Anne Marie Morris) and the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford), who put forward their own amendments. Both were extremely well intended and thoughtfully drafted and there have been further thoughtful contributions from all parties and both Houses in thinking about what an amendment to that effect might need to deliver.

3.45 pm

We all recognise that medical devices are not subject to the same comprehensive regulatory system of pre-market assessment that medicines are. The Government also recognise that the system could be made stronger in

respect of how devices are purchased, used and reviewed. The issue is incredibly important. Like me, Members across both Houses are anticipating the forthcoming report from the independent medicines and medical devices review, which looked into significant matters, with an expectation that it might make recommendations in this area. I put on the record that I am deeply sympathetic to patients and families affected by the issues covered in the review. That is why I am keen to take action now, when we know that there are gaps that we might close in the regulations made under the powers in this Bill, rather than wait.

New clause 1 introduces a power for the Secretary of State to create a medical device information system through regulations for the purposes of the safety and performance, including the clinical effectiveness, of devices; the safety of individuals who receive or are treated with a medical device; and the improvement of medical devices' safety and performance through advances in technology.

The new clause has a number of detailed subsections because there are a number of considerations that Members will wish to know are being taken into account in the light of the productive discussions that have been had in this place and elsewhere about the important question of patient safety and the system's capacity to protect us all.

Some of the matters covered by the clause can be dealt with already, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. That Act established the Health and Social Care Information Centre, otherwise known as NHS Digital, and allows for the Secretary of State to issue a direction, asking NHS Digital to collect data in respect of the NHS in England. It is under that Act that the Secretary of State sought to act late last year, by issuing a direction to NHS Digital to begin to collect data with regard to implanted devices in England so that we could begin to build a picture.

However, this issue affects the whole UK and patients in all four nations. Devices are also implanted in private institutions by providers who are under no obligation to provide data to a central system if they are not working under contract to the national health service.

In their amendments in Committee, Members referred to device registries. We have a number of existing device registries in this country and a global exemplar in the National Joint Registry, which describes its own mission as

“Working for patients, driving forward quality”.

It collects information on operations to monitor the performance of certain implants and the effectiveness of different types of surgeries, improving clinical effectiveness and benefiting patients, clinicians and the sector as a whole. That works for patients, at a local level, who receive devices under the aegis of a registry. But not all higher-risk devices have a registry, and some registries will generate insights or patterns that are of use to other types of implants or devices—or, indeed, to improving regulation and the safety of devices as well as our system responses.

Data is fundamentally a driver of change. It is how we identify trends and draw links between individual issues to find patterns. It is by bringing data together that we see a bigger picture that can drive our response. The new clause seeks to create the legal backbone for

future data collection and construct an information system to support existing and new registries in the future.

Members will be concerned about how data is safeguarded, how it might be used and by whom, and I will come to that shortly. But it is worth reflecting and understanding that the benefits of this system will be broad. Such a system would monitor the performance of devices and ensure that patient outcomes can be tracked. The longer-term aim is to intervene earlier, through clinical analysis of the data in the information system, to prevent patient harm before it happens by enabling the healthcare system to flag concerns, drive clinical system and regulatory action where appropriate, and use alternative and better devices and procedures to mitigate risk to UK patients. It would support the registries, both present and future, to take action underpinned by the national data from all four corners of the United Kingdom.

Such a system, subject to safeguards, could allow for the sharing of certain types of information with clinicians, the regulators, the NHS and other healthcare partners in the longer term. That would improve the data available on medical devices, as part of post-market surveillance. As a result, the UK's regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, will be better able to take action early and more effectively as part of its regulation of devices on the UK market.

New clause 1(2) sets out some of the matters that regulations that establish this system might make provision for. It enables provision to be made so that the information is provided to NHS Digital in order that it can carry out its functions under the regulations. It enables provision to be made about using or disclosing the information, and for NHS Digital to have regard to certain matters, such as the need to reduce burdens on healthcare institutions when exercising its functions.

Subsection (3) clarifies subsection (2) by asking a private provider of, for example, breast implants to supply data to the information centre and to do so in a manner and in such a time that is provided for in the regulations. Along with the UK-wide nature of the power, it would ensure that we have a national picture that would support the aim we are all here to drive forward.

Subsection (4) makes it clear that anyone whose services, powers or duties relate to medical devices can be specified in the regulations and thus required to provide that information to NHS Digital for the purposes of the information system. That is important, as we would not wish to inadvertently have a gap as technology and procedures move on.

Subsection (5) sets out that the kind of information we might expect to require is retained and entered in the information system. The first and most immediate use of the information system must be to ensure that if there is an issue with a device it is possible to find and then notify a patient. To support that, the unique device identifier must be retained, along with the details of the patient in whom the device has been implanted, through, for example, their patient record, and the information about any procedure that has taken place, including the name of the clinician who has implanted it. This was raised in discussions and the provision is, if you like, an indication at the outset of what we would expect to capture, but subsection (5) does not limit us to that if consultation takes us further.

Subsection (6) deals with the disclosure and analysis of information. There was considerable discussion on Second Reading, led by the hon. Member for Twickenham (Munira Wilson), of the need to trust how data is used and analysed in order for such a system to be supported by patients. Subsection (6) is therefore critically important in being transparent at the outset that it would be necessary not only to capture the information, but to ensure that it can be used to identify patterns or trends to determine whether a patient's experience of a device is personal and highly specific to their particular circumstances, or whether there is something clinicians or regulators need to do to improve the way in which that device can be used.

Patients are absolutely critical. They want to know that their data is protected, and subject to data protection legislation and other safeguards. They wish to know that they can be traced in the event of a problem with a device, and that the healthcare system professionals they interact with may know their surgical history as part of any future or ongoing procedures. They also wish to know that system change will be informed by their experiences—that their voices will be heard and change will occur as a result.

I recognise there is a lot of concern in this place and in the other place about how we ensure sensitive information is kept securely and processed for legitimate reasons only, and that there are strict safeguards on who has access to it. I wish to assure Members now that this legislation is here to provide the backbone for future regulation. The benefit of secondary legislation is that we do not have to have all the elements in place immediately, but we can put building blocks of data together to access it slowly over time, with the proper process of consultation with patients, clinicians and devolved Administrations and consensus behind the most appropriate course of action to build the longer-term vision that I have set out. We have specified the kind of things the regulation under this amendment might enable us to do, but we will need to return to Parliament with the detail. I can commit myself now to our intention that the consultation on regulations will indeed have considering voices of patients at its heart.

Enabling provision to be made in secondary legislation means that any information system can be updated to reflect collaboration with existing and future clinical registries, so that the processes for data collection remain streamlined, avoid duplication and reduce the burden on organisations providing the data. Future amendments to the secondary legislation governing the operation of any information system will ensure that the system remains as effective as possible in monitoring the safety of medical devices, but while that is the future, we do intend to ensure through regulations that, in the short term, data are subject to appropriate safeguards such as anonymisation by NHS Digital, and able to be shared within the NHS system and with the regulator so that patients get the benefit immediately of improved product safety and the comfort of knowing they can be traced if there is information that they need about their specific advice. That can and should be in place before we are in a position to put in place the vision of a system of clinical registries.

We have spoken to Ministers from the devolved Administrations, and there is broad agreement about the need for improved tracking of medical devices.

The benefits for product and patient safety that an information system could bring are beyond party politics. It is the right thing to do for patients. IT projects are notoriously difficult and I think it would be difficult, if not impossible, to put one in legislation in detail. We have sought to strike the right balance between detail on what might be in the regulations in the interests of transparency, and enough flexibility to respond properly to the consultation on what the future should look like with those most affected by this. It is absolutely critical that this works, not least for clinicians who will need to record the information. We have published a detailed document setting out the long-term aspiration and some of how we would like to get there to accompany the amendments and to support Members' scrutiny. I hope the amendment has support in all parts of the House.

Let me turn to the minor and technical amendments in the name of the Secretary of State. These are very small matters. Amendments 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 and 18 all make minor changes in order to enable new clause 1. Amendments 8 to 17 make minor and consequential amendments to enable regulations made under the powers in the Bill subject to the negative procedure to be combined in a single statutory instrument with regulations under powers which are subject to the affirmative procedure, or with regulations under powers in other legislation which are subject to the negative procedure. Allowing for different provisions to be combined in a single statutory instrument makes for greater efficiency within the parliamentary timetable.

I move now to amendments tabled by the hon. Members for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) and for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer). I thank them for tabling them and hope that I can engage as much as possible with the points raised. Amendments 21, 22 and 23 are similar to those put down—

Alex Norris (Nottingham North) (Lab/Co-op): It is a thrill for a Government Minister to move my amendments, although that might be giving me false hope. But I just wanted to put on record for colleagues that the purpose of amendment 21 is to make patient safety the uppermost priority.

Jo Churchill: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. We are in completely unusual times: I get to respond to his amendments before he has actually spoken to them himself, but we will crack on.

I recognise that the hon. Gentleman said at the time that he wished to return to these issues during the proceedings and I was expecting him to do so. We agree that patient outcomes and patient safety are matters that we would expect the House to consider very seriously.

Amendments 21, 22 and 23 all seek to establish a hierarchy of considerations applied by the Secretary of State or the appropriate authority when making regulations under the Bill, making safety the primary consideration. It is important to say at the outset that there is a consensus on both sides of the House on patient safety. It matters to us as individuals and as MPs representing our constituents, who rightly wish to know that their safety and their animals' safety is of uppermost importance when we look to make regulatory change.

4 pm

Patient safety is critical, and through the Bill we are trying to do what is important for patients. The Bill includes changes such as adding prescribing professions for veterinary medicines, reflecting the desire to make medicines as accessible as possible while not compromising animal safety or the safety of the person administering the medicine. This could mean allowing a physician to prescribe a medication outside its licensed purpose, because it will give a better clinical outcome for that patient in those circumstances than no drug at all or a drug that will be harmful alongside another medicine that they are already taking. The Bill is about patient safety, but it is also about a combination of factors that deliver on behalf of patients.

Not all regulatory changes are made with the intention of changing the way in which a device or medicine makes its way to the patient, or are about whether the substance or device is safe to a patient. In 2013, changes were made to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 so that brokers, importers, manufacturers and distributors of active substances could apply to make oral representations to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to have certain decisions, such as a decision to vary or suspend their registration, reviewed. That made no palpable difference to the safety of patients, but it did make a regulatory change that could be said to respond to the attractiveness consideration. Regulations are not the only route to protect patients. In addition, the MHRA, the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care have multiple points at which the safety of medicines and patient safety are addressed and considered.

The NHS also has ways to interact with the regulator, such as the yellow card scheme, to raise patient safety concerns that can result in suspension of the use of medicines and devices. That is an example of our regulatory regimes in action, fulfilling the primary purpose they were created for: protecting patient safety. In addition, NHS Improvement established a patient safety strategy in July 2019, which it will continue to develop in consultation with clinicians and patients. There are also patient safety managers in hospital trusts, as well as leadership within DHSC responsible for ensuring patient safety. Those examples, in addition to the consultation required under the Bill, will feed into the decisions that are made when making regulations under the Bill, ensuring that consideration of any impact on the safety of medicines and medical devices is always well informed.

When it comes to the considerations set out in the Bill to be taken into account before making regulations, it is our view that there need be no hierarchy, because the combination of all three considerations provides the best outcomes for patient safety—the safety of the medicines and devices themselves, the availability of those medicines and devices, and a UK market that will encourage the continual development of innovative, more effective and, importantly, safe medicines and devices. It is not a choice between having safe medicines and having a strong and secure supply chain, nor is it a choice between having safe medicines and being an attractive place for the development of new medicines. Those considerations go hand and hand and must continue to do so, so that our regulations continue to ensure that safe and effective medicines reach UK patients and that our vibrant life sciences sector is supported.

I was grateful to the hon. Member for Nottingham North for the points he made in Committee. We agree on the need to send a clear message about the importance of patients. We also agree that patients—be they human or animal—should and must come first in our consideration of regulatory changes that affect them, and that that consideration must include the safety of medicines and devices, alongside availability and attractiveness of the UK market, to ensure the best outcomes for patients, which is what we are both working for.

The sunset provision in amendment 20, is intended to limit the operation of the Bill to a three-year period after Royal Assent. The amendment is similar to the one tabled in Committee. The practical consequence of a sunset provision is that, at its end, the Government would be compelled to return to Parliament with new legislation. There has been much consideration in this House and elsewhere of the extent of these powers in legislation, particularly legislation designed to ease our way out of the transition period and into the UK's regulatory autonomy. The hon. Gentleman himself has said that the arrangements in the Bill could be said to reflect current arrangements, and I would argue that the arrangements in the Bill—there must be consultation before regulations may be made and they must be laid in draft before the House and subject to the affirmative procedure—provide for a significant increase in parliamentary scrutiny of any changes to the current framework.

The hon. Gentleman said in Committee that he wished to see proper consultation across the sector in order to set up a world-class, safe and effective regulatory regime. I would say that that is precisely what we wish to achieve through the Bill as it is drafted. Proper consultation does not mean simply the act of providing evidence to Parliament; rather, it is the ongoing consideration of changes to regulations that affect the sector. That is precisely what clause 40 is intended to produce.

The hon. Gentleman concluded in Committee by making two points, and I hope that I can address them both here. First, he asked whether this provision—the ability to make regulatory change via secondary legislation—would mean a diminution in protection. I would say absolutely not. This is not about reducing UK standards; it is about ensuring we can modify and adapt our regulatory regime so that we can take account of new technologies and ensure effective regulation that keeps pace with innovation. We have approached the drafting of the Bill with the intent of creating legislation that will stand for some time, and that is why we have focused on which regulations may be made to amend or supplement existing legislation. It is also why we have sought to consolidate the enforcement regime so that it is transparent and clear to companies and the MHRA how we ensure operation within the law.

The hon. Gentleman also asked whether the Government could accept that the liberty to make bold changes by using the delegated powers in the Bill should not give the Government the chance to make any changes they wanted. It is right that we take a sensible and proportionate approach to regulatory change. Small changes, such as adding Braille to packaging, are common sense, but I agree that changes such as how we approach community pharmacy and novel technologies are something else. I can assure him that we have no intention of making bold changes to regulations without full consultation

and bringing the issue back to the House with the assumption that we will be expected to justify those changes.

The amendment would mean returning to primary legislation within three years. In practical terms, that would be likely to mean within two years, given the need to have sufficient parliamentary time for the passage of the Bill. There are two months after Royal Assent before we can make the regulations, other than in emergencies, and those regulations are subject to a statutory consultation and then the affirmative procedure, all of which takes time. This would mean that we would have 18 months, at most, of practical operation of the legislation before we had to go back to its principles. We would not know, for example, whether the civil sanctions regime had had the desired material effect, as it would simply not have had enough time to run. We would cease being able to disclose pertinent safety information from the MHRA to the NHS, and it would be unclear whether the registers facilitated by clause 13—or, indeed, the medical device information system introduced by the new clause—would be able to continue to operate, or whether we were starting from scratch. Some regulatory changes take years to put into effect. Manufacturers, companies, hospitals and so on must expend financially on preparing for them, putting them into effect and sustaining them. We would like, as much as possible, to be certain that any regulatory change we have introduced in the UK is sustainable and ongoing. It is key that we get this right.

The Bill's drafting, and our approach to making transparent the kinds of changes one might expect from the delegated powers, have been carefully thought out. Our approach has been consistent with the recommendations of the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee in relation to the Fisheries Bill in the last parliamentary Session, 2017 to 2019. We have, in fact, gone beyond the work of that Bill and produced six illustrative draft statutory instruments. We have recognised the need for Parliament to have a greater role and, other than in specific circumstances, the affirmative procedure applies and is supported by a mandatory obligation to consult.

This is not a stopgap Bill to get us through the transition period. It is a proportionate approach to regulating an industry that moves quickly, with regulators who wish to take effective action and who are renowned for working with the industry in the best interests of patients, such as during covid. We can get this right now, and not suggest to industry, the regulators or patients that this is not the right answer for the future of regulation such that Parliament would need to revisit it swiftly by applying a sunset clause.

I turn to amendment 19, which was tabled by the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston. I recognise the great passion with which she spoke about this amendment in Committee. In particular, she raised the issue of human organs used in the development of medicines and medical devices when consent has not been obtained, and the matter was raised specifically in relation to China. I thank her for the additional context that she has shared on the amendment both in Committee and through subsequent correspondence. However, these issues are not best addressed through primary legislation dealing with the regulatory framework for human medicines in the UK. I have written to the Minister for Asia

regarding the issue and asked him to hold a meeting to discuss the matter further, and I believe that the relevant offices are in communication.

Comprehensive legislation that governs human organs and tissues for transplantation or the manufacture of medicinal products currently exists in the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007 and the Human Tissue Act 2004. The safeguards provided by this legislation ensure the appropriate quality, safety and origin of human tissues by setting out requirements around the donation, procurement, testing, processing, storage and distribution of organs, tissues and cells intended for human application. The requirements apply to any products that are administered to humans and, crucially, include requirements around consent and the traceability of human tissues and organs. Amendment 19 would not provide for future amendments to be made to the legislation governing human tissues.

Although I am entirely sympathetic to the concerns of the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston, I reassure Members that the current legislation provides extensive safeguards to ensure the ethical and appropriate use of human tissues in medicines and medicinal products. Equally, although I am sympathetic to the hon. Member's intentions, I do not believe that the amendment would have the intended effect. I look forward to hearing further contributions from hon. Members.

Alex Norris: It is a pleasure to resume proceedings on the Bill. The exchanges in Committee were of a high quality in both content and tone, and I look forward to more of the same this afternoon. I was proud to take the lead for the Opposition in Committee, as I am during the remaining stages of the Bill, and I thank my predecessor in the early rounds, my hon. Friend the Member for Washington and Sunderland West (Mrs Hodgson).

Let me turn to new clause 1. I am so pleased to see the Government introduce what we spoke of in Committee as a device registry, which is now called the information centre. Bad medicines and devices cause exceptional harm. The noble Baroness Cumberlege is looking at the impact of three of these: Primados, sodium valproate and surgical mesh. I pay tribute to the campaigners and their allies in this place for all their work to ensure that those who are suffering, or who have suffered, are not forgotten. Clearly there have been devices that, knowing what we know now, we would not have used. There is a risk of similar things happening in the future, and it is a risk that we cannot fully mitigate, so an information centre will at least put us in the strongest possible position to react quickly and clearly.

I am personally grateful to the Minister for the level of engagement from her and the Government in general. I and my colleagues in the other place are committed to continuing to develop the idea. I know that the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford)—who will be watching proceedings, and whose expertise and creativity are missed—is ready to do the same. I can tell from my inbox that there is considerable interest in the sector in making this work, and I hope the Minister will commit to full consultation with it.

4.15 pm

I want to take this opportunity to talk about the Cumberlege review. I had rather hoped that the remaining stages of the Bill might fall after the review reports on 8 July. That is important, because the report could have

a profound impact on how we view the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and on how we view the past and what we need to do in the future. Presumably, proceedings in the other place will fall after that date, so I hope the Minister will at least be able to commit not only that the Government will engage seriously with that review—I am sure they will—but that, crucially, they will be willing to make amendments to this Bill or changes more generally to the MHRA through other legislation, regulations or other ways to ensure that it is fit for the future and addresses the challenges that come up in that review.

This is a simple Bill and the sunset clause that my amendment 20 would introduce reflects that. The Bill takes our current arrangements as governed by our previous membership of the European Union and transplants them into UK law—so far, so simple. It then hands Secretaries of State the power to amend those arrangements as they wish via secondary legislation. The Minister and I agree on a great deal of things—probably the vast majority of things—but our views diverge on whether that power is a downgrade from where we are. While I accept that the democratic deficit in the European Union is the face that launched a thousand undergraduate essay ships, there are nevertheless multiple independent stages across the Commission, the Parliament and the Council. Whether or not that is a good process is for the birds for us now, but if nothing else, there are lots of eyeballs to pick up mistakes.

Under the Bill, we will have a Secretary of State governing high-risk medicines and medical devices, with decisions essentially ratified by a Committee or occasionally, perhaps, on the Floor of the House, where the Secretary of State will have a majority come what may. I think that in any terms that is a diminution, and the Government will need to be mindful of that.

All amendment 20 asks is that the Secretary of State returns to Parliament after having had the powers for three years and resets the arrangements, creating an holistic new status quo, as we are doing now. That is not to say that the status quo would then be locked in for ever—it would have to be a moving picture—but it would just give us an understanding in the round of all regulations and allow Parliament to have a full consideration, rather than doing it bit by bit. Given how much scrutiny will be coming out of the process, the measure is not onerous. Nevertheless, I accept that a sunset clause is an inelegant solution so I do not intend to press the amendment to a vote. It is the best we have as an Opposition, and I hope that the Government will bear it in mind in the other place.

Page 4 of the Government's impact assessment says that before a medical device enters the UK market, the domestic notified body—for us, that is the MHRA—must sign it off and say it is safe. It must then be signed off by two other notified bodies from other member states. That is a triple lock. Under the Bill, it will be just the MHRA and the Minister. That is a high wire, and it leaves the potential for a lot of harm.

A sunset clause—I would probably rather characterise it as a reset clause—would allow us to consider or evaluate one particularly critical by-product of the Bill that I can guarantee every Member will hear about from their constituents, if they have not done so already. If colleagues comb the Bill or do a ctrl+f search looking for the words “hub and spoke”, they will not find them.

They can be found only on page 10 of the Government's impact assessment at paragraph 42. Buried deep in there is the idea that the Government may—or do—plan to change the age-old principle that the pharmacy that dispenses is the pharmacy that distributes, either at the counter or via home delivery.

Paragraph 42 raises the idea that instead, mobile deliverers will be able to partner with dispensing pharmacies to deliver their prescriptions for them or, more likely, be able to dispense and deliver on their behalf, leaving pharmacists to pick up new clinical responsibilities. There are very strong valid arguments on both sides of the issue. I cannot tell the House with certainty how I would vote if asked to pick a side at this very moment. Some say that the measure will destroy community pharmacy and others say that it will unleash community pharmacy into the brave new world.

I can tell the House this: it is the most profound reform to community pharmacy in our lifetimes. It is delicate and it is important. Our constituents care about it, as do our local businesses. The Bill opens it up. I would even say that the impact assessment prejudices the matter, and it is not even on the face of the Bill. That is why the Bill needs a sunset clause. We know we have to support the Bill's Third Reading, or we will not have a regulatory regime for medicines and medical devices, but how on earth did we get to the point where we are practically committing ourselves to an entire new model for pharmacy along the way? I cannot understand that, and I hope the Minister will respond in summing up and make a strong commitment to the broadest possible consultation on the matter, because we will have to tread very lightly indeed.

As for amendments 21, 22, and 23, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 13:13, he spoke of three things you discover as you grow up. We are entering the wedding season now—happily we are allowed to do that again—so Members will recognise this message:

“And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.”

Similarly, on clause 1(2) of the Bill, there are three things when it comes to human medicines—or, in the case of my other amendments, veterinary medicines or medical devices: safety, availability, and attractiveness of the UK market. Surely, the greatest of these is safety.

I know the Minister has a strong personal commitment to patient safety, so I still cannot quite understand why in the Bill it is seen as equal to the attractiveness of the UK as a driving force of the Secretary of State's decision making. I reckon we could stand in the Members' Lobby all day without finding an hon. Member who would make attractiveness a coequal priority with patient safety. I am keen to hear what legal advice she has had on this point. Are we certain that there is not a vulnerability facing a future Secretary of State who is said to have prioritised patient safety over the attractiveness of the UK market to litigious and exceptionally powerful pharmaceutical companies? I do not intend to push this to a Division, but I would be keen to hear the Minister's reflections on this point and ask that it be considered in the other place.

Amendment 19, which stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer), deals with an exceptionally important

issue. Again, there would be complete unanimity that human tissue harvested without consent is repulsive and that we in this country would want nothing to do with it—I have no doubt of that at all—but we also know that globally it is happening, and so it is incumbent on us all to make sure we are certain that such tissue does not enter the UK for the purposes we are discussing today. I listened carefully to what the Minister said in Committee. She provided a good deal of reassurance—and she has provided further reassurance this afternoon—but it is clear from correspondence from campaigners since that there might yet be gaps in the current arrangements and that we must act either today or in the other place.

Finally, I turn to the remaining Government amendments. As I said in Committee, I find it reassuring when there are Government amendments, because it means they are still reading their own Bill, which is a very good thing—I see it as a point of strength. I do not have any quarrel with these remaining amendments, but I want to make a final point about the use of secondary legislation powers, which the entire Bill is built on. This point is made clear on page 10 of the delegated powers memorandum. Not only is the Secretary of State reserving for himself significant powers via secondary legislation, but many are via the negative procedure. Examples include labelling, prohibiting, advertising, and the fees regime governing human medicine—an awful lot of very important things, and all at the stroke of a pen before Parliament has even said a word about it. I cannot help wondering whether the Government should be careful what they wish for. This is a high wire they have stepped out on to.

That summarises the Opposition's views on the amendments. They are good amendments, both the Government and the Back-Bench ones, and I hope the Government will give the Opposition amendments strong consideration either today or at a later stage.

Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab): I thank the Minister for providing us with sight of her letter to the Minister for Asia. As she committed herself to doing in Committee, she communicated it to all Committee members. I sincerely thank her for that.

Amendment 19 would empower the appropriate authority to make provisions for the process of developing or manufacturing medicines in relation to the origin and treatment of human organs. This is necessary because of the actions by the Chinese Government in Beijing. The China tribunal, headed up by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, launched the first independent legal analysis of all evidence relating to organ harvesting in China and found beyond reasonable doubt that forcible organ harvesting was taking place. China was invited to provide evidence to this tribunal but failed to do so.

Further, a study by the medical journal *BMJ Open* has raised ethical issues on over 400 Chinese medical studies, and there is clear evidence that China is abusing the human rights, including the right to life, of Uyghurs, practitioners of Falun Gong, conscientious objectors and political prisoners. There is no reason to believe that China is not also experimenting on such prisoners without consent and then harvesting organs to examine the results of such experiments, and we must protect the UK health system from being morally compromised by this.

[*Ms Marie Rimmer*]

The Minister stated in Committee that my amendment was not required as regulations are already in place under the Human Tissue (Quality and Safety for Human Application) Regulations 2007 and the Human Tissue Act 2004. There are codes of practice in respect of the 2007 regulations, but section 1(4) of the 2004 Act explains that subsection (1) does not apply for a body to which subsections (5) or (6) apply:

“Subsections (1) to (3) do not apply to an activity of a kind mentioned there if it is done in relation to...a body to which subsection (5) applies”—

which includes a human body that has been imported—

“or...relevant material to which subsection (6) applies”,

and that applies to “relevant material” if it has been imported. “Relevant material” means material consisting of human cells, so imported human tissue does not require appropriate consent.

The importing of human body tissue for medical research does not require any consent or traceability—it is only advised, not required—meaning that human tissue from countries like China can legally be imported to the UK for the purpose of medical research without traceability, documentation or consent. Imported human body tissue for use in medicines requires traceability from donor to recipient. Although technically consent documentation does not legally require consent, in reality it would be difficult to demonstrate donor selection requirements without it.

Without my amendment, we have no assurance that harvested organs cannot find their way into our national health service. Although the legislation and regulations provide guidance, it is just that: guidance. Why should we not want to make it clear that harvested organs will not find their way into this country? International checks on the system are failing, with the World Health Organisation’s assessment of the Chinese organ transplant system actually being one of self-assessment, as stated by the WHO to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Thus, the regime breaking the ethical standards is also assessing whether it meets them.

The British Medical Association has called on the Government

“to reconsider its position on this issue in light of the findings of the Tribunal”.

My amendment would empower the Government to do just that, and to close the hole in the existing legislation. It aims not to shut down the trade in medicines between the United Kingdom and China, but to ensure that it is ethical. It would not force the Government to implement the regulations now; it would merely empower them and the relevant authorities to take the steps necessary to regulate on this issue, when and if they are prepared to do so.

I do not intend to push my amendment to a Division today, although frankly, I should not have to: the moral and practical case is as clear as day, and the Government should accept it. It seems that they will not do so at this stage, but they should when the Bill is debated in the other place. I want to make it abundantly clear that I will not let this matter lie. A growing group of cross-party parliamentarians, both here and in the other place, are determined to stop this from happening. We now need the Government to do their bit. I will leave it there.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): It is a pleasure to be able to speak on this issue. The Minister knows how pleased I am to see her in her position. I have always followed her progress, and she has done very well. I am pleased to note how capably she responds to the issues that are raised in the debate. What a pleasure it is, too, to see the shadow Minister, the hon. Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris), in his place.

4.30 pm

I am pleased to follow the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer). We are good friends and have a similar staunch interest in the issue of organ harvesting, which she addressed in her speech. I am greatly concerned about the fact that China seems to undertake almost commercial organ harvesting, including those of Falun Gong, those of people of Christian belief and those of Uyghur Muslims and many others. I very much want to see all the protections that the hon. Lady has asked for, and I look forward to the Minister’s response.

Back before the 2017 election, I had occasion to be in hospital for three operations. If for nothing else but that one thing, I realised not only how good the NHS is and how well its people work, but also how unfashionable those surgical gowns are. It really scares me to think about it, never mind anything else, but that is the nature of life.

We are all aware that the Bill is an important piece of legislation. It is part of the drive to achieve the ambition to maintain the UK’s position as a world leader in science and research beyond the Brexit transition period. That is also referred to in the background notes. The Queen’s University research facility is world-class and is part of the team who are driving the search for a covid-19 vaccine, backed by the £20 million Government grant to find a vaccine and understand the virus. Sometimes it is not said, but it should be said and I say it now, that the Government have done some great work. It is in the nature of life that we sometimes say what has not been done, but let us give credit for what has been done; it has been really good stuff.

The Patrick G. Johnston Centre for Cancer Research and the Wellcome-Wolfson Institute for Experimental Medicine are both internationally recognised and acclaimed for the work that has been done there. Having been there many times in person, I cannot but be impressed by the leading world-class facility at Queen’s University in Belfast. There is more that can be achieved, and I hope the Bill will free up the Queen’s researchers to reach their potential. Perhaps the Minister would confirm that that would be the case. Queen’s University leads the field.

It is important that we do not just maintain current standards. I believe that the Bill will enable us to raise standards above and beyond—retain what we have and, hopefully, do better. I am so proud of what we have achieved in this country and confident that we can go further in the future. The Bill is therefore essential. However, future regulations enabled by the Bill must also ensure that patients are not disadvantaged and that the UK remains an attractive market for the international industry. I want to ensure that that is the case and I am sure it will be, but as the Minister will confirm, there is a fine balance to be achieved between regaining our sovereignty, which is of the utmost importance—and

which I support totally—and ensuring that we are still competitive and able to work closely with the global market. I believe that we can achieve that, just as, last week, I spoke on the importance of assuring the future of the aerospace industry by means of regulations that enable continued easy access to the EU but also give the best protection for our own industry.

One of the questions that came up in my discussions was mentioned by the Minister. For years I have had a particular interest in rare diseases. I want to confirm that those with rare diseases will still have access to the specific clinical trials relating to their diseases. The Minister says, rightly, that the legislation will affect all of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and that all four regions will be part of that. I have had some correspondence from the British Heart Foundation—an organisation which I highly respect, and which is highly respected by all of us in the House. We appreciate the level of work that it undertakes to benefit people throughout the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The BHF communicated with us about the Bill and I ask its questions, which are as follows. Close UK-EU collaboration is protected through full alignment with the EU clinical trials regulation, allowing patients access to vital pan-EU clinical trials regulation and encouraging industry to continue to invest in UK science and research. Will that continue? Patients currently have quick supplies of crucial medicines through close participation in the European Medicines Agency licensing process; will that continue? From 2004 to 2016, the UK collaborated with other EU countries in 5,000 clinical trials—the third highest number of joint clinical trials with EU countries—and we were playing our part, as we often do, above and beyond. The outcome of the trials has been impressive, and we must ensure that co-operation without capitulation is the key. The UK ranks in the top four EU countries for cardiovascular disease clinical trials, according to the 2017 analysis, with 586 CVD trials registered in the European clinical trials database. In 2016-17, the BHF spent 24% of its research income on clinical research, 31% of this on clinical trials and the rest on epidemiology, genetic studies and so on. The UK supplies 45 million packs of drugs to Europe every month and 37 million packs of drugs come the other way. We need to ensure that this can continue.

Despite its having a number of bilateral trade agreements with the EU, it is estimated that Switzerland gains access to new medicines, on average, 157 days later than the EU27. In Australia and Canada, new medicines come to market, on average, six to 12 months later than in the EU or the USA. This is a very great concern of the BHF that I understand. However, it must also be remembered that as we are at the cutting edge of many of these technological and medicinal advances, we will not necessarily be delayed in our procurement of medicines that could not happen at all without our involvement. We need to ensure that we keep pressing on with our research and sharing information and communication on mutually beneficial projects.

I welcome the Minister's commitment in her opening speech with regard to data protection for patients—that is sensible and helpful. That was another of our concerns, but she has already answered it, so I thank her. I am absolutely in agreement with the stated aims of the Bill: making it simpler for NHS hospitals to manufacture

and trial the most innovative new, personalised and short-life medicines as their usage increases and they are taken up in local clinics and theatre; increasing the range of professions able to prescribe and supply certain medicines, making the most effective use of the NHS workforce where recommended by experts; and developing more innovative ways of dispensing medicines in local pharmacies.

May I ask the Minister a very specific question that I, some of my colleagues and others in Northern Ireland are wondering about? In relation to the protections provided through this Bill, can she advise on what impact the Northern Ireland protocol will have on the medicines being transferred between mainland UK and Northern Ireland? We want to ensure a seamless, transparent, easy system, and it will be important that this is the case. *[Interruption.]* I am almost at the end, Madam Deputy Speaker—I give you my word that I will keep within the time limit.

It is also essential that we remove unnecessary bureaucracy for the lowest-risk clinical trials to encourage rapid introduction of new medicines while still maintaining safety. That is crucial for the wellbeing of our patients in all of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This is a marvellous opportunity. Our research and development needs to keep us as world-leading innovators, and yet the foundation of all of this must be the safety of the patient—that is paramount. I know that that is the Minister's intention, and it would certainly be mine. It is my belief that we can achieve this and still share communication and projects with EU countries. I am supportive of this Bill—I want the Minister to know that—and hopeful for our future in this field. We can have safety, security and co-operation without mindless red tape, and I hope that that is exactly what this Bill will do. I welcome it as the Minister prepares to reply.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I call Tim Farron. *[Interruption.]*

Tim Farron (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): Jim, you could have carried on a bit longer, couldn't you? It is an honour to follow the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon).

When it comes to the regulation of the introduction of new, innovative medicines, treatments and technologies, I am bound to say that cancer will be at the forefront of many of our minds. It is an area that deeply concerns every single one of us, and it could be severely impacted if we do not get the negotiations right. The NHS long-term plan, which is full of very good and wise things, recognised the significant problem that we have in the United Kingdom with our cancer survival rates. Our survival rates, and it has been the case under many Governments of different colours, are among the worst in Europe. We have the second lowest survival rate for lung cancers and below average survival rates for nine of the 10 major cancers. The terrifying statistic for us personally is that one in every two of us is likely to get cancer at some point in our lives. That means we will, all of us, almost certainly be touched by cancer in some way in our families at some point during our lives, if we have not been already.

The need to step up our efforts to fight this horrific disease is amplified by the current context. We have seen a 60% drop in cancer referrals and a 20% fall in the numbers of those starting treatment during the covid

[Tim Farron]

crisis—for obvious reasons, and some of them justifiable reasons. Clearly, there are people who are at risk of their immunity being suppressed during the virus or who could gain the infection via surgery during the pandemic, so we understand why clinicians make such decisions.

Jim Shannon: The week past was Men's Health Week, and I know the hon. Gentleman is of the same opinion as me about the importance of highlighting prostate cancer. Bowel cancer is another example. Those are two of the cancers that take people out of this world very quickly. I know the Minister will respond very positively, but is it the hon. Gentleman's understanding that those are two of the cancers that, critically, we need to address early on?

Tim Farron: The hon. Gentleman makes a very good point. The two statistics I rattled out—and not for the first time, even today—are the 60% drop in referrals and 20% drop in treatments beginning. The referrals one is broadly down to people not coming forward because they do not want to trouble the NHS. It is massively important to amplify what I know Ministers and clinicians are saying around the country, which is that if people are even the remotest bit concerned, they must come forward and seek advice, because the NHS undoubtedly is open. Some of the cancellations of treatment have been for other reasons, such as not having had full access to kit and, in the early days, NICE advising against it taking place when perhaps it could have done. However, I am pleased that the Government have managed to make significant progress in recent weeks.

The statistics on the reduction in people coming forward for treatment and for referral, and on the reduction in treatments beginning, are, of course, all true, yet the number of people with cancer at this point is the same as it would be in any other year, give or take. That tells us that we are in danger of seeing a serious peak in late diagnoses, and, therefore, sadly, in people tragically not living as long as they would have done otherwise.

In the context of the Bill, removal from the European Medicines Agency would do our people harm. Choosing to go from being part of an organisation that represents 25% of medicine sales on the planet to one making up only 3% will inevitably see us fall down the list of those applying for new drugs and treatments. In that case, the wisest course of action would be to negotiate associate membership of the European Medicines Agency. We must be at the cutting edge of cancer treatment, yet we will hobble ourselves if we reduce access to new treatments and scale back research and development.

Of course, Britain's membership of the EMA is no guarantee of progress. I am thinking particularly of radiotherapy technology. NHS England has just agreed to roll out the commissioning of stereotactic ablative radiotherapy—SABR technology—and to bring it forward by a year. This comes after an arduous 10-year battle for this precise and powerful treatment to be rolled out to every cancer centre in the country. Although, 100% of radiotherapy centres are equipped to give this treatment, only half of them are currently commissioned to do so. I am very grateful to Ministers and in particular to the one in her place, who intervened to ensure that all centres will now be commissioned. We are very grateful.

The reason given time and again by NHS England for wasting this resource was that it did not have enough data. This is relevant, because this was a treatment being used effectively across Europe with significantly improved outcomes. If this is the case when the data is there, I dread to think what the impact will be of having reduced access to data on medicines and medical devices when we are outside the EMA.

If effective and co-ordinated implementation does not follow regulation, regulation becomes utterly meaningless. Many colleagues have rightly raised concerns about maintaining access to the best possible treatment for those in the UK, but we also need to recognise that countless people are not able to access the treatment that they need and that has been approved even now. The idea that this could be further curtailed and cost further lives is deeply troubling. Indeed, it would be an outrageous injustice. The process between the approval of a medicine or medical device and its use to treat illness and save lives is hugely important, as the experience of the development of radiotherapy in this country proves.

4.45 pm

A lack of co-ordination, damaging bureaucracy and the absence of consistent investment have left us lagging behind Europe in a treatment for which, ironically, we lead the field in innovation. Our machines should be replaced every 10 years, but a survey undertaken by Action Radiotherapy revealed that there are machines up to 17 years old. Replacing them would work out at about £400 per patient—the same as a single night's stay in hospital. This is a highly curative cancer treatment, so I call for swift action to ensure that we stop lagging behind. A ring-fenced central funding pot to replace machines more than 10 years old would secure fast and uninterrupted patient treatment, solve the £140 million backlog in machine replacement costs, and secure the treatment's future.

Recognising the gap between approval and access also means recognising that access to treatment can mean physical access. People in Westmorland face a three-hour round trip for radiotherapy, and many of the elderly and extremely ill choose not to make the trip at all—they choose shorter lives because they cannot face the longer journeys. It is essential that we invest the £250 million for new network treatment delivery centres to bring treatment closer to home and avoid long travel for the 3.5 million people who live farther away than the recommended 45-minute maximum travel time. For us, that would mean a long-overdue radiotherapy centre at Westmorland General Hospital in Kendal.

Access to innovative treatment is essential, and it must be in no way be diminished at the end of the transition period. However, that is only half the picture: access and approval must be followed by a co-ordinated and effective roll-out to patients. We cannot tolerate red tape leading to life-saving innovation being left unused in hospitals, just as we cannot risk having reduced access to those innovations in the first place.

If we claim to value the lives of the British public, we owe it to them to get this right and ensure they have easy access to the best and most effective treatment. That means ensuring a close deal with our neighbours and tackling our home-grown bureaucracy, which is more than capable of stifling innovation and costing lives.

Jo Churchill: I am most grateful to hon. Friends and hon. Members for their contributions. This is not a stop-gap Bill to get us through the transition; it is a proportionate approach to regulating an industry that moves quickly, with regulators that want to take effective action but are renowned for working with the industry in the best interests of patients. It is about setting a new direction and making clear what the UK wants after the end of the transition period.

Let me turn to the points that hon. Members made. I reiterate to the hon. Member for Nottingham North the commitment to consult when the Cumberlege report is published. We are keen to take account of its recommendations and ensure we are taking the necessary steps to protect patients, as patient safety is paramount in the future of medicines and medical devices regulation. We have of course had routine engagement with the review team, as would be expected, to ensure it is adequately supported and resourced to conduct its review.

I believe that the situation for pharmacies is quite the contrary to what the shadow Minister outlined. For hub-and-spoke dispensing, we intend to give smaller community pharmacies the same opportunity that large pharmacy businesses already enjoy. We will support them, and remove the legal barrier that allows such an arrangement only when the spoke pharmacy and the central dispensing hub are part of the same retail pharmacy business. That would level the playing field for smaller community pharmacies, rather than put them under threat. As I outlined in Committee, particularly during covid, all 11,600 of our community pharmacies have gone above and beyond. They have kept their doors open and have been there every single day for our constituents. I thank them once again. We have committed ourselves to consulting before making regulations, and that applies to any changes to rules on pharmacy registration. It means that no changes can be made without first undertaking proper consultation.

I understand the passion of the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer) on the subject she raised. As the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) observed, we are talking about a thoroughly abhorrent process. As I indicated, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly raises concerns with China, including on the extensive use of the death penalty, and on the treatment of religious and ethnic minorities, which sit at the heart of this. I look forward to having a conversation with her after she has had that meeting, in order to understand what was discussed and to continue the conversation further.

I thank the hon. Member for Strangford for his kind words and for highlighting the fact that we have a unique ecosystem here; we have brilliant academics, such as those he mentioned from Queen's and others from right across the UK. We have a world-leading life science industry, employing some 240,000 people, and they are working to bring the best products to patients. We want to ensure that in and around clinical trials we have a regulatory system that maintains and enhances the UK as a site for global co-operation in research and allows us flexibility to achieve what is best for patients.

On clinical trials, the Government value the strong, collaborative partnerships we have across Europe in the areas of science, research and innovation, and we want to continue to support those opportunities. We are committed to ensuring that the UK maintains its position

as a global science superpower and continues to collaborate with Europe on scientific research. The Prime Minister has made it clear that the UK sits ready to consider a relationship in line with non-EU member states' participation in Horizon Europe, provided that that represents value for money and is in the UK's interest.

The Bill, as drafted, does not breach the Northern Ireland protocol and the powers in the Bill are capable of being exercised compatibly with the protocol. We will ensure that that is the case. We are clear that the protocol provides that where a GB authority currently approves goods for sale, it will continue to be able to do so, in order to have that free-flowing movement.

To the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Tim Farron), who never misses an opportunity to remind me that he would like more services close to his constituents, I say: I hear you, again. Following health questions this morning, I can say that I know we share that commitment to drive patient access to radiotherapy and treatments together. Many hon. Members know that that is dear to my heart, as I have had cancer on more than one occasion. I came here to try to get more cancer nurse specialists and to make sure that on their journey those who have metastatic cancer, which is rarely spoken about in this place, are treated as people who still have full lives to live. Living with and beyond cancer is something we should embrace. The next round of negotiations with the EU will start shortly and we will continue to explore with the EU what future relationship arrangements can look like.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone for their efforts in getting us to this point.

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): I was not in the Chamber earlier, but just before the Minister comes to a conclusion, I wish to thank her for her comments about the engagement she has had with my hon. Friend the Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford), who has not been able to participate in person in the process of this Bill. I know, however, that my hon. Friend has been grateful for the engagement on a cross-party basis, for the comments the Minister made about the amendments tabled by the Scottish National party in Committee, for the commitments the Government made in response to them, and for their engagement with the Scottish Government. I just want to place on the record our thanks for all that, and my sympathy with the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston (Ms Rimmer). A number of my constituents, like those of several other Members, have raised concerns about these issues of forced organ harvesting, and I hope some of that can be considered as well.

Jo Churchill: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his contribution. These are unusual times, so it was my pleasure to work with the hon. Member for Central Ayrshire (Dr Whitford) to do what we could to ensure that the Bill proceeded with a degree of consensus, as it was to work with her on access to off-licence drugs some years ago.

Our consideration of the Bill has been led by good sense and common ground, and by general understanding and consensus about its purpose. I am grateful to everyone who contributed along the way. I think the themes we heard today and in Committee—the paramount importance of patients; the need to ensure that we carefully consider

[Jo Churchill]

and scrutinise legislation and that it is made after consultation; and the use of data to underpin better regulation and improve safety—were the right ones for us to consider. Although it is not necessarily part of regulatory scrutiny, I am grateful to the hon. Member for St Helens South and Whiston for raising the important issue of the UK's continued promotion of human rights and ethics.

I am grateful to the Clerks for their help; these are unusual circumstances, but I have felt no less supported, and, working towards ensuring that we can make progress in the other place, we will continue to use imagination. The Bill is a framework for where we want to go. It will allow us to ensure that the regulation that governs critical areas that matter for us all and are likely to affect us all indirectly is up to date and supports the thriving life sciences sector and patients. To that end, I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and agreed to.

New clause 1 accordingly read a Second time, and added to the Bill.

Clause 14

FEES, INFORMATION, OFFENCES

Amendment made: 1, page 8, line 35, leave out “efficacy” and insert

“performance, including the clinical effectiveness.”.—(Jo Churchill.)

This amendment clarifies the matters relating to medical devices the recording of information about which may be the subject of provision in regulations under Clause 12(1).

Clause 35

OFFENCE RELATING TO INFORMATION

Amendments made: 2, page 18, line 36, at end insert—

“(2) A person to whom information is disclosed under regulations under section (Information systems) commits an offence if the person uses or discloses that information in contravention of those regulations.”

This amendment and Amendment 3 provide that a person who discloses information in breach of regulations made under the new clause inserted by NCI commits a criminal offence.

Amendment 3, page 18, line 37, after “subsection (1)” insert “or (2)”.—(Jo Churchill.)

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 2.

Clause 38

POWER TO MAKE CONSEQUENTIAL ETC PROVISION

Amendment made: 4, page 21, line 41, leave out “and 12(1)” and insert

“, 12(1) and (Information systems)(1)”.—(Jo Churchill.)

This amendment enables regulations made under the new clause inserted by NCI to make consequential and other provision.

Clause 40

CONSULTATION

Amendments made: 5, page 22, line 11, leave out “sections 1(1), 8(1) or 12(1), or paragraph 9 of Schedule 1” and insert

“a provision of Part 1, 2 or 3”.

This amendment and Amendment 6 have the effect that the Secretary of State is required to consult before making regulations under the new clause inserted by NCI.

Amendment 6, page 22, line 29, after “section 12(1)” insert

“or (Information systems)(1)”.—(Jo Churchill.)

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 5.

Clause 41

PROCEDURE

Amendments made: 7, page 22, line 32, leave out “section 1(1), 8(1) or 12(1), or paragraph 9 of Schedule 1,” and insert

“a provision of Part 1, 2 or 3”.

This amendment has the effect that regulations made under the new clause inserted by NCI are to be made by statutory instrument.

Amendment 8, page 22, line 42, leave out

“section 1(1), 8(1) or 12(1)”

and insert

“a provision of Part 1, 2 or 3”.

This amendment and Amendments 9 to 17 enable regulations under powers in the Bill which are subject to negative procedure to be combined in a single statutory instrument with regulations under powers which are subject to affirmative procedure, or with regulations under powers in other legislation which are subject to negative procedure.

Amendment 9, page 23, line 12, leave out

“to which subsection (9) applies”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 10, page 23, line 13, at end insert

“if the only regulations under a provision of Part 1, 2 or 3 that it contains are regulations to which subsection (9) applies”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 11, page 23, line 14, leave out

“to which subsection (9) applies”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 12, page 23, line 16, at end insert

“if the only regulations under section 1(1) or 8(1) that they contain are regulations to which subsection (9) applies”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 13, page 23, line 18, leave out

“to which subsection (9) applies”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 14, page 23, line 23, at end insert—

“, if the only regulations under a provision of Part 1, 2 or 3 that it contains are regulations to which subsection (9) applies”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 15, page 23, line 24, after “to” insert

“—

(a) ”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 16, page 23, line 36, at end insert

“, and

(b) regulations under paragraph 9 of Schedule 1”.

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Amendment 17, page 23, line 37, leave out subsection (10).—(Jo Churchill.)

See the explanatory statement for Amendment 8.

Clause 43

COMMENCEMENT

Amendment made: 18, page 24, line 15, at end insert
“, and

(d) section (Information systems)”.—(*Jo Churchill.*)

This amendment provides for the new clause inserted by NC1 to come into force two months after the Bill is passed.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I will now suspend the House for three minutes.

4.58 pm

Sitting suspended.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (TODAY)

Ordered,

That, at this day's sitting, the Speaker shall put the Questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on the motions in the name of Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg relating to the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS) one hour after the commencement of proceedings on the motion for this Order; such Questions shall include the Questions on any Amendments selected by the Speaker which may then be moved; the business may be proceeded with, though opposed, after the moment of interruption; and Standing Order No. 41A (Deferred divisions) shall not apply.—(*Mr Rees-Mogg.*)

Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton):

With the permission of the House, motions 4 to 6 will be taken together. Before I call the Leader of the House to move the first motion and speak to all three motions, I confirm that the Speaker has selected amendment (a) to motion 5 in its corrected form. I will call amendment (a) to motion 6, if amendment (a) to motion 5 is agreed to. The selected amendments will be debated together with the three motions, and the questions necessary to dispose of the motions will be put at the end of the debate. Colleagues will see that a number of Members wish to speak, so I intend to impose a five-minute limit on Back-Bench contributions.

5.3 pm

The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr Jacob Rees-Mogg): I beg to move,

That this House reaffirms its commitment to the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS) and to tackling bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct on the part of anyone who is or was a member of the parliamentary community; accepts the recommendation in the report by Dame Laura Cox QC on The Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff that complaints against Members should be determined by an independent body; agrees with the proposal brought forward by the House of Commons Commission to implement this recommendation; accordingly agrees to the establishment of an independent panel of experts which shall operate in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency and natural justice; and expects all Members of this House to cooperate with the Panel's work and comply with its decisions.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this we shall consider the following:

Motion 5—Independent Expert Panel—

That the following Standing Orders, amendments to standing orders and amendments to the Code of Conduct be made:

A. Independent Expert Panel

(1) There shall be a Panel, to be known as the Independent Expert Panel for the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (the “ICGS”), whose members shall be appointed by the House in accordance with Standing Order (Appointment of Independent Expert Panel Members).

(2) The Panel shall consist of eight members, of whom a quorum shall be four.

(3) The functions of the Panel shall be:

- (a) to determine the appropriate sanction in ICGS cases referred to it by the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards;
- (b) to hear appeals against the decisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in respect of ICGS cases involving Members of this House;
- (c) to hear appeals against a sanction imposed under paragraph (a);
- (d) to report from time to time, through the Clerk of the House, on the operation of the ICGS as it relates to Members of this House

(4) The Panel may elect its own Chair.

(5) The responsibilities of the Chair shall include:

- (a) ensuring that the Panel and its sub-panels comply with the provisions of the relevant resolutions and standing orders of this House;
- (b) the appointment of sub-panels to consider individual cases;

- (c) co-ordinating the work of the Panel with that of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards;
 - (d) referring any report from a sub-panel which determines a sanction that can only be imposed by the House to the Clerk of the House who shall lay it upon the Table of the House;
 - (e) informing the parties concerned of the outcome of any other case reported to the Chair by a sub-panel and ensuring compliance as appropriate with its recommendations;
 - (f) establishing the procedure for an appeal against the findings or determination of a sub-panel in cases referred under (3)(a) above;
 - (g) reporting to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards any case of noncompliance under sub-paragraph (e) above by a Member of this House;
 - (h) ensuring publication of an Annual Report on the functioning of the Panel and its sub-panels by referring the report to the Clerk of the House for laying on the Table.
- (6) The Panel and any sub-panel shall have power
- (a) to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House;
 - (b) to order the attendance of any Member before it and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of the Commissioner, be laid before it;
 - (c) to appoint legal advisers, and to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Panel's order of reference.

B. Independent Expert Panel: Sub-panels

- (1) Cases referred to the Independent Expert Panel under Standing Order (Independent Expert Panel) shall be considered by a sub-panel appointed under paragraph (5)(b) of that order.
- (2) A sub-panel shall consist of three members of the Panel and shall have a quorum of three.
- (3) Sub-panels shall sit in private.
- (4) A sub-panel may request the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to conduct further investigations in respect of a case referred to it and may specify the matters to be covered in that investigation.
- (5) In respect of each case referred to it, a sub-panel shall make a report of its findings to the Chair of the Panel.
- (6) Where an appeal is made against a finding or determination of a sanction by a sub-panel, a new sub-panel shall be established to hear that appeal. No member shall be eligible to hear an appeal against the decision of a sub-panel on which they have served.

C. Appointment of Independent Expert Panel Members

- (1) Members of the Independent Expert Panel shall be appointed by a resolution of the House on a motion made under the provisions of this order and shall remain as members in accordance with the provisions of this order.
- (2) The period of appointment of each member shall be specified in the resolution of the House for appointment and shall not exceed six years. The appointment of a member is not terminated by any dissolution of Parliament.
- (3) No person who has once been a member may be appointed for a further term.
- (4) No person may be appointed as a member if that person is or has been a Member of this House or a Member of the House of Lords; and any person so appointed shall cease to be a member upon becoming a Member of this House or of the House of Lords.
- (5) No person may be appointed as a member unless that person has been selected on the basis of a fair and open competition.
- (6) A person appointed as a member may resign as a member by giving notice to the House of Commons Commission.
- (7) A person appointed as a member shall be dismissed from that position only following a resolution of the House, after the House of Commons Commission has reported that it is satisfied

that the person should cease to be a member; and any such report shall include a statement of the Commission's reasons for its conclusion.

(8) No motion may be made under the provisions of this order unless—

- (a) notice of the motion has been given at least two sitting days previously, and
- (b) the motion is made on behalf of the House of Commons Commission by a Member of the Commission.

(9) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on motions made under the provisions of this order not later than one hour after the commencement of those proceedings.

(10) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed.

D. Motions consequent on the ICGS

(1) A motion may be moved by a member of the House of Commons Commission to implement a sanction in respect of an individual ICGS case determined by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel.

(2) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on a motion under paragraph (1) of this order not later than one hour after the commencement of such proceedings.

(3) Business under this order may be proceeded with until any hour, though opposed.

Amendments to other Standing orders

(1) Standing Order No 149 (Committee on Standards)

Paragraph (1)(a): after "Standards", insert "except in relation to the conduct of individual cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme".

(2) Standing Order No 150 (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards)

Leave out paragraph (2)(f) and insert:

"(2) (f) to oversee investigations and make findings in cases against Members under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme; to refer such cases to the Independent Panel of Experts where a sanction beyond her powers is contemplated; and to assist the Panel and its sub-panels in its work."

Delete paragraph (4)(c).

(3) Standing Order No 41A (Deferred divisions) Paragraph (2)(d): at end of sub-paragraph 5, delete "and" and insert:

"(vi) paragraph 1 of Standing Order (Motions consequent on the ICGS); and".

Amendments to the Code of Conduct

In the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (HC (2017–19) 1882):

(1) in paragraph 19, at end add "and for the Independent Expert Panel acting in accordance with Standing Order (Independent Expert Panel) in relation to the determination of cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme."

(2) in paragraph 21; at end add "Failure to comply with a sanction imposed by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel shall be treated as a breach of the Code."

Motion 6—Matters Raised on Motions Consequent on the ICGS—

That, subject to the discretion of the Chair, the House shall apply the following rules in proceedings on matters raised by the Independent Expert Panel or its sub-panels:

- (a) The name of any complainant may not be referred to in any motion, debate or question.
- (b) Details of any investigation or specific matters considered by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel shall not be referred to in any motion, debate or question.
- (c) The findings and determination of sanctions of a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel may not be called into question.

Mr Rees-Mogg: This is a dreadful position for us to be in as a House. The behaviour of a small number of Members of Parliament over years and decades has disgraced and shamed our parliamentary democracy, of which I, and many hon. Members, are so proud. Our ancient right that we should look after our own affairs is to be sacrificed, because the importance of restoring the trust of the British people in our system makes that the right thing to do. How we treat each other matters at all times in all places, but particularly in Parliament. It matters wherever people work together, for everyone should be able to perform their roles in an atmosphere of courtesy and respect, and it most certainly matters in the Palace of Westminster.

There are about 13,000 passholders with access to the parliamentary estate. In recent years, we have been trying hard to create the kind of culture that prioritises having a safe working place where people are afforded respect and which enables them to speak out and be confident that they will be listened to. My predecessors, particularly my right hon. Friend the Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom), made an enormous contribution to that effort by achieving cross-party agreement to the establishment of an Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme. That we had to do so is an indication of how far some in this institution had failed and had not lived up to the standards required of them.

The ICGS has already been approached by a large number of people, receiving 201 calls and emails in the first quarter of this year alone from those who feel that they have faced bullying, harassment or sexual harassment. However, there are some complaints that have not yet come forward because of the concerns of the complainants that Members continue to play a role in the sanctions process. This is where we have the greatest challenge in restoring trust: not just between us and voters, but between us and those who work in this place.

The approach I am putting forward today is motivated by supporting those who need to make complaints and allows for the restoration, I hope, of our reputation. Since becoming Leader of the House, I have spoken to a number of complainants and potential complainants about the progress made so far. Every conversation I have had has left me profoundly moved and, in some cases, shocked and appalled by some of the things that have happened to people in this House, some of which seem to me to reach the threshold of criminal activity. This place, which ought to be the epitome of good behaviour, has been besmirched by that. I am therefore determined to do more to continue the momentum for sustained culture change that was begun in the previous Parliament.

I, of all people, cannot pretend that I like abandoning some of the ancient responsibilities and rights of Parliament, but it is our fault that we have to do this and so it is right to change. There is a problem of the power dynamic which can occur wherever those in a position of influence assume that they are able to act without consequences, so it is right that we seek to change the culture in order to challenge that assumption. In Westminster, we have introduced a behavioural code; established the “Valuing Everyone” training; replaced the Respect and Valuing Others policy with the ICGS; and extended the scheme to include historic allegations of some former members of the parliamentary community. The latter two steps

were the result of Dame Laura Cox’s recommendations in her report on the treatment of House staff. Her third recommendation, however, remains outstanding: that Members of Parliament should no longer be able to determine the sanctions imposed.

It is no coincidence that that outstanding recommendation is by some distance the most constitutionally challenging and the most significant, too. Under our current arrangements, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards has the power to determine cases and impose sanctions up to a certain level of severity. Until now, more serious cases, including suspension and expulsion from the House, have been for the Committee on Standards to determine. In February, the House of Commons Commission agreed its preferred option of those presented by the staff team on a means of changing that: that there be an independent chair and seven expert panel members, none of whom will be MPs. The panel should be empowered to determine ICGS cases, decide on sanctions, and hear appeals by either party against the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards’ conclusions. That proposal has been the subject of consultation over recent months and Dame Laura Cox herself was among those who supported that approach.

While I am taking steps to strengthen it further, I am supportive of the House of Commons Commission’s proposed solution overall. Placing decisions of this kind in the hands of an independent expert panel is a fundamental break with the past that reflects our continuing efforts to make Parliament a better place to work.

Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) (Con): I wholeheartedly welcome the momentum for having a system that is fair and transparent. The Leader of the House referred to the constitutional significance of the creation of this new independent body. Is he aware of an independent body in any part of the UK with such sweeping disciplinary powers over its members that is not justiciable? My concern is that if an accusation is made against Members, they will not have any recourse to a court of law, whereas if an accusation of bullying against a member of House staff or Members’ staff is upheld by the panel, they would have recourse to a court of law or an employment tribunal.

Mr Rees-Mogg: The question of parliamentary privilege applying to the ICGS is one that will have to be determined by a court, and it is not entirely clear whether they would be covered by the article 9 rights. The reason we have to have a final vote in this House is that there is no court outside Parliament that can question the proceedings in Parliament. That is at the heart of the constitutional dilemma that we have been facing. It is also why we are making this fundamental break with the past.

In allowing an independent body to take such action we are making a really important constitutional change. We are doing this—and we are right to do this—because of the way that some Members have behaved, and we have to stop that happening in the future. As Leader of the House, I am ashamed when people come to see me and tell me what they have suffered; I am appalled at the stories they tell me and shocked sometimes that they have not been to the police about them when they are so awful. That is why we have to have this change, which hits at the heart of our constitution. The House knows that I have an admiration and affection for our constitution that does not seek to change it lightly.

[Mr Rees-Mogg]

Let me come to the panel and the level of member that we expect. The panel's members must bring significant expertise to the process, and we will expect it to be led by somebody who has a standing equivalent to that of a High Court judge. It must also include knowledge of human resources, employment law, bullying and harassment cases and sexual harassment cases. In a serious case, three of the independent experts would consider the sanction in the light of the report and recommendation of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. A further three would act as an appeal panel if necessary.

In cases considered by the panel that propose sanctions requiring action by the House, the panel would report directly to the House. At that stage, a motion would be moved by a member of the House of Commons Commission to implement the sanction, and it is at this stage that we find ourselves on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, it is constitutionally proper that a decision of this magnitude—the expulsion or suspension of a Member—can only be taken by the House as a whole. It is removing, in effect, albeit temporarily, the democratic representation of tens of thousands of people, and we can only take away that democratic representation by a motion of this House. It does not seem right that a decision that could overturn the result of an election in a constituency could be taken by unelected individuals.

Sir Edward Leigh (Gainsborough) (Con): All bullying is horrible and goes against traditional good manners; we all accept that. I hope that the Leader of the House will emphasise the point that he just made: the fundamental difference between Members of Parliament and all other staff members is that we are elected by the people. We are responsible to the people, and the people must have the final say on whether we come here in the first place, when we leave and how we leave. That is very important. However distinguished an independent panel, only the people have the final say.

Mr Rees-Mogg: My right hon. Friend makes a crucial point: we are elected by the people, and we are answerable to them. That is why I support the principle that only the House of Commons holds the authority to make the decision to suspend or expel.

Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): The Leader of the House is making an excellent speech. To pick up on the previous intervention, we may be democratically elected, but we are also employers, and we have a duty of care to the people we employ. Does he agree that that is equally important?

Mr Rees-Mogg: It is of fundamental importance, and I say again that I have had people come to see me who have been treated in a way that makes my skin crawl. You cannot believe that senior people would have behaved to people subordinate to them in such a way in any workplace, let alone in the House of Commons, which ought to be a model of good behaviour. That is why we have to have the counterbalancing bit, but we cannot give MPs an opportunity to delve into the personal details of a case and try it effectively a second time. The other place offers a cautionary tale in this regard.

Having listened carefully to views expressed to me in recent days, I am proposing that we establish a convention that the Commission member moving the motion will

do so formally. This means the expectation will be that there will be no detailed debate, while maintaining the constitutional right to debate. In addition, I am asking the House explicitly to restrict what it is permissible to refer to during any further proceedings on severe ICGS cases in the Chamber.

To that end, motion 6, in my name, emulates the sub judice resolution, which the House carefully and successfully observes to avoid prejudicing any current criminal proceedings and which is enforced from the Chair. The motion sets out that the names of any complainants may not be referred to. The details of any investigations or specific matters considered by a sub-panel of the independent experts panel, in any motion, debate or question brought to the House, may not be referred to. Furthermore, the findings and determination of sanctions of a sub-panel may not be brought into question. The motion will ensure that any debate that does occur, which is something of a misnomer in this instance, is merely a short, factual exposition of the process, not the circumstances involved.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I seek some clarification because I have been looking through the amendments that have been tabled, and the right hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom) has tabled what I believe is an excellent amendment, which would address this issue. Is the intention to bring that forward?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Order. That amendment has not been selected.

Mr Rees-Mogg: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I turn to amendment (a), tabled by the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), who has been very helpful in this process and in the discussions I have had with him. I understand that some Members remain sceptical about the approach that I have set out and whether it is the right one, and this amendment seeks to remove entirely any possibility of debate in these circumstances. I am not entirely unsympathetic to this view, because our priority is to restore confidence in the ability of the House to achieve the standards that are reasonably expected of us and to ensure that people making complaints, some of whom, as I have said, have been treated in the most appalling way, feel that the system will not add greater pain to that which they have already suffered.

However, it is my view that it would be wrong for the Government to have tabled a motion that denied the House the opportunity to consider a matter of this gravity. It should be for the House, not for Ministers, to decide that they wish to curtail the ability of Members to conduct debate. The House can set its procedures as it wishes, but it would not be constitutionally right for the Executive to seek to limit free speech in this House.

I believe that this curtailment can be avoided and have set out how we can meet our constitutional requirements, while reassuring those wishing to access the ICGS who have not yet done so that they will have their confidential information preserved and protected. But if the House agrees to this amendment, it will willingly and knowingly have taken this approach, and in those circumstances, motion 6 will not be moved.

While the amendments tabled today differ in terms of the means, I think we are all entirely united in the ends, signalling our collective determination to make a break

with the past. Above all, this is a matter for the House, which this House must get right to show that we are genuinely committed to change.

Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD): The Leader of the House has taken us very deftly through the constitutional and procedural aspects, but there is a further test that I think the House needs to apply: whether the outcome of the decisions that we make will make it more or less likely that the people whom he has met and whose complaints he has heard will have confidence in the system to see it through to a conclusion. I suggest gently that that is why the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant) is a sensible one.

Mr Rees-Mogg: The right hon. Gentleman makes an important point. I believe that the proposal that the Government have put before the House balances the constitutional needs and the protection of the individual complainants, but I make no criticism of those who have come to a different conclusion. I absolutely share his concern not only that we must ensure that people are not discouraged, but that we must all—in our own way, when we can and when it comes to us—encourage people to use these systems, because they are there to protect people who are vulnerable. That is very important.

Meg Hillier (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op): The tone of this debate is in the right direction, but I really do have concerns about a bully pulpit being used in this Chamber. Even if people are not named, there will be gossip and innuendo about who is being referred to. I hate to refer to this, Madam Deputy Speaker, but a predecessor of Mr Speaker, in a published book, named Members of this House. If people of position and power do that, what confidence will people have if we still have an open debate in this Chamber, even if people cannot be named?

Mr Rees-Mogg: The hon. Lady makes a very fair point. I think the answer is that not having a debate in this Chamber at the end of the process, subject to very strict rules, does not mean that people may not write books saying things that they should not say or that they may not use other opportunities within parliamentary privilege. It is the question of constraining what can be done within parliamentary privilege that is essential, which is why I believe that something that is controlled and clearly set out in the rules is, on balance, preferable to trying to prevent this House from debating. However, I understand that others come to a different conclusion on what is a serious level of constitutional change because of past behaviour that has besmirched the name of this House and of politics and politicians generally.

Taken together, the provisions have the effect of acting decisively to uphold the spirit of our efforts towards culture change, while respecting the traditions and requirements of our parliamentary democracy. They aim to build the confidence of complainants by ensuring that these matters will be treated with the sensitivity and professionalism that they deserve. We simply have to give people who feel that they have been abused the confidence that they need to come forward. Adopting Dame Laura Cox's recommendation by establishing the independent panel of experts will help us to do that. I commend the motions to the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Before I call the shadow Leader of the House, I should tell hon. Members that although I said that I thought the time limit would be five minutes, it will probably be four minutes.

5.23 pm

Valerie Vaz (Walsall South) (Lab): I thank the Leader of the House for bringing the motions to the House today.

I want to start by thanking all the staff for their work on the independent complaints and grievance scheme, which is a testament to them all and to their hard work: they were working to tight deadlines in addition to their own work.

At the start of the process, it was about serious cases of sexual misconduct; it was then extended to bullying and harassment. We are now at the stage where there is a behaviour code. We have Valuing Others training in place, and I hope that all right hon. and hon. Members have signed up. I am not quite sure what is happening now, with covid—whether the training can be undertaken online or whether it is still going on.

I have mentioned numerous times at the meetings that we also need to have racial awareness training. Now that the Black Lives Matter movement is becoming centre-stage, I think that it should be an important addition to that training. The Leader of the Opposition has instructed everybody from the shadow Cabinet to undertake unconscious bias training. He has given us a deadline to do that, and the same should apply to the House.

Motion 4 confirms our commitment to the ICGS. It is worth hon. Members reading the ICGS annual report, which covers its first year and ends in June 2019. It was undertaken by Lee Bridges, the senior responsible owner. He and his staff have done a fantastic amount of work to ensure that the scheme is in place, and we owe them a great debt. The next report is due in October. Alison Stanley undertook a six-month review, and she has come up with recommendations. It would be helpful if the Leader of the House could set them out in a grid and tell us when Ms Stanley is likely to conduct the 18-month review, which I think is due in June.

I am concerned about the changes to the helplines, because I notice on the intranet that the two helplines have merged. The view when they were set up was that particularly for those who had experienced sexual misconduct, a specialist was required in the first instance so that the first person they spoke to could deal with them and they did not have to tell their story over and over again. I hope that that has not changed.

The other motions deal with setting up the panels, and that is about the end of the process. As the Leader of the House has said, and as we have discussed, the panels should have a level of judicial experience. They will set their own rules and processes, and it is important that transparency applies and everyone knows the rules.

Alberto Costa: The right hon. Lady and I have spoken about this over the last few months and years. As a lawyer, does she share my concern about the fact that, as she just said, the panel will make its own rules on disclosure of evidence? None of these procedures will be subject to review or oversight by a court of law. Why are MPs being denied recourse to the law in the event that they are subject to a complaint?

Valerie Vaz: The hon. Gentleman and I have had this discussion. The House can, by resolution, decide how it wants to conduct its business, and the House has decided, for the reasons that the Leader of the House has set out, that this is extremely urgent. We are trying to say that if the process is transparent and fair, and if the rules of natural justice apply from the start to the end of the process, there should be confidence in it. Let me explain what that means. Both parties to the dispute should be heard, the hearing should be a fair one and the Human Rights Act should be engaged. The point is that the panel at the end has the expertise to look at that. The Leader of the House is right to say that this is a big moment for the House because it is letting go of a process, but that can be done within our constitutional settlement.

I encourage hon. Members to support the amendment that has been selected, in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant). I understand that on motion 6, the Leader of the House tried to come to a compromise. I thank him for trying to ensure that the name of the complainant and the details and findings of the investigation cannot be called into question, but I do not think that that will give those who use the system confidence that their case will be heard confidentially. I will come on to that.

Max Freedman, the chair of Unite, representing staff of MPs, and Georgine Kester, from the Members' and Peers' Staff Association—both have vast experience of dealing with cases and with other people in the community—have said that there should be no debate. They, too, have been at the meetings of the ICGS, and they have had tremendous input over the years. I thank them for their work. I have been, as has the Leader of the House, contacted by a complainant in what I would describe as a completely horrific case. The complainant said:

“I do not want this serious case”—

I will not say what it is, but it is very serious—

“being debated...being named...being called a liar or slandered”.

If complainants feel that that will happen if the report is debated, they will not come forward, because they will be too scared. There cannot and must not be a re-hearing of the case, nor should complainants be identified in any way by association when a report is discussed. This is a confidential process from the start until the end. Having no debate would mean that that confidential process is preserved.

I ask hon. Members to put themselves in the shoes of the complainant: what would they expect of the process? This way, we can give a voice to the voiceless and those voices can be heard. The House has made huge attempts to change the culture, starting with the respect policy. There have been various discussions about how the bars operate and about changing the drinking culture. I hope we will look at unconscious bias and racism and awareness training.

Everyone who works here knows how important our work is for our country. We have seen the House rise to the challenge of a pandemic and make sure that democracy works; I know that the whole parliamentary community will rise to the challenge of working together in mutual respect.

5.31 pm

Sir Bernard Jenkin (Harwich and North Essex) (Con): I support the motions tabled by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, but I have also added my name to the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), who is Chair of the Committee on Standards, on which I serve. The amendment would mean that the House would ratify the decisions of the ICGS independent expert panel without debate.

Evidence of the mistreatment of the staff of this House, of right hon. and hon. Members' staff and even of Members of the House themselves was for far too long managed out of public view to avoid proper scrutiny, meaning that those responsible were never held to account. That is why the ICGS must be as it describes itself: independent. Unless we understand how we MPs have forfeited the trust of victims, we will fail to learn the lessons of our past and fail to honour our obligation to put matters right.

Sir Edward Leigh: So my hon. Friend thinks it is all right to pass control of who is here from the people—from this House; this House is responsible to the people—to an independent body. He thinks that is okay, does he?

Sir Bernard Jenkin: To expel or even just suspend an MP voted in by their electors is a serious matter. It is perfectly sensible for my right hon. Friend to test the opinion of the House on whether the House should debate a decision by the IEP, but the delegation of such decisions has no bearing on our sovereignty, whether we debate the matter or not. By voting for the amendment we will not only demonstrate our commitment to the ICGS. By deliberating and then deciding on these matters, we make sure that there can be no legitimate complaint about there being no debate when at some future date we are asked to approve the IEP decisions.

I do, however, wish to put down a caveat. If the wrong kind of panel is appointed, this delegation of a very serious constitutional responsibility to unelected people will not last. The IEP must inspire the trust and confidence of the House as well as of staff and the public. The legitimacy of such decisions taken by such a panel will be the issue. As my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said, it needs to be chaired by the equivalent of a High Court judge.

I would say that it should be a retired senior judge who chairs this panel, supported by relevant people of similar standing with juridical experience of the assessing and weighing of evidence and of interpreting the meaning of rules. The IEP should itself be sufficiently judicial in character to provide the same assurance as a proper court. Its decisions need to be as unimpeachable as the High Court would be. If this works well, there is much that the Standards Committee might learn from the ICGS about how to improve the House of Commons code of conduct, which we still have under review.

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House talked about changing the culture. That is something that the House of Commons code has never really succeeded in doing. What do we mean by culture? We mean changing people's attitudes and changing their behaviour, and that is a very personal and difficult thing to discuss. It is about not just talking about that, but approving of the good behaviours and the good attitudes and calling out

the bad long before people have actually broken rules. I suggest that promoted alongside that is a positive conversation as well as a holding to account. It is not just about the enforcement of rules. Our challenge on the Standards Committee is to reform the House of Commons code so that it begins also to promote a positive change in attitudes and behaviour.

5.35 pm

Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP): It is a real pleasure to speak in this debate. I have had the great privilege of having served in all the various ICGS working groups since their inception, and it is particularly good to be here today to make a few remarks on behalf of the House of Commons Commission on what hopefully will be the conclusion and the implementation of all the recommendations that have been made to the ICGS.

As I look around the Chamber today, I can see several colleagues who have served on the various incarnations of the working group, and I pay tribute to them for their contribution and dedication. In particular, I pay tribute to the right hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom), whose vision, leadership and guidance at the inception of all this helped to guide us through this process, so I thank her for her contribution today.

Today, we are here to bring the ICGS in line with the third recommendation of Dame Laura Cox. It is worth briefly reminding ourselves of what Dame Laura Cox actually said about this House in her most damning report and the litany of issues that she uncovered. She talked of an

“excessively hierarchical, ‘command and control’ and deferential culture, which has no place in any organisation in the 21st century.”

That is what Dame Laura said.

It is two years since Dame Laura Cox presented her report to the House. It was in October 2018 that the Commission overwhelmingly agreed to all three of her recommendations. We have heard that the first two have been implemented. One was, of course, the behaviour code, which has been put in place. The second was looking at historical cases, and today we are considering the third recommendation. Let us just remind ourselves what that is. It is to put in place the mechanism whereby complaints of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment brought by House staff against Members of Parliament would be an entirely independent process in which Members of Parliament would play no part. For this to happen, the Commission set up a working group to put together how we should respond to this and to bring this House in line with that recommendation. That was met with the Commission's unanimous agreement to establish the independent expert panel to replace the Committee on Standards in considering cases brought under the ICGS.

At our last meeting of the Commission, we confirmed our support for the implementation of the independent expert panel, and we asked for this matter to be brought before the House. The new panel will determine sanction in cases where the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards does not have the power to invoke sanctions. As we have heard, this could include the suspension or expulsion of a Member of Parliament. These serious cases will be referred to the panel and will be considered

by a sub-panel of three independent experts, supported by specialist advice. When they have been decided and concluded, a member of the House of Commons Commission, probably me, will move a motion to allow the House to implement the sanction determined by the IEP. Lastly, Madam Deputy Speaker, you will know that the Commission agreed that the House would be asked to consider whether there should be a time-limited debate in these circumstances, and that is where we are today, with the motions in the name of the Leader of the House.

The motions accurately reflect the considerations of the House of Commons Commission, and its members are pretty much in line and in step with what Dame Laura Cox expects in the implementation of her third recommendation. That is, of course, until we get to paragraph D(1) in motion 5, where the Leader of the House makes that provision for the debate. If it is helpful to the House, what the Commission decided in our consideration of this issue was that we would let the House decide whether it wanted a debate. I think the expectation was that a couple of motions would be brought by the Leader of the House, which would give us flexibility in our options. Instead, we have this one determination of the Leader of the House, which is that we are now invited to a yes or no. I do not think that I am giving away any secrets, Madam Deputy Speaker, when I say that the Commission was almost split down the middle when we were considering this matter, and that was why we felt it was appropriate that the House should decide and determine this.

My view as a Member of the House who has been involved in the ICGS for the past two and a half years is that what the Leader of the House suggests in paragraph D(1) breaks practically every principle and the whole spirit of the third Cox recommendation. It is little wonder that there is profound disappointment among House staff today. Such are the concerns that Dame Laura herself has felt the need to respond to some of the representations from staff. She notes the fears that a debate could result in a complainant's confidentiality being compromised and speaks of

“the chilling effect that this will undoubtedly have on complainants reporting cases of harassment or bullying”.

There are real concerns that MPs will debate the findings of an independent judgment on one of their colleagues while protected by privilege, with staff having no equivalent platform. That cannot be right.

The Leader of the House seeks to reassure us with motion 6, but we cannot escape the overwhelming conclusion that Members and complainants could be identified inadvertently in a debate. Colleagues and friends of somebody who has been complained against will feel the temptation to get up there and defend them.

Mr Carmichael: The hon. Gentleman is drilling down into an important part of the issue, which is about procedural fairness. It goes to the point raised by the right hon. Member for Gainsborough (Sir Edward Leigh). Once we got into a debate, it is inevitable that we would get into the merits of the issue; how, procedurally, could we expect not to?

Pete Wishart: I think that concern has been expressed by the House staff after looking at the motions presented by the Leader of the House today.

[Pete Wishart]

As was mentioned by the Leader of the House and shadow Leader of the House, the House should make the ultimate determination about the expulsion or suspension of a Member of Parliament. That is right, but it should not be done through a debate. That is why I will be supporting the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), and I really hope that the rest of the House will too.

It is disappointing that this little issue has presented itself after we have come all this way with full agreement, full consensus and the involvement of the House staff, and are just at the point of doing this. I say to the House: stick with the principles of Laura Cox and support the amendment this evening.

5.42 pm

Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con): It was on 19 July 2018 that we introduced the ICGS to this House, and I said:

“Our ultimate ambition is for a culture where people can work and visit Parliament and take part in our democracy free from unacceptable behaviour and free from bullying or harassment and where individuals are free to thrive and make a difference.”—[*Official Report*, 19 July 2018; Vol. 645, c. 633.]

That must apply to everyone who works in this place—from cooks to Clerks, from Members’ staff to security staff, and from cleaners to Members of Parliament. I pay tribute to so many people in this place, from cross-party Members to House staff to Members’ staff, who supported that huge piece of work, and to the many brave victims who came forward to give their story and tell their side.

When we established the ICGS, the cross-party team that worked on the Committee sought to uphold two key principles: first, that confidentiality for the victim must be at the heart of any successful complaints procedure; and secondly, the democratic convention whereby elected Members of Parliament should not be removed by unelected institutions. I had hoped that my amendment would be selected today, because it would have addressed those two red lines.

First, it would have protected the confidentiality of victims. It would have ruled out any debate in the Chamber that, notwithstanding the constraints included by the Leader of the House, will result in a complainant feeling re-victimised—therefore inevitably undermining confidence in the complaints procedure itself. Staff and trade union side representatives have already publicised their concerns very clearly.

Secondly, my amendment would have sought to preserve the key democratic principle that an elected person should not be removed from office by an unelected person. To ensure that the democratic convention was adhered to, under my amendment we would have had—instead of a debate in the Chamber—a constrained debate on process, not on the case itself, in the Committee on Standards. That would have happened within five sitting days of the independent expert panel’s findings, and the final recommendations, which could not go against the findings of the IEP, could have been for expulsion or suspension up to and including invoking the Recall of MPs Act 2015. That is something that will not be available to the independent panel on its own if it does not go through the Committee on Standards.

That conclusion of the Standards Committee would then have been put to the House for a vote without any further debate.

I am deeply disappointed that my amendment, which seeks to uphold the two fundamental principles behind the ICGS, has not been allowed for debate and a vote today. For my own part, I will have to vote for the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), which would not allow a debate in this Chamber, because we cannot not stand by those victims. I feel that we will rue the day that we enable Members of Parliament in this way. In the last period of office, we had cases where members should have invoked recall and not been expelled, and that will not be possible in future.

Several hon. Members rose—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Order. After the next speaker, I shall introduce a time limit of three minutes in order to try to get as many people in as possible.

5.45 pm

Chris Bryant (Rhondda) (Lab): That normally happens before I speak, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is a delight to follow the right hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom), because she has done so much work on this. Everybody who works in this place surely has a right to know that this is a safe workplace. That is a fundamental principle. A second fundamental principle is that everybody has a right to a fair hearing. For complainants, that must mean that they have confidence in the system and that it is not loaded in one direction against them. Of course, we know that in recent years many complainants have felt that they have not had the chance of a fair hearing, and that is why the work we are doing is so important. I would also say, however, that MPs have a right to a fair hearing. That is why it is so important, as the hon. Member for Harwich and North Essex (Sir Bernard Jenkin), who sits on the Standards Committee, said, that a full, fair, judicial or semi-judicial process is engaged in and that MPs have the right to due process and independent adjudication, the right of appeal and the right to a fair hearing.

Joanna Cherry (Edinburgh South West) (SNP): I thank the hon. Gentleman for tabling his amendment, which I shall be supporting. On the point about due process, politics can be a dirty business, and sometimes complaints that turn out to be unfounded can be deployed against politicians for political reasons. Is he satisfied that our new independent process will be robust enough to deal with those sorts of complaints fairly?

Chris Bryant: I think it will, but that will obviously depend on the quality of the people we appoint to it. I very much hope not only that the House will go through a thorough process to ensure that we get good people, but that good people around the country will seriously consider taking on this role, because it will probably be a fairly thankless task. We need to ensure that we have the right people.

I warmly commend the Leader of the House for bringing forward his motions today and for the way he has approached today’s debate and the discussions that have taken place over recent days. I should say, as Chair

of the Standards Committee, that I have deliberately not spoken to any complainants, because it is perfectly possible that something might be coming to my Committee, and it would have been inappropriate for me to have done so. I have only one issue with the Leader of the House, which is about the one-hour debate, as he knows—hence the amendment that I have tabled. His motion 6 is effectively a sort of self-denying ordinance. It sort of says, “There are lots of things that you will not be able to address in the debate”, and I commend him for tabling it, but in the end you cannot be half-chaste. It is a bit like when you decide to give up chocolate for Lent. You cannot decide on Ash Wednesday to stock the fridge with chocolate, because that shows that you have not really decided that you are going to give up chocolate for Lent.

The point about a self-denying ordinance is that it has to be absolute, and in this case we have to declare an absolute self-denying ordinance in relation to debating a decision that has already been reached by an independent body, that has an appellate process within it, where all the evidence has been considered, where both sides of the argument have an equal opportunity to put their case, and where both sides have equal forces. That is not the case in a debate in the House of Commons, and many complainants would be frightened that they would be re-victimised—to use the word that was just used by the former Leader of the House, the right hon. Member for South Northamptonshire—and that they would be put through a second ordeal. Even words that the Speaker might allow, because they did not understand that it was a subtle way of getting a dig in, could be terribly, terribly wounding to an individual who had made a complaint. It is terribly easy in this small world to reveal what is meant to be confidential.

Meg Hillier: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Chris Bryant: I will not, if she does not mind, because I have very little time and I know others want to speak.

It is important that there is equality of forces when it comes to a process such as this, and I say to those who worry that non-elected people will be making decisions about whether somebody can be suspended or expelled from the House that that is already true. It is already true, for instance, of an election court, a criminal court that decides to give somebody a sentence of more than 12 months and, I think, a bankruptcy court.

I fully understand that we are making a very significant change to our constitutional process, but my amendment would simply mean that the motions would be taken forthwith. In 1910, Asquith was absolutely blind drunk at the Dispatch Box and nobody ever knew about it. Churchill wrote home to his wife Clemmie that it was “only the persistent freemasonry of the House of Commons”

that meant it never became a scandal. That is the fear that many complainants would have. We must not have a debate.

5.51 pm

Jeremy Wright (Kenilworth and Southam) (Con): It is a great pleasure to follow my right hon. Friend the Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom), who deserves huge credit for moving this agenda on in

the way it should have been, and the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), to whose amendment I will return.

First, I declare an interest as a member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Although the Committee takes no collective view on the specific questions put in the motions before us, it undoubtedly welcomes the determination of complaints against Members of this House, particularly serious ones, by a body that is wholly independent of it. I have spoken to my Committee colleague, the right hon. Member for Derby South (Margaret Beckett), who cannot participate in this debate, and I know that she shares the views I am about to express.

I support the establishment of the independent expert panel and its determination of these cases, but it is right, as the Leader of the House said, that as a matter of constitutional principle the act of suspending or expelling a Member of this House can be done only by the House itself. There must therefore be a vote on the use of the most severe sanctions.

I am not, however, persuaded that there should be even the prospect of a debate about the sanctions, and I therefore declare my second interest as a former practitioner in the criminal courts, where I took part in a large number of sentencing hearings, which is in effect what we are discussing here. The panel would return a verdict, and we as the House of Commons would consider whether to impose the penalty that the panel had recommended.

Alberto Costa: My right hon. and learned Friend uses an excellent example, but in that example he must also accept that there is an appellate structure, which is being denied to MPs and only MPs in this proposal.

Jeremy Wright: I absolutely understand the point that my hon. Friend is making, which he has made before in this debate. I only say to him that he may find less comfort in his argument than he thinks, because as a distinguished lawyer he will know that the courts are extremely reluctant to involve themselves in the processes and penalties imposed by this place. It may be that the courts will not be as much help to him as he thinks.

I was going to go on to say that sentencing hearings can be effective and fair only if we have two sets of information: first, the mitigation available to the defendant, but secondly, information about the seriousness of the offence. More recently, the criminal courts have access to a third set of information, which is the effect of the offence upon the victim.

For good and sensible reasons, the Government are seeking in motion 6 to exclude from the debates we are considering not just the name of the complainant, but also

“Details of any investigation or specific matters considered” by the panel. That is doubtless correct, but it would make it extremely difficult to assess the seriousness of the offence, and we would—again, quite properly—have no information at all on the effect of the offence on the victim.

I do not then see how we could do justice to what would effectively be a sentencing process in such a debate, and I do not therefore see what good having such a debate would do. It would certainly give rise to

[Jeremy Wright]

the risks that others in this debate have already set out, without deriving significant benefit. For that reason, I will be supporting the amendment of the hon. Member for Rhondda.

Several hon. Members *rose*—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I am introducing a time limit of two minutes.

5.54 pm

Jess Phillips (Birmingham, Yardley) (Lab): Worry not, Madam Deputy Speaker; I can say it in two minutes.

I very much welcome the Leader of the House's comments. I do not think he expected at the beginning of his career that he would be changing the constitution quite so much; it must be a tiny bit painful. I simply want to say that a debate in the House, even with the constraints that the right hon. Gentleman has attempted to introduce, will stop people coming forward. That is what the victims, the staff and Dame Laura Cox are saying. It will simply stop people feeling confident.

As a slight rebuttal to the interveners in this debate, it is a delight to see people so concerned about MPs having employment law, but I do not remember the same voices speaking up for maternity leave, for example. In this instance, they are right there with us on the employment law issue.

On the idea that our constituents' rights would be taken away, because they have voted for us, we are talking about the most severe cases, which will have gone through a process. Does any hon. Member honestly think that their constituents would complain if this House took action on something that was abhorrent enough to mean expulsion? Good luck selling that on the doorstep—"I've been found completely wanting, but you voted for me so you should carry on getting your say." It is nonsense, and it is not what our constituents are calling for. No constituent will have been in touch with anyone in this House to say, "Do you know what? I really want my right to keep my slightly wrong 'un MP in place"—not a single one. I will be supporting my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant) because that is what the victims have asked me to do.

5.56 pm

Laura Farris (Newbury) (Con): I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom) on the work that she has done and I warmly welcome the Leader of the House's remarks. I want to talk briefly about why I will be supporting the amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant). I am an employment law barrister, and I have previously been instructed by the House of Commons Commission in a number of employment disputes, most recently last year. None involved current elected Members of this House. I support the amendment because, as a matter of employment law, any process that invites Members to speak up for colleagues against a background of party allegiance and personal loyalties is fundamentally problematic.

That is not just a theoretical objection: the debate on Lord Lester that took place in the House of Lords in 2018 prompted 74 members of staff employed in the House

of Lords to write a letter of complaint the following week. The next month, that letter was reviewed by the Committee for Privileges and Conduct. I believe that this may answer the point made by the Leader of the House, who said that any such debate should be a short, factual exposition, dealing purely with process. The Committee's conclusion was that the debate had

"inappropriately strayed beyond points about the process and into implied and explicit criticisms of the complainant."

It said that the word

"reputation" was invoked (positively) 15 times to describe Lord Lester. It was not invoked once to describe the complainant."

The debate led Naomi Ellenbogen, who undertook the independent inquiry into bullying and harassment in the Lords, to conclude in paragraph 181 of her report:

"On numerous occasions, I was told that any earlier belief that a complaint...might be worth pursuing had vanished...ultimately powerful members would protect their powerful friends, at the expense of the complainant, whose public humiliation would be immortalised in Hansard. Making a complaint was not only pointless; it was devastating".

5.58 pm

Meg Hillier (Hackney South and Shoreditch) (Lab/Co-op): I commend the hon. Member for Newbury (Laura Farris) for that insightful contribution.

We are in a different place from where the constitution set us up to be. There is a line that, unfortunately, Members have crossed and transgressed in the past. That means that, if we have to clip the wings of our constitutional position, so be it. I listened very carefully to the right hon. Member for South Northamptonshire (Andrea Leadsom), and it is with some pain that I have come to that position too, but we need to consider the victims. I have had the privilege of being contacted by a number of victims. Some have done so face to face, but some have emailed me because their outlet was to leave this place, because that was the easiest thing to do. The impact on their lives has been immense.

We need to stand up and make this place transparent, proper and modern in the way we employ people and the way we treat people, and that means that we all individually need to step up. I reiterate that it is important we actually stem this before it gets to the point of the independent panel. I would advocate again that we have properly paid, properly trained and properly accredited office managers or heads of office—whatever we want to call them—who call us out on the slightest transgression. Staff would have the confidence to go to them so that Members who are learning to manage staff, often for the first time, and who have often come from very different working environments, learn what is proper in this place.

If we cannot set the example of good employment practice and protection for people who call it out here, and good management—let us face it, sometimes staff may complain because they are asked to do something that they do not want to do, and vice versa; it is not always clear cut—what does it say? It is important that we manage our staff well, that we are trained to do that and that we have the mechanisms in place.

This is part of it, but it is only the beginning. I will of course be backing amendment (a) tabled by my hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Chris Bryant), because we cannot have a debate, as I mentioned in my intervention,

in which we refer to such things. For anyone who was wavering, I think the hon. Member for Newbury has nailed it.

6 pm

Wendy Chamberlain (North East Fife) (LD): As a new MP with a background in human resources, I would echo some of the comments made by the hon. Member for Hackney South and Shoreditch (Meg Hillier). I have often thought about the job description of an MP and what it looks like—the behaviour, knowledge and skills required to carry out this role effectively—even though our recruitment process is fairly unique. For me, they fall into three broad areas: the skills to be a candidate in order to be elected in the first place; the skills to be an MP in terms of a role in this place and our engagement with constituents; and, finally—I would argue that this is both the most important and the most overlooked—the skills as a people manager.

Although I am incredibly grateful for the support I received at the time of my election, the reality is that Members recruit staff themselves and, as the email inbox quickly fills up and this place sits, the process must be completed as quickly as possible. I would argue that this is not necessarily the right environment for the best recruitment decisions to take place. The fact is that, too often, staff working either here or in our constituencies are let down. Too often, Parliament is not a good or even, appallingly, a safe place to work for our staff. Scenarios presented during the commendable Valuing Everyone training that all MPs should complete seem, sadly, to be all too common.

Dame Laura Cox's inquiry was a vital step forward, which was welcomed by many of the staff members I have spoken to, and I fully agree with the report's recommendations. Fundamentally, having a debate on the Floor of the House on the rare occasions when a finding of suspension or expulsion is made is grounded in our roles as democratic representatives in the traditions of this place, but that is not the point of the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme. The point of the scheme is effectively to execute our responsibilities as employers. What business would allow its powerful executive to debate a complaint against one of their own without any right of reply? What business would allow staff members—

6.2 pm

One hour having elapsed since the commencement of proceedings on the motion, the Deputy Speaker put the Question (Order, this day).

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House reaffirms its commitment to the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS) and to tackling bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct on the part of anyone who is or was a member of the parliamentary community; accepts the recommendation in the report by Dame Laura Cox QC on The Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff that complaints against Members should be determined by an independent body; agrees with the proposal brought forward by the House of Commons Commission to implement this recommendation; accordingly agrees to the establishment of an independent panel of experts which shall operate in accordance with the principles of fairness, transparency and natural justice; and expects all Members of this House to cooperate with the Panel's work and comply with its decisions.

The Deputy Speaker then put the Questions necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that time (Order, this day).

INDEPENDENT EXPERT PANEL

Motion made, and Question proposed,

That the following Standing Orders, amendments to standing orders and amendments to the Code of Conduct be made:

A. Independent Expert Panel

(1) There shall be a Panel, to be known as the Independent Expert Panel for the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (the "ICGS"), whose members shall be appointed by the House in accordance with Standing Order (Appointment of Independent Expert Panel Members).

(2) The Panel shall consist of eight members, of whom a quorum shall be four.

(3) The functions of the Panel shall be:

- (a) to determine the appropriate sanction in ICGS cases referred to it by the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards;
- (b) to hear appeals against the decisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in respect of ICGS cases involving Members of this House;
- (c) to hear appeals against a sanction imposed under paragraph (a);
- (d) to report from time to time, through the Clerk of the House, on the operation of the ICGS as it relates to Members of this House

(4) The Panel may elect its own Chair.

(5) The responsibilities of the Chair shall include:

- (a) ensuring that the Panel and its sub-panels comply with the provisions of the relevant resolutions and standing orders of this House;
- (b) the appointment of sub-panels to consider individual cases;
- (c) co-ordinating the work of the Panel with that of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards;
- (d) referring any report from a sub-panel which determines a sanction that can only be imposed by the House to the Clerk of the House who shall lay it upon the Table of the House;
- (e) informing the parties concerned of the outcome of any other case reported to the Chair by a sub-panel and ensuring compliance as appropriate with its recommendations;
- (f) establishing the procedure for an appeal against the findings or determination of a sub-panel in cases referred under (3)(a) above;
- (g) reporting to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards any case of noncompliance under sub-paragraph (e) above by a Member of this House;
- (h) ensuring publication of an Annual Report on the functioning of the Panel and its sub-panels by referring the report to the Clerk of the House for laying on the Table.

(6) The Panel and any sub-panel shall have power

- (a) to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House;
- (b) to order the attendance of any Member before it and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of the Commissioner, be laid before it;
- (c) to appoint legal advisers, and to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Panel's order of reference.

B. Independent Expert Panel: Sub-panels

(1) Cases referred to the Independent Expert Panel under Standing Order (Independent Expert Panel) shall be considered by a sub-panel appointed under paragraph (5)(b) of that order.

(2) A sub-panel shall consist of three members of the Panel and shall have a quorum of three.

(3) Sub-panels shall sit in private.

(4) A sub-panel may request the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to conduct further investigations in respect of a case referred to it and may specify the matters to be covered in that investigation.

(5) In respect of each case referred to it, a sub-panel shall make a report of its findings to the Chair of the Panel.

(6) Where an appeal is made against a finding or determination of a sanction by a sub-panel, a new sub-panel shall be established to hear that appeal. No member shall be eligible to hear an appeal against the decision of a sub-panel on which they have served.

C. Appointment of Independent Expert Panel Members

(1) Members of the Independent Expert Panel shall be appointed by a resolution of the House on a motion made under the provisions of this order and shall remain as members in accordance with the provisions of this order.

(2) The period of appointment of each member shall be specified in the resolution of the House for appointment and shall not exceed six years. The appointment of a member is not terminated by any dissolution of Parliament.

(3) No person who has once been a member may be appointed for a further term.

(4) No person may be appointed as a member if that person is or has been a Member of this House or a Member of the House of Lords; and any person so appointed shall cease to be a member upon becoming a Member of this House or of the House of Lords.

(5) No person may be appointed as a member unless that person has been selected on the basis of a fair and open competition.

(6) A person appointed as a member may resign as a member by giving notice to the House of Commons Commission.

(7) A person appointed as a member shall be dismissed from that position only following a resolution of the House, after the House of Commons Commission has reported that it is satisfied that the person should cease to be a member; and any such report shall include a statement of the Commission's reasons for its conclusion.

(8) No motion may be made under the provisions of this order unless—

(a) notice of the motion has been given at least two sitting days previously, and

(b) the motion is made on behalf of the House of Commons Commission by a Member of the Commission.

(9) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on motions made under the provisions of this order not later than one hour after the commencement of those proceedings.

(10) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed.

D. Motions consequent on the ICGS

(1) A motion may be moved by a member of the House of Commons Commission to implement a sanction in respect of an individual ICGS case determined by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel.

(2) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on a motion under paragraph (1) of this order not later than one hour after the commencement of such proceedings.

(3) Business under this order may be proceeded with until any hour, though opposed.

Amendments to other Standing orders

(1) Standing Order No 149 (Committee on Standards)

Paragraph (1)(a): after “Standards”, insert “except in relation to the conduct of individual cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme”.

(2) Standing Order No 150 (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards)

Leave out paragraph (2)(f) and insert:

“(2) (f) to oversee investigations and make findings in cases against Members under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme; to refer such cases to the Independent Panel of Experts where a sanction beyond her powers is contemplated; and to assist the Panel and its sub-panels in its work.”.

Delete paragraph (4)(c).

(3) Standing Order No 41A (Deferred divisions) Paragraph (2)(d): at end of sub-paragraph 5, delete “and” and insert:

“(vi) paragraph 1 of Standing Order (Motions consequent on the ICGS); and”.

Amendments to the Code of Conduct

In the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (HC (2017–19) 1882):

(1) in paragraph 19, at end add “and for the Independent Expert Panel acting in accordance with Standing Order (Independent Expert Panel) in relation to the determination of cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme.”.

(2) in paragraph 21; at end add “Failure to comply with a sanction imposed by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel shall be treated as a breach of the Code.”.—(*Mr Rees-Mogg.*)

Amendment proposed to motion 5: (a) in section D, paragraph (2), leave out

“not later than one hour after the commencement of such proceedings.”

and add “forthwith.”.—(*Chris Bryant.*)

Question put, That the amendment be made.

The House proceeded to a Division.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I ask all hon. Members other than Front Benchers and Tellers to leave the Chamber by the doors behind me. Members should join the queue to vote in Westminster Hall. To vote, Members should enter the Lobby and swipe their pass on one of the pass readers.

The House having divided: Ayes 243, Noes 238.

Division No. 58]

[6.3 pm

AYES

Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Antoniazzi, Tonia
Ashworth, Jonathan
Baillie, Siobhan
Baldwin, Harriett
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Begum, Apsana
Bell, Aaron
Betts, Mr Clive
Black, Mhairi
Blackford, rh Ian
Blackman, Kirsty
Blake, Olivia
Bonnar, Steven
Brabin, Tracy
Bradley, Ben
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Bryant, Chris
Butler, Rob
Byrne, Ian

Cadbury, Ruth
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Cates, Miriam
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Charalambous, Bambos
Cherry, Joanna
Clark, Feryal
Colburn, Elliot
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, Rosie
Cooper, rh Yvette
Coutinho, Claire
Cowan, Ronnie
Coyle, Neil
Crawley, Angela
Creasy, Stella
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Davey, rh Sir Edward
David, Wayne
Davies, Dr James
Davies-Jones, Alex
Day, Martyn

Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Doogan, Dave
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dromey, Jack
 Duffield, Rosie
 Edwards, Ruth
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fell, Simon
 Fellows, Marion
 Ferrier, Margaret
 Fletcher, Colleen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibson, Patricia
 Gideon, Jo
 Gill, Preet Kaur
 Glindon, Mary
 Grady, Patrick
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Peter
 Gray, Neil
 Green, Kate
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Nia
 Griffiths, Kate
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Haigh, Louise
 Hamilton, Fabian
 Hanna, Claire
 Hanvey, Neale
 Hardy, Emma
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hendrick, Sir Mark
 Hendry, Drew
 Hill, Mike
 Hillier, Meg
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hollern, Kate
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Hopkins, Rachel
 Hosie, Stewart
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Jardine, Christine
 Jarvis, Dan
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Johnson, Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Jones, Sarah
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keeley, Barbara
 Khan, Afzal
 Kyle, Peter
 Lake, Ben
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Law, Chris
 Leadsom, rh Andrea
 Lewell-Buck, Mrs Emma
 Lewis, Clive
 Linden, David
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Loughton, Tim
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 Madders, Justin
 Mahmood, Shabana
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 Matheson, Christian
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mc Nally, John
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonald, Stewart Malcolm
 McDonald, Stuart C.
 McDonnell, rh John
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Merriman, Huw
 Miller, rh Mrs Maria
 Mishra, Navendu
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Monaghan, Carol
 Moran, Layla
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Mundell, rh David
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nici, Lia
 Nicolson, John
 Norris, Alex
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Olney, Sarah
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Oswald, Kirsten
 Owen, Sarah
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillips, Jess
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Pollard, Luke
 Powell, Lucy
 Qureshi, Yasmin
 Rees, Christina
 Reeves, Ellie
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd

Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Sheppard, Tommy
 Simmonds, David
 Slaughter, Andy
 Smith, Alyn
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Nick
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Tarry, Sam
 Thewliss, Alison
 Thompson, Owen
 Thomson, Richard
 Timms, rh Stephen
 Timpson, Edward

Trickett, Jon
 Tugendhat, Tom
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Western, Matt
 Whitford, Dr Philippa
 Whitley, Mick
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wild, James
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wishart, Pete
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Jeremy
 Yasin, Mohammad
 Young, Jacob
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mark Tami and
Liz Twist

NOES

Adams, Nigel
 Afolami, Bim
 Aiken, Nickie
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy
 Amess, Sir David
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Benton, Scott
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, rh Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Bowie, Andrew
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Brokenshire, rh James
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey

Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Mims
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Caroline
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, Michelle
 Dorries, Ms Nadine
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Ellis, rh Michael
 Eustice, rh George
 Evans, Dr Luke
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 Fuller, Richard
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Gale, rh Sir Roger
 Gibson, Peter
 Gillan, rh Dame Cheryl
 Glen, John
 Goodwill, rh Mr Robert
 Grant, Mrs Helen
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James

Gullis, Jonathan
Halfon, rh Robert
Hall, Luke
Hands, rh Greg
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Heaton-Harris, Chris
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hoare, Simon
Holden, Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John
Howell, Paul
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hughes, Eddie
Hunt, Jane
Hunt, rh Jeremy
Hunt, Tom
Jack, rh Mr Alister
Jayawardena, Mr Ranil
Jenkinson, Mark
Jenkyns, Andrea
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Keegan, Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Levy, Ian
Lewer, Andrew
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopresti, Jack
Lord, Mr Jonathan
Mackinlay, Craig
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Macleane, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
McPartland, Stephen
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, Johnny
Metcalfe, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Milling, rh Amanda
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morrissey, Joy
Morton, Wendy

Mullan, Dr Kieran
Murray, Mrs Sheryll
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Nokes, rh Caroline
Opperman, Guy
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Percy, Andrew
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pursglove, Tom
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Rees-Mogg, rh Mr Jacob
Roberts, Rob
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Mary
Ross, Douglas
Rowley, Lee
Russell, Dean
Sambrook, Gary
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, rh Julian
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, Dr Ben
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stewart, Bob
Stewart, Iain
Streeter, Sir Gary
Stride, rh Mel
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Throup, Maggie
Tolhurst, Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Tracey, Craig
Trott, Laura
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Wakeford, Christian
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Wallis, Dr Jamie
Warburton, David
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles
Webb, Suzanne
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittaker, Craig
Wiggin, Bill
Williams, Craig
Williamson, rh Gavin
Wood, Mike
Zahawi, Nadhim

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr Marcus Jones and
David Rutley

Question accordingly agreed to.

The list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy, is published at the end of today's debates.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Ordered,

That the following Standing Orders, amendments to standing orders and amendments to the Code of Conduct be made:

A. Independent Expert Panel

(1) There shall be a Panel, to be known as the Independent Expert Panel for the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (the "ICGS"), whose members shall be appointed by the House in accordance with Standing Order (Appointment of Independent Expert Panel Members).

(2) The Panel shall consist of eight members, of whom a quorum shall be four.

(3) The functions of the Panel shall be:

- (a) to determine the appropriate sanction in ICGS cases referred to it by the Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards;
- (b) to hear appeals against the decisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in respect of ICGS cases involving Members of this House;
- (c) to hear appeals against a sanction imposed under paragraph (a);
- (d) to report from time to time, through the Clerk of the House, on the operation of the ICGS as it relates to Members of this House

(4) The Panel may elect its own Chair.

(5) The responsibilities of the Chair shall include:

- (a) ensuring that the Panel and its sub-panels comply with the provisions of the relevant resolutions and standing orders of this House;
- (b) the appointment of sub-panels to consider individual cases;
- (c) co-ordinating the work of the Panel with that of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards;
- (d) referring any report from a sub-panel which determines a sanction that can only be imposed by the House to the Clerk of the House who shall lay it upon the Table of the House;
- (e) informing the parties concerned of the outcome of any other case reported to the Chair by a sub-panel and ensuring compliance as appropriate with its recommendations;
- (f) establishing the procedure for an appeal against the findings or determination of a sub-panel in cases referred under (3)(a) above;
- (g) reporting to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards any case of noncompliance under sub-paragraph (e) above by a Member of this House;
- (h) ensuring publication of an Annual Report on the functioning of the Panel and its sub-panels by referring the report to the Clerk of the House for laying on the Table.

(6) The Panel and any sub-panel shall have power

- (a) to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House;
- (b) to order the attendance of any Member before it and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of the Commissioner, be laid before it;
- (c) to appoint legal advisers, and to appoint specialist advisers either to supply information which is not readily available or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Panel's order of reference.

B. Independent Expert Panel: Sub-panels

(1) Cases referred to the Independent Expert Panel under Standing Order (Independent Expert Panel) shall be considered by a sub-panel appointed under paragraph (5)(b) of that order.

(2) A sub-panel shall consist of three members of the Panel and shall have a quorum of three.

(3) Sub-panels shall sit in private.

(4) A sub-panel may request the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards to conduct further investigations in respect of a case referred to it and may specify the matters to be covered in that investigation.

(5) In respect of each case referred to it, a sub-panel shall make a report of its findings to the Chair of the Panel.

(6) Where an appeal is made against a finding or determination of a sanction by a sub-panel, a new sub-panel shall be established to hear that appeal. No member shall be eligible to hear an appeal against the decision of a sub-panel on which they have served.

C. Appointment of Independent Expert Panel Members

(1) Members of the Independent Expert Panel shall be appointed by a resolution of the House on a motion made under the provisions of this order and shall remain as members in accordance with the provisions of this order.

(2) The period of appointment of each member shall be specified in the resolution of the House for appointment and shall not exceed six years. The appointment of a member is not terminated by any dissolution of Parliament.

(3) No person who has once been a member may be appointed for a further term.

(4) No person may be appointed as a member if that person is or has been a Member of this House or a Member of the House of Lords; and any person so appointed shall cease to be a member upon becoming a Member of this House or of the House of Lords.

(5) No person may be appointed as a member unless that person has been selected on the basis of a fair and open competition.

(6) A person appointed as a member may resign as a member by giving notice to the House of Commons Commission.

(7) A person appointed as a member shall be dismissed from that position only following a resolution of the House, after the House of Commons Commission has reported that it is satisfied that the person should cease to be a member; and any such report shall include a statement of the Commission's reasons for its conclusion.

(8) No motion may be made under the provisions of this order unless—

(a) notice of the motion has been given at least two sitting days previously, and

(b) the motion is made on behalf of the House of Commons Commission by a Member of the Commission.

(9) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on motions made under the provisions of this order not later than one hour after the commencement of those proceedings.

(10) Business to which this order applies may be proceeded with at any hour, though opposed.

D. Motions consequent on the ICGS

(1) A motion may be moved by a member of the House of Commons Commission to implement a sanction in respect of an individual ICGS case determined by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel.

(2) The Speaker shall put the questions necessary to dispose of proceedings on a motion under paragraph (1) of this order forthwith.

(3) Business under this order may be proceeded with until any hour, though opposed.

Amendments to other Standing orders

(1) Standing Order No 149 (Committee on Standards)

Paragraph (1)(a): after “Standards”, insert “except in relation to the conduct of individual cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme”.

(2) Standing Order No 150 (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards)

Leave out paragraph (2)(f) and insert:

“(2) (f) to oversee investigations and make findings in cases against Members under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme; to refer such cases to the Independent Panel of Experts where a sanction beyond her powers is contemplated; and to assist the Panel and its sub-panels in its work.”.

Delete paragraph (4)(c).

(3) Standing Order No 41A (Deferred divisions) Paragraph (2)(d): at end of sub-paragraph 5, delete “and” and insert:

“(vi) paragraph 1 of Standing Order (Motions consequent on the ICGS); and”.

Amendments to the Code of Conduct

In the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament (HC (2017–19) 1882):

(1) in paragraph 19, at end add “and for the Independent Expert Panel acting in accordance with Standing Order (Independent Expert Panel) in relation to the determination of cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme.”.

(2) in paragraph 21; at end add “Failure to comply with a sanction imposed by a sub-panel of the Independent Expert Panel shall be treated as a breach of the Code.”.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): We now come to motion 6 on matters raised on motions consequent on the ICGS—not moved.

Business without Debate**DELEGATED LEGISLATION**

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF
EMPLOYMENT**

That the draft National Minimum Wage (Offshore Employment) (Amendment) Order 2020, which was laid before this House on 6 May, be approved.—(*Maria Caulfield.*)

Question agreed to.

PETITIONS

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): Before we move to the presentation of public petitions, I remind the House of the established practice when a petition is presented in the Chamber. When called to present a petition, Members may make a statement, not a speech, about who the petition is from, and how many signatures it has. Members should summarise the content of the petition, and then read the request or prayer contained at its end. If Members make speeches about the subject matter of the petition, they will be called to order by the Chair.

Return of children to schools in September

6.34 pm

Munira Wilson (Twickenham) (LD): I rise to present a petition on behalf of parents in my constituency and across the country who support the September for Schools campaign. They and headteachers alike demand clarity on how schools can return safely in September,

[Munira Wilson]

especially in view of the Prime Minister's commitment to fully reopening schools. At the moment, there is no plan with the requisite resources attached. Headteachers need that plan to prepare, and parents need it to gain confidence to send their children back.

The petition reads as follows:

The Petition of residents of the United Kingdom,

Declares that children must be at the heart of government strategy as lockdown eases; notes that research has shown that home-schooling has been inconsistent across the country during lockdown, with disadvantaged children faring particularly poorly; and further declares that the best place for students is in the classroom, as schools provide consistency, social interaction, stimulating learning environments and promote good health and wellbeing.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to work together with head teachers, parent bodies, unions and local authorities to devise a plan by 13 July to safely resume education in September so that all children can return to school.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

[P002582]

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Eleanor Laing): I search for Patricia Gibson to present a petition but I see that she is not here, so that will have to await another day.

Windrush Day 2020

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Maria Caulfield.*)

6.36 pm

Helen Hayes (Dulwich and West Norwood) (Lab): In 2018, to mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush at Tilbury, 22 June was designated Windrush Day, an annual day of celebration of the enduring contribution of a remarkable generation to the UK. Yesterday saw the third national celebration. I want to start by paying tribute to Patrick Vernon, who led the campaign for Windrush Day for many years.

I am proud to represent a constituency with one of the strongest connections to the Windrush. Around 200 of the original Windrush passengers made their way from Tilbury to Clapham, where they found temporary accommodation in the deep shelter on Clapham common. From Clapham, they came to the labour exchange on Coldharbour Lane in Brixton in my constituency, where they found work in many different occupations, including with London Transport, in the construction industry and in the NHS. Many then settled in Brixton and a community grew, bringing food and music, and establishing local businesses and churches. Their identity is inextricably linked with the Brixton we know today.

It is easy for celebration of the Windrush generation to become sentimental, commemorating the positive story of people who came at the invitation of the British Government and helped to rebuild a country decimated by the second world war and to establish the NHS. Yet that is to ignore the hardship and racism the Windrush generation suffered: the signs in homes to rent that read, "No blacks, no Irish, no dogs"; the humiliation of bus conductors, whose passengers would leave their fares on their seat to avoid contact—the pervasive, oppressive, grinding discrimination encountered in so many aspects of life.

The first official Windrush Day took place against the raw open wounds of the Windrush scandal. The Home Secretary had resigned and the Government had promised to right the wrongs that so many have suffered.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I commend the hon. Lady for bringing this to the House for consideration. Does she feel the angst that many of us feel that in December last year only 1,108 claims had been made and only 36 people had received money from the £200 million fund? Does she agree with me and others that it is disgraceful that those who need the money most cannot get anything?

Helen Hayes: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. He makes the important point, which I will come to later, that as we celebrate Windrush Day we must also be mindful of the justice that so many of the Windrush generation are still waiting for. Two years on from that first Windrush Day, only 60 Windrush citizens, as he says, have received compensation from a Government scheme, which is complex and hard to access and far too slow to deliver.

Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab): I thank my hon. Friend for giving way to allow me to amplify that point. My understanding is that the compensation

claims of people who applied in the November–December time are still outstanding, and that is inexcusable, six months on. Perhaps I might join her and put my name to her remarks about just how extraordinary that generation were, coming over here in the immediate aftermath of war, when we had lost so many men from the population. They contributed so greatly to rebuilding this nation.

Helen Hayes: I thank my hon. Friend for his intervention. That mismatch between the contribution that Windrush citizens made to this country and their appalling treatment at the hands of the British Government, and the wait that so many still have for compensation, is something to which we must urgently turn our attention.

The Windrush generation are still living with the pain and devastation of the Windrush scandal. Stephen S. Thompson's powerful drama "Sitting in Limbo"—based on the experience of his brother, Anthony Bryan, who lost his job, home and mental wellbeing as a consequence of the Home Office's refusing to accept his status as a British citizen, despite his having been in the country since the age of eight—was devastating to watch. Even more excruciating was the news that Anthony Bryan still had not received compensation from the Windrush compensation scheme and was only contacted by the Home Office days before the drama was due to be screened.

Anthony Bryan's experience mirrors that of so many of my constituents. The common experience of the victims of the Windrush scandal is that the Government's compensation scheme does not function effectively or deliver the redress that they are due. I, and other Opposition Members, have voiced concerns about the scheme many times, and those have all too often been dismissed out of hand by Ministers.

Ruth Jones (Newport West) (Lab): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way, and I thank her for securing tonight's debate. It is timely, and it is very important for me and many of my constituents across Newport West and across Wales. Does she agree that to show that black lives matter, we need the Government to show both urgency and compassion? They must right the wrongs of the Windrush scandal once and for all and pay those affected the compensation they deserve now.

Helen Hayes: I thank my hon. Friend for her powerful intervention. She makes a very strong and important point—that it is hypocritical for the Government to offer warm words in celebration of Windrush Day when, of the many thousands who were impacted by the Windrush scandal, only 1,275 have even applied for compensation so far, and of those, only 60 have received any money. There is still so much that the Government must do to put right the wrongs of the Windrush scandal.

Jim Shannon: The hon. Lady has just mentioned the figures for now. In the six months that it has taken for 100 claims to be lodged, only 14 have actually been processed. That underlines the issue, does it not?

Helen Hayes: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his intervention. I have sat with constituents and filled out the form with them, compiled the documents, gone through that process, submitted the application, and we are still waiting months and months to hear anything from the Home Office.

I welcome the establishment of the new, cross-Government Windrush working group, and particularly the involvement in the working group of Black Cultural Archives, based in my constituency. Black Cultural Archives is a trusted organisation with deep roots in the UK's black communities, and it has done so much to support the victims of the Windrush scandal. I pay tribute to its work. It is absolutely vital that it is funded to continue to provide that support, yet it is still waiting for applications to open for the £500,000 fund that the Government announced to support grassroots organisations. I hope the Minister might mention a timescale for that fund in his response.

I also welcome the Home Secretary's announcement today that she has accepted the recommendations of Wendy Williams's lessons learned review. However, the Government have been far too slow, not only in relation specifically to the Windrush scandal, but in delivering the much wider reforms that are needed to address structural racism, including implementing the recommendations of the Lammy review on the over-representation of black men in the criminal justice system. I hope that the Minister understands just how low confidence currently is in this Government to tackle racism and structural racial inequality, and understands that there will not be confidence until sustained and meaningful action is delivered.

This year's Windrush Day is celebrated against the backdrop of a new and additional scandal: the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. The stories of the Windrush generation and the NHS are intertwined. The Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury just weeks before the founding of the NHS. In my constituency, that connection is embodied in a single street. At one end of Coldharbour Lane was the labour exchange; at the other end is King's College Hospital, which was and is still substantially sustained by the commitment, skill and care of BAME nurses.

Yesterday, I took part in an event organised by the Runnymede Trust to mark Windrush Day by celebrating the role of BAME workers in the NHS. We heard from academic researchers who had captured the historic experience of migrant women working in the NHS. During the event, the chat bar filled up with devastating first-hand stories of racism and racial discrimination. They included the experience of migrant nurses who were prevented from training as state-registered nurses, meaning that they could only take the inferior career path of the state-enrolled nurse—effectively a structural limitation on promotion and pay—and stories of patients being allowed to wait to be treated by white staff instead of equally qualified BAME staff, reinforcing racist views.

In 2020, it is now BAME NHS workers who are dying from coronavirus in disproportionate numbers. The Government are once again being too slow to protect them: they have announced another review, which will report at the end of the year, rather than taking the immediate protective action that is needed and demanded now. Earlier this month, thousands took to the streets in a heartfelt cry for justice and reform in response to the horrific death of George Floyd in the USA, because his death resonated so powerfully with their own experience here in the UK.

[Helen Hayes]

This Windrush Day must be both a celebration of the contribution of the Windrush generation to our communities, culture, economy and public services in the UK, and a moment of deep national reflection. We must reflect on how, more than 70 years since those first Windrush citizens began to work in our NHS, BAME health workers have died in disproportionate numbers as they administered treatment and care during the coronavirus pandemic.

We must engage communities across the country in learning about their own history, even when it is painful, and find ways to ensure that our town squares and public spaces reflect the diversity of our communities, including by moving statues that glorify shameful periods of our history from public spaces to museums where they can be contextualised as artefacts from the past. We need reform of the history curriculum in our schools, so that every child is taught a truthful and inclusive version of British history, including colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade.

The Government must deliver a functioning and effective compensation scheme for the victims of the Windrush scandal and urgently implement the recommendations of Wendy Williams and of my right hon. Friend the Member for Tottenham (Mr Lammy). They must give confidence that such a scandal can never happen again.

Mr Steve Baker (Wycombe) (Con): I am enjoying the hon. Lady's speech. She mentions the Lammy review; I have just had an answer to my parliamentary question to the Lord Chancellor about the review, which I will tweet out in a moment. It tells me that

"of the 35 recommendations...16 have been completed ... 17 recommendations are still in progress, of which... 1 recommendation is in the initial stages...11 recommendations aim to be completed within 6-12 months...5 recommendations will take longer than 12 months".

I really think that the Government are making serious progress on the Lammy review, and I think that the Minister is to be congratulated.

Helen Hayes: I think the test of the Government's progress in this area is the experience of BAME residents up and down the country, and the protests in recent weeks tell us loudly and clearly that they do not have confidence in this Government. I hope that the Government will start to rebuild that trust and confidence, but I also hope that the hon. Gentleman will recognise exactly how far they have to go.

We must see urgent, meaningful action to protect BAME frontline workers from coronavirus and address the underlying health inequalities that left them at risk in the first place. The Government must end the hostile environment and reform the history curriculum so that every child learns about British history as a story of migration and is taught about the UK's shameful role in the transatlantic slave trade. Windrush Day is a national celebration, but also a day for asserting the truth that black lives matter and for redoubling our efforts to create a society free from structural racism and discrimination in which everyone's contribution is fully recognised.

6.50 pm

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (Luke Hall): I congratulate the hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Helen Hayes) on securing this debate and the tone in which she has conducted it. I know that this issue is close to her heart. She laid out very eloquently at the start of her speech the story of how many of those who arrived on the Windrush took temporary shelter in Clapham South and then went to find jobs at labour exchanges, including, as she said, at Coldharbour Lane in her constituency. She raised issues that are so significant and so personal to Members of this House and to many of her constituents, and I congratulate her on the way in which she did so.

This is, of course, the second annual national Windrush Day, and the third year in which the Government have supported celebrations since the 70th anniversary. It is absolutely right that the Government and this House celebrate the enormous contributions of the Windrush generation to our social, economic and cultural history. After the ship's arrival back in 1948, those brave individuals helped to rebuild our country after the ravages of the war. They found work in sectors such as health and transport and formed the backbone of our national health service, as the hon. Lady said.

Today, as history repeats itself, we see a different threat, and many of the Windrush generation's descendants continue to protect and rebuild our country in the midst of covid-19, carrying the legacy of many of their forebears. Their remarkable contribution to our national health service, to care and to many other key sectors during this crisis has been absolutely staggering—it has been integral to stemming the tide of this virus. The whole country is grateful for their contribution, and I certainly add my own tribute today. However, the hon. Lady is absolutely right that while we celebrate the Windrush generation and how they shaped this country, and most recently how their descendants have helped to defend it, we must candidly acknowledge the difficulties that many have endured. I wish to take this opportunity to explain how we have been working to try to right the wrongs.

Windrush Day this year did not look like Windrush Day last year. I thank the Windrush Day advisory panel for its support in ensuring that we could still mark the day with the enthusiasm and importance that it deserves. Preparations for the celebrations have of course been altered by the unique social and health challenges presented by the pandemic, but that has not stopped people and organisations holding events throughout the country and organising innovative ways to make sure that we can continue to celebrate the important contribution I referred to and the importance of this day, which has of course gained a huge amount of traction, interest and passionate debate. Most of the celebrations yesterday were digital—the hon. Lady talked about an event that she attended—but there were still plenty of them up and down the country. We had only to look at the media or social media yesterday to see the incredible variety of debates.

Our Department is still keen to support publicly the marking of the day: we provided a £500,000 grant to support some of the organisations that are celebrating and commemorating the Windrush generation, alongside educating people about them. Earlier this year, the

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government agreed that the funding would be distributed across 49 charities, community groups and local authorities. In the midst of some extremely challenging circumstances, that guarantee has demonstrated our willingness, passion, aptitude and innovation to deliver the events in the way that they have been delivered.

From Bristol, Birmingham, Leicester and Leeds, we have received some incredible feedback on the workshops, radio documentaries and Zoom meetings that have been held over the past couple of days. A children's charity, Barnardo's, launched an oral history project to celebrate the impacts of the achievements of the Windrush generation and their descendants, fronted by its vice-president Baroness—Floella—Benjamin.

Several projects funded by the Windrush Day grant were based in the hon. Lady's constituency, including Represent Radio, which trains second-generation Windrush individuals to develop a week of specialist radio programming shining a light on the impact of the Windrush generation. I have not managed to catch any yet but I will make an effort to do so in the next day. I know that that admirable local organisation is doing a lot of good work, and I was pleased to hear that Lambeth Council had its own itinerary to celebrate Windrush Day and get people involved locally. I commend it for that work.

The day was also very well recognised in local, national and international media, including on the BBC's "The One Show", and I think CNN was live in Brixton. There was a message from his excellency the high commissioner of Jamaica, and our great national institutions took up the call to commemorate the arrival of the Windrush generation. I believe that the National Theatre has made the adaptation of Andrea Levy's "Small Island" free to view until tomorrow. I saw that the Church of England marked Windrush Day in an online service, I think very candidly reflecting on its troubling recent history, which once saw Anglican churchgoers barred from participating in worship owing to the colour of their skin. I encourage anybody who is able to do so to head online and find out how they can continue to take part in some incredible celebrations.

Mr Steve Baker: I am very grateful for what the Minister has said. There was a fantastic virtual celebration in High Wycombe over the weekend, and I was absolutely delighted to join it. I put on record how very proud I am of the Windrush generation in High Wycombe and their descendants. They make a fantastic contribution to our community and my eyes have really been opened to how people do still face racism in their lives. I am very glad that the Government are taking steps to implement the Lammy review, but, of course, there is much more that we all need to do.

Karl McCartney (Lincoln) (Con) *rose—*

Luke Hall: I give way to my hon. Friend.

Karl McCartney: I thank the Minister for giving way, given the shortness of time. The hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood (Helen Hayes) did well to secure the debate and gave a very moving speech. I am sure that, like me, she is waiting for some timescales for when the cases will be dealt with, and I hope the Minister will address that shortly.

Luke Hall: I will turn to that in a second, and I add my congratulations to the organisation responsible in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr Baker).

Of course, it is right that as we celebrate and recognise the Windrush generation and their descendants, we also have to reflect on the wrongs that they have experienced. It was nothing short of a moral failure that those who helped to lay the foundations of the country that we know and love today had to endure so many injustices.

On 19 March, the Home Secretary published Wendy Williams's Windrush lessons learned review. It was an essential publication, and I hope that it will be part of a long healing process. The Home Secretary updated the House today by saying that she has accepted all 30 recommendations from that report. She has set up a Windrush lessons learned implementation team and will lead the response to the report, working with teams across the Government and externally. She will also bring an update to the House on implementing the recommendations before the summer recess.

To support this, yesterday, we announced the Windrush cross-Government working group and, as the Home Secretary aptly said, we know that the best way to make sure we reach all those affected is by listening to them and hearing their voices. Only in that way can we learn how best to address the wider challenges that disproportionately affect those from BAME backgrounds. This group will support the Government to deliver practical solutions across the themes of education, work and health, advising also on the design of the Windrush community fund scheme and the response to the lessons learned review. We will work together to implement these recommendations and make good our commitment to learn from past mistakes.

The hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood and a number of other Members have referred to the compensation scheme. We do think that this is an important part of the action that we are taking to address the injustices that have been faced. It was developed to ease the burden of the unacceptable mistreatment that some of the generation have faced, and so far significant progress has been made. We have helped over 12,000 people to obtain documentation confirming their status, including 5,900 grants of citizenship. In the Home Secretary's remarks to the House earlier today, we heard that as at the end of this March, more than £360,000 had been awarded through the compensation scheme.

7 pm

Motion lapsed (Standing Order No. 9(3)).

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Maria Caulfield.*)

Luke Hall: The Home Secretary updated the House today on the fact that over £1 million has been offered through the compensation scheme, and more payments are being made each week. While this is progress, and claims continue to be processed as quickly as possible, the Home Office is committed to getting more people to come forward and claim. That is exactly why we are setting up the new working group and community fund. We encourage all those who are eligible to apply for compensation to do so. We completely understand how integral this is to our work as we move forward to try to right the wrongs of the past.

[*Luke Hall*]

We also want to publicly acknowledge how the Windrush generation have enriched our nation's history, so we are constructing a permanent monument at Waterloo station that will be a tribute to the generation that has come to be defined more broadly than the original pioneers who arrived in 1948. It will be erected in London but will stand as a testament to the contribution of Caribbean migrants in communities across the United Kingdom. It will create a permanent place of reflection and inspiration for Caribbean communities and the general public. It will be a symbolic link to our past—a permanent reminder of shared history and heritage.

Ruth Jones: I appreciate that statues are lovely, but people who are watching outside want to know when they are going to get their money. They have waited a long time; they need to know. Will the Minister give a timetable?

Luke Hall: That is exactly the purpose and point of the measures that the Home Secretary has announced—to make sure that this work will be brought forward speedily and accurately. I understand the hon. Lady's concerns, but I do think it is right to put on record the importance of things that can be done, like the permanent memorial. I know that the hon. Member for Dulwich and West Norwood has been a passionate advocate for having the national memorial in her constituency. I hope that she accepts the Government's rationale for having it at Waterloo station and the symbolic nature of that.

Helen Hayes: I could not let mention of Waterloo as the location for the memorial pass without saying how strongly so many of my constituents and the Windrush Foundation feel that the proper location for that memorial is in Windrush Square outside Black Cultural Archives—a location still within London and still within zone 2 that still has such a strong connection to the original Windrush passengers and to the community of so many who followed them here.

Luke Hall: The hon. Lady continues to make a passionate case and she is quite right to do so. There are a number of examples of more local tributes that are being set up. Hackney is a great example of a local authority that has commissioned a local public artwork to be placed in its town square to celebrate and honour its Windrush generation. I know that we do not quite see eye to eye on the location of the national monument, but if there is anything that our Department can do to set up conversations or to provide further advice about what could be done within the local authority, we would be very happy to do so at any time. My door is always open to discuss that further.

The hon. Lady referred to the Windrush generation overcoming incredible adversity. They and their descendants have proved to be some of the most inspirational role models. I heard some stories of those individuals yesterday. RAF veteran Sam King returned to London from Jamaica on the *Empire Windrush* and not only built a life here but volunteered as a circulation manager on the *West Indian Gazette* and supported the organisation of the carnival at St Pancras town hall in 1959. He was the first black mayor of Southwark—a position he took

up just six months after being elected to the council. Euton Christian served in the RAF as well, and settled in Manchester. He was not only the first black magistrate in Manchester but helped to set up the West Indian Sports and Social Club in Moss Side and was one of the founders of the Manchester Council for Community Relations. Those are just two examples I heard yesterday of the incredible contributions that the hon. Lady has talked so passionately about.

The hon. Lady also mentioned the impact of covid-19 on black and minority ethnic communities, and she is right to do so. We have to acknowledge that these have been difficult times for so many people. Professor Fenton's review, on behalf of Public Health England, on the impact of covid-19 on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities highlighted some of these challenges so starkly to so many of us, and I know what an emotional moment that was for so many people. The pandemic has amplified long-standing inequalities; BAME groups have been found to be more likely to have pre-existing conditions that worsen the effects of covid-19. In response, the NHS has created a new centre to investigate the impact of race and ethnicity on people's health. My hon. Friend the Minister for Equalities is taking forward further work, following the PHE review, so that we can better understand the disparities, which I know we all agree should not exist in the 21st century.

As has been discussed, Windrush Day this year also took place in the midst of a wider social movement to challenge racism and injustice. As a south Gloucestershire MP, I saw the scenes in Bristol, just next door. I saw the passion of the communities in not only Bristol, but the surrounding areas. It is so important that we listen to the thousands of people who have marched peacefully for Black Lives Matter. That is why the Prime Minister committed himself to establishing that new cross-party commission to explore these issues, as well as to champion the success of BAME groups. That new commission on race and ethnic disparities will examine continuing racial and ethnic inequalities in Britain. It will build on the work of the Race Disparity Unit, but it will go further, to understand why disparities exist, and what works and what does not. It will present recommendations for action across government and other public bodies.

The Windrush generation answered the call to help rebuild our nation after the war. They and their descendants have inspired as entrepreneurs, nurses, musicians and athletes. The hon. Lady has said that she attended the Runnymede Trust's virtual event on the contribution of BAME people to the NHS, and I wish to restate my personal thanks and the whole Government's thanks to those from minority backgrounds who are working in our NHS, and in shops, delivery services, local authorities and other key positions around the country, on the frontline against this virus. Through this national effort, we are turning the tide and getting control of this virus. I know she has made a passionate case for the importance of making sure that the compensation schemes are delivered at the pace she has suggested. Of course, I will be discussing this with my colleagues in the Home Office.

Windrush Day has been a fantastic success in the past couple of years. I welcome the hon. Lady's constructive comments about how we can make it a success in the future. I encourage everyone to find a Windrush Day

activity to get involved with, either online or locally near them, later this year. I will certainly be looking at the radio project happening in her constituency, and I thank those involved in that. By taking part in Windrush Day, people will be playing their part in celebrating, commemorating and educating about the Windrush generation, their descendants and their contribution to

Britain's social, cultural and economic life; and, of course, they will be helping to build a stronger and more integrated Britain for the future.

Question put and agreed to.

7.8 pm

House adjourned.

Members Eligible for a Proxy Vote

The following is the list of Members currently certified as eligible for a proxy vote, and of the Members nominated as their proxy:

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Ms Diane Abbott (Hackney North and Stoke Newington)	Bell Ribeiro-Addy
Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth)	Jim McMahon
Imran Ahmad Khan (Wakefield)	Eddie Hughes
Nickie Aiken (Cities of London and Westminster)	Stuart Andrew
Tahir Ali (Birmingham, Hall Green)	Chris Elmore
Victoria Atkins (Louth and Horncastle)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Richard Bacon (South Norfolk)	Stuart Andrew
Siobhan Baillie (Stroud)	Stuart Andrew
Hannah Bardell (Livingston)	Patrick Grady
Paula Barker (Liverpool, Wavertree)	Kim Johnson
Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay)	Stuart Andrew
Margaret Beckett (Derby South)	Clive Efford
Sir Paul Beresford (Mole Valley)	Stuart Andrew
Jake Berry (Rossendale and Darwen)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Clive Betts (Sheffield South East)	Chris Elmore
Mhairi Black (Paisley and Renfrewshire South)	Patrick Grady
Ian Blackford (Ross, Skye and Lochaber)	Patrick Grady
Bob Blackman (Harrow East)	Stuart Andrew
Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North)	Patrick Grady
Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill)	Patrick Grady
Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire)	Stuart Andrew
James Brokenshire (Old Bexley and Sidcup)	Stuart Andrew
Alan Brown (Kilmarnock and Loudoun)	Patrick Grady
Ms Lyn Brown (West Ham)	Chris Elmore
Richard Burgon (Leeds East)	Zarah Sultana
Conor Burns (Bournemouth West)	Stuart Andrew
Ian Byrne (Liverpool, West Derby)	Chris Elmore
Ruth Cadbury (Brentford and Isleworth)	Chris Elmore
Dan Carden (Liverpool, Walton)	Alex Norris
Sir William Cash (Stone)	Leo Docherty
Sarah Champion (Rotherham)	Chris Elmore
Douglas Chapman (Dunfermline and West Fife)	Patrick Grady
Feryal Clark (Enfield North)	Chris Elmore

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Damian Collins (Folkestone and Hythe)	Stuart Andrew
Rosie Cooper (West Lancashire)	Chris Elmore
Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde)	Patrick Grady
Mr Geoffrey Cox (Torridge and West Devon)	Alex Burghart
Neil Coyle (Bermondsey and Old Southwark)	Bambos Charalambous
Angela Crawley (Lanark and Hamilton East)	Patrick Grady
Stella Creasy (Walthamstow)	Chris Elmore
Tracey Crouch (Chatham and Aylesford)	Caroline Nokes
Janet Daby (Lewisham East)	Chris Elmore
Geraint Davies (Swansea West)	Chris Evans
Mr David Davis (Haltemprice and Howden)	Stuart Andrew
Martyn Day (Linlithgow and East Falkirk)	Patrick Grady
Thangam Debbonaire (Bristol West)	Chris Elmore
Marsha De Cordova (Battersea)	Rachel Hopkins
Caroline Dinenage (Gosport)	Caroline Nokes
Dave Doogan (Angus)	Patrick Grady
Ms Nadine Dorries (Mid Bedfordshire)	Stuart Andrew
Jack Dromey (Birmingham, Erdington)	Chris Elmore
Philip Dunne (Ludlow)	Jeremy Hunt
Colum Eastwood (Foyle)	Conor McGinn
Julie Elliott (Sunderland Central)	Chris Elmore
Dr Luke Evans (Bosworth)	Stuart Andrew
Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford)	Stuart Andrew
Michael Fabricant (Lichfield)	Stuart Andrew
Stephen Farry (North Down)	Mr Alistair Carmichael
Marion Fellows (Motherwell and Wishaw)	Patrick Grady
Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West)	Patrick Grady
Yvonne Fovargue (Makerfield)	Chris Elmore
Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford)	Chris Elmore
George Freeman (Mid Norfolk)	Theo Clarke
Gill Furniss (Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough)	Chris Elmore
Sir Roger Gale (North Thanet)	Caroline Nokes
Preet Kaur Gill (Birmingham, Edgbaston)	Chris Elmore
Dame Cheryl Gillan (Chesham and Amersham)	Stuart Andrew
Mary Glendon (North Tyneside)	Chris Elmore
Mrs Helen Grant (Maidstone and The Weald)	Stuart Andrew
Peter Grant (Glenrothes)	Patrick Grady
Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts)	Patrick Grady

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West)	Chris Elmore
Kate Griffiths (Burton)	Aaron Bell
Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish)	Chris Elmore
Robert Halfon (Harlow)	Julie Marson
Fabian Hamilton (Leeds North East)	Chris Elmore
Claire Hanna (Belfast South)	Liz Saville Roberts
Neale Hanvey (Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath)	Patrick Grady
Sir Mark Hendrick (Preston)	Chris Elmore
Mike Hill (Hartlepool)	Chris Elmore
Simon Hoare (North Dorset)	Fay Jones
Dame Margaret Hodge (Barking)	Wes Streeting
Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West)	Chris Elmore
Kate Hollern (Blackburn)	Chris Elmore
Adam Holloway (Gravesham)	Maria Caulfield
Sir George Howarth (Knowsley)	Chris Elmore
Dr Neil Hudson (Penrith and The Border)	Stuart Andrew
Dan Jarvis (Barnsley Central)	Chris Elmore
Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire)	Stuart Andrew
Andrea Jenkyns (Morley and Outwood)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham)	Stuart Andrew
Dame Diana Johnson (Kingston upon Hull North)	Chris Elmore
Sarah Jones (Croydon Central)	Chris Elmore
Alicia Kearns (Rutland and Melton)	Ruth Edwards
Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South)	Chris Elmore
Afzal Khal (Manchester, Gorton)	Chris Elmore
Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Pauline Latham (Mid Derbyshire)	Mr William Wragg
Ian Lavery (Wansbeck)	Kate Osborne
Chris Law (Dundee West)	Patrick Grady
Clive Lewis (Norwich South)	Rosie Duffield
Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger (Bridgwater and West Somerset)	Stuart Andrew
Tony Lloyd (Rochdale)	Chris Elmore
Mark Logan (Bolton North East)	Stuart Andrew
Julia Lopez (Hornchurch and Upminster)	Lee Rowley
Jack Lopresti (Filton and Bradley Stoke)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Jonathan Lord (Woking)	Stuart Andrew
Holly Lynch (Halifax)	Chris Elmore
Kenny MacAskill (East Lothian)	Patrick Grady

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Craig Mackinlay (South Thanet)	Robert Courts
Shabana Mahmood (Birmingham, Ladywood)	Chris Elmore
Alan Mak (Havant)	Stuart Andrew
Seema Malhotra (Feltham and Heston)	Chris Elmore
Rachael Maskell (York Central)	Chris Elmore
Andy McDonald (Middlesbrough)	Chris Elmore
Stewart Malcolm McDonald (Glasgow South)	Patrick Grady
John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington)	Cat Smith
John Mc Nally (Falkirk)	Patrick Grady
Stephen McPartland (Stevenage)	Stuart Andrew
Ian Mearns (Gateshead)	Chris Elmore
Mark Menzies (Fylde)	Sir David Amess
Johnny Mercer (Plymouth, Moor View)	Stuart Andrew
Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock)	Stuart Andrew
Nigel Mills (Amber Valley)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Andrew Mitchell (Sutton Coldfield)	Stuart Andrew
Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West)	Patrick Grady
Jessica Morden (Newport East)	Chris Elmore
Anne Marie Morris (Newton Abbot)	Stuart Andrew
David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale)	Stuart Andrew
Grahame Morris (Easington)	Chris Elmore
James Murray (Ealing North)	Chris Elmore
Gavin Newlands (Paisley and Renfrewshire North)	Patrick Grady
John Nicolson (Ochil and South Perthshire)	Patrick Grady
Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon)	Rebecca Harris
Brendan O'Hara (Argyll and Bute)	Patrick Grady
Guy Opperman (Hexham)	Stuart Andrew
Kate Osamor (Edmonton)	Florence Eshalomi
Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire)	Patrick Grady
Sarah Owen (Luton North)	Alex Norris
Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich)	Peter Aldous
Lucy Powell (Manchester Central)	Chris Elmore
Yasmin Qureshi (Bolton South East)	Chris Elmore
Christina Rees (Neath)	Chris Elmore
Ellie Reeves (Lewisham West and Penge)	Chris Elmore
Rob Roberts (Delyn)	Stuart Andrew
Mr Virendra Sharma (Ealing, Southall)	Chris Elmore
Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield)	Chris Elmore

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Tommy Sheppard (Edinburgh East)	Patrick Grady
Alyn Smith (Stirling)	Patrick Grady
Henry Smith (Crawley)	Stuart Andrew
Royston Smith (Southampton, Itchen)	Robert Courts
Alex Sobel (Leeds North West)	Chris Elmore
Chris Stephens (Glasgow South West)	Patrick Grady
Jo Stevens (Cardiff Central)	Chris Elmore
Sir Gary Streeter (South West Devon)	Stuart Andrew
Mel Stride (Central Devon)	Stuart Andrew
Sam Tarry (Ilford South)	Chris Elmore
Alison Thewliss (Glasgow Central)	Patrick Grady

Member eligible for proxy vote	Nominated proxy
Owen Thompson (Midlothian)	Patrick Grady
Jon Trickett (Hemsworth)	Olivia Blake
Karl Turner (Kingston upon Hull East)	Chris Elmore
David Warburton (Somerton and Frome)	Stuart Andrew
Mrs Heather Wheeler (South Derbyshire)	Stuart Andrew
Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire)	Patrick Grady
Mick Whitley (Birkenhead)	Chris Elmore
Hywel Williams (Arfon)	Ben Lake
Beth Winter (Cynon Valley)	Rachel Hopkins
Mohammad Yasin (Bedford)	Chris Elmore

Written Statements

Tuesday 23 June 2020

TREASURY

Financial Services Regulation

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak): The Working Group on Sterling Risk-Free Rates (RFRWG), the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Bank of England published joint statements on 25 March^[1] and 29 April^[2] relating to LIBOR transition. These statements underline the need for firms to continue to migrate away from LIBOR as a reference in their financial contracts and reiterate that firms cannot rely on the benchmark's continued publication as the current voluntary agreement between the FCA and LIBOR panel banks will expire after end-2021 (as announced in 2017^[3]). The Government have followed these and related global regulatory developments closely, including the Tough Legacy Taskforce report^[4] published by the RFRWG.

The Government share both the regulators' pragmatism in recognising the interim timetable for transition has been slowed by Covid-19 and their urgency that the market must continue actively transitioning away from LIBOR. It is in the interests of financial markets and their customers that the pool of contracts referencing LIBOR is shrunk to an irreducible core ahead of LIBOR's expected cessation, leaving behind only those contracts that genuinely have no or inappropriate alternatives and no realistic ability to be renegotiated or amended. The Government recognise, however, that legislative steps could help deal with this narrow pool of 'tough legacy' contracts that cannot transition from LIBOR.

Unlike many jurisdictions, the UK has an existing regulatory framework for critical benchmarks such as LIBOR. The Government therefore intend to legislate to amend and strengthen that existing regulatory framework, rather than directly to impose legal changes on LIBOR-referencing contracts that are governed by UK law. The legislation will ensure that, by end-2021, the FCA has the appropriate regulatory powers to manage and direct any wind-down period prior to eventual LIBOR cessation in a way that protects consumers and/or ensures market integrity. The Government therefore intend to:

Amend the UK's existing regulatory framework for benchmarks to ensure it can be used to manage different scenarios prior to a critical benchmark's eventual cessation. In particular, the Government will introduce amendments to the Benchmarks Regulation 2016/1011 as amended by the Benchmarks (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (the 'UK BMR'), to ensure that FCA powers are sufficient to manage an orderly transition from LIBOR.

Extend the circumstances in which the FCA may require an administrator to change the methodology of a critical benchmark and clarify the purpose for which the FCA may exercise this power. New regulatory powers would enable the FCA to direct a methodology change for a critical benchmark, in circumstances where the regulator has found that the

benchmark's representativeness will not be restored and where action is necessary to protect consumers and or to ensure market integrity.

Strengthen existing law to prohibit use of an individual critical benchmark where its representativeness will not be restored, while giving the regulator the ability to specify limited continued use in legacy contracts.

Refine ancillary areas of the UK's regulatory framework for benchmarks to ensure its effectiveness in managing the orderly wind down of a critical benchmark, including that administrators have adequate plans in place for such situations.

The Government intend to take these measures forward in the forthcoming Financial Services Bill. Following engagement with industry and global counterparts, the FCA will, where appropriate, issue a number of statements of policy relating to its approach to a range of new powers provided by the legislation before it exercises those new powers. The FCA may consider, among other factors, international impacts before exercising its new powers, given LIBOR's global usage.

The Government agree with the RFRWG's Tough Legacy Taskforce that active transition of legacy contracts remains of key importance and provides the best route to certainty for parties to contracts referencing LIBOR. Parties who rely on regulatory action, enabled by the legislation the Government plan to bring forward, will not have control over the economic terms of that action. Moreover regulatory action may not be able to address all issues or be practicable in all circumstances, for example where a methodology change is not feasible, or would not protect consumers or market integrity. This reinforces the importance of parties who can transition away from LIBOR doing so on terms that they themselves agree with their counterparties. The Government, the FCA and the Bank of England will continue to work closely to encourage market-led transition from LIBOR and to monitor progress.

^[1] <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/statements/impact-coronavirus-firms-libor-transition-plans>.

^[2] <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/statements/further-statement-rfrwg-impact-coronavirus-timeline-firms-libor-transition-plans>.

^[3] <https://www.fca.org.uk/news/speeches/the-future-of-libor>.

^[4] <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/markets/benchmarks/paper-on-the-identification-of-tough-legacy-issues.pdf?la=en&hash=0E8CA18F27F75352B0A0573DCBBC93D903077B6E>.

[HCWS307]

Financial Services Update

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Rishi Sunak): Leaving the EU means the UK has taken back control of the rules governing our world-leading financial services sector. The UK has always championed and remains committed to the highest international standards of financial regulation. The financial services sector plays a crucial role in supporting the wider economy, creating jobs across the UK, supporting SMEs, contributing taxes, driving regional growth and investment, tackling climate change and embracing technology and innovation. The UK's financial services sector has also been at the forefront of our response to the economic impact of covid-19, extending more than £35 billion of credit to provide fundamental support to businesses and offering

crucial forbearance on mortgages and consumer credit products. Frontline staff have worked to keep bank and building society branches open throughout the pandemic, ensuring that people all across the UK could access the vital financial services they need.

The future success of the UK financial sector will be underpinned by a world-class environment for doing business. In turn, our future legislation will be guided by what is right for the UK, to support economic prosperity across the country, to ensure financial stability, market integrity and consumer protection, and to continue to ensure the UK remains a world leading financial centre. An enduring future relationship with the EU would help complement the UK's leading global role in financial services. The Government continue to believe that comprehensive mutual findings of equivalence between the UK and the EU are in the best interests of both parties and we remain open and committed to continuing dialogue with the EU about their intentions in this respect.

There are now a range of important regulatory reforms in the process of being implemented at the international and European level that the UK needs to address before the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020. The purpose of this written ministerial statement is to set out how the UK intends to approach these, as well as a limited number of discrete areas for review to ensure relevant regulations remain appropriate for the UK financial sector. Today I would like to update Parliament on how the UK intends to approach these in the immediate term.

Last year, HM Treasury launched the Financial Services Future Regulatory Framework Review, a long-term review looking at how the UK's regulatory framework needs to adapt to the future and in particular to the UK's position outside of the EU. The next phase of the review will look at how financial services policy and regulation are made in the UK, including the role of Parliament, the Treasury and the financial services regulators, and how stakeholders are involved in the process. HM Treasury will consult on its approach to the next phase of the review in the second half of this year.

In the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019, the Government also announced their intention to bring forward a Financial Services Bill in order to deliver a number of existing Government commitments and to ensure that the UK maintains its world-leading regulatory standards and remains open to international markets. The Financial Services Bill will deliver our commitments to: long-term market access between the UK and Gibraltar for financial services firms based on shared, high standards; and simplified process which allows overseas investment funds to be sold in the UK.

In general, consistent with the UK's position as a major international financial hub, the Government intend to implement immediate reforms in line with existing expectations of the industry and the approach of the EU and other international partners where relevant. Naturally there will be some defined areas where it is appropriate for the UK—as a large and complex financial services jurisdiction—to take an approach which better suits our market, while remaining consistent with international standards.

Today's announcements provide clarity to all stakeholders about the UK's legislative plans for the near future in relation to these forthcoming reforms, in relation to updating prudential requirements; maintaining sound capital markets; and, managing future risks.

Updating prudential requirements

The features that distinguish the UK as a leading global financial centre—openness, safety and transparency, innovative and resilient markets—are also in part anchored in international standards for financial regulation that the UK has had a significant hand in designing. Through organisations such as the G20, Financial Stability Board (FSB), and the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision, the UK has led the way in a number of key reform areas. Harmonised international standards are key to promoting the openness and resilience underpinning the UK's sector.

The UK played a pivotal role in the design of EU financial services regulation. The Government remain committed to maintaining prudential soundness and other important regulatory outcomes such as consumer protection and proportionality. However, rules designed as a compromise for 28 countries cannot be expected in every respect to be the right approach for a large and complex international financial sector such as the UK. Now that the UK has left the EU, the EU is naturally already making decisions on amending its current rules without regard for the UK's interests. We will therefore also tailor our approach to implementation to ensure that it better suits the UK market outside the EU.

The Government have previously announced their intention to use the Financial Services Bill to legislate to enable the implementation of a new prudential regime for investment firms and to update the regulation of credit institutions, including the implementation of the international Basel III standards. HM Treasury has today set out more detail on our legislative approach to prudential regulation in the document "Prudential standards in the Financial Services Bill: June update". In particular, the Government intend to introduce updated prudential standards in a flexible and proportionate manner, as called for by industry and the House of Lords EU Affairs sub-committee. The Government intend to do this by delegating responsibility for firm requirements to the relevant regulator—the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) or the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)—subject to an enhanced accountability framework to ensure that the regulators have regard to competitiveness and equivalence when making rules for these regimes. Both the PRA and the FCA will set out further details on the substance of the proposed regimes in due course.

To minimise uncertainty, the Government and the Regulators propose to introduce the new Investment Firms Prudential Regime (IFPR) and updated rules for credit institutions in line with the intended outcomes of the EU's Investment Firms Regulation and Directive, and the second Capital Requirements Regulation respectively for the IFPR, the June update further clarifies that the Government and the PRA do not intend to require PRA-designated investment firms to re-authorise as credit institutions, unlike the EU regime. It also clarifies that the Government do not intend to require FCA-regulated investment firms to comply with the requirements of the fifth Capital Requirements Directive

(CRDV) in the period until the new IFPR applies. A consultation on our transposition of CRDV will take place in July.

During the transition period, and under the terms of the withdrawal agreement, the Government will implement EU legislation that requires transposition before the end of 2020. This includes the transposition of the fifth Capital Requirements Directive (CRDV), and the Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive II (BRRDII) by 28 December 2020. BRRDII makes amendments to the original 2014 Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD) provisions, in order to update the EU's resolution policy and minimum requirements for own funds and eligible liabilities (MREL) framework.

However, HM Treasury is considering how best to implement aspects of files that do not come into force until after 31 December 2020. Given some of these changes do not come into force until the UK has left the transition period, it is right that the UK exercises its discretion when implementing these files.

For example, while we are committing to transposing most aspects of BRRDII, HM Treasury has considered how to ensure that it suits the UK market and we have today published a consultation document setting out more detail on this. In our transposition of BRRDII we are not intending to transpose the requirements in the directive that do not need to be complied with by firms until after the end of the EU Exit transition period, in particular Article 1(17) which revises the framework for MREL requirements across the EU. MREL is the minimum amount of equity and debt that a firm must maintain to absorb losses and provide for recapitalisation, in the event of resolution. The purpose of MREL is to ensure that investors and shareholders, and not the taxpayer, absorb losses when a firm fails. The UK already has in place a MREL framework in line with international standards. BRRDII states that the deadline for institutions and entities to comply with end-state MREL requirements shall be 1 January 2024. Given this is after the end of the transition period, it is right that the UK exercises its discretion about whether to transpose those requirements.

The Government also plan to bring forward a review of certain features of Solvency II to ensure that it is properly tailored to take account of the structural features of the UK insurance sector. The review will consider areas that have been the subject of long-standing discussion while the UK was a member state, some of which may also form part of the EU's intended review. These will include, but are not limited to, the risk margin, the matching adjustment, the operation of internal models and reporting requirements for insurers. The Government expect to publish a call for evidence in autumn 2020.

Maintaining sound capital markets

Under the terms of the withdrawal agreement, the Government will implement EU legislation that comes into force before the end of the transition period. The EU is in the process of implementing a range of provisions on capital markets, with some aspects applying before and after the end of the transition period. HM Treasury has considered how to take forward this legislation in the way that is to the benefit of the UK sector, while maintaining high regulatory standards

The Government are committed to regulation that supports and enhances the functioning of UK capital markets. It will therefore consider the future approach

to the UK's settlement discipline framework, given the importance of ensuring that regulation facilitates the settlement of market transactions in a timely manner while sustaining market liquidity and efficiency. As such, the UK will not be implementing the EU's new settlement discipline regime, set out in the Central Securities Depositories Regulation, which is due to apply in February 2021. UK firms should instead continue to apply the existing industry-led framework. Any future legislative changes will be developed through dialogue with the financial services industry, and sufficient time will be provided to prepare for the implementation of any new future regime

Additionally, the UK will not be taking action to incorporate into UK law the reporting obligation of the EU's securities financing transactions regulation for non-financial counterparties (NFCs), which is due to apply in the EU from January 2021. Given that systemically important NFC trading activity will be captured sufficiently through the other reporting obligations that are due to apply to financial counterparties, it is appropriate for the UK not to impose this further obligation on UK firms.

In addition to these measures set out above, HM Treasury will continue to maintain a global outlook on regulatory best practices, regardless of where those practices come from. This approach will continue to be guided by a commitment to maintaining high standards and achieving the same or better prudential outcomes as today, in the way that works best for the UK. HM Treasury plans to set out further detail on upcoming legislation in due course, which will include:

Amendments to the Benchmarks Regulation to ensure continued market access to third country benchmarks until end-2025. HM Treasury will publish a policy statement in July 2020;

Amendments to the Market Abuse Regulation to confirm and clarify that both issuers and those acting on their behalf must maintain their own insider lists and to change the timeline issuers have to comply with when disclosing certain transaction undertaken by their senior managers ('Persons Discharging Managerial Responsibilities');

Legislation to improve the functioning of the PRIIPs regime in the UK and address potential risks of consumer harm in response to industry and regulator feedback. HMT will publish a policy statement July 2020; and

Legislation to complete the implementation of the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) to improve trade repository data and ensure that smaller firms are able to access clearing on fair and reasonable terms.

Managing upcoming risks

HM Treasury has today also published a written statement relating to LIBOR transition. The statement sets out detail on the Government's approach to legislative steps that could help deal with 'tough legacy' contracts that cannot transition from LIBOR before end-2021. In particular the Government will use the Financial Services Bill to introduce amendments to the Benchmarks Regulation 2016/1011 as amended by the Benchmarks (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (the 'UK BMR'), to ensure that FCA powers are sufficient to manage an orderly transition from LIBOR.

EDUCATION

Student Support: England

The Minister for Universities (Michelle Donelan): I am today confirming the eligibility rules for EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members who wish to commence courses in England in the academic year starting in August 2021. Following our decision to leave the EU, EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals will no longer be eligible for home fee status, undergraduate, postgraduate and advanced learner financial support from Student Finance England for courses starting in academic year 2021/22. This change will also apply to further education funding for those aged 19+, and funding for apprenticeships. It will not affect students starting courses in academic year 2020/21, nor those EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals benefiting from citizens' rights under the EU withdrawal agreement, EEA EFTA separation agreement or Swiss citizens' rights agreement respectively. It will also not apply to Irish nationals living in the UK and Ireland whose right to study and to access benefits and services will be preserved on a reciprocal basis for UK and Irish nationals under the common travel area arrangement. EU, other EEA and Swiss students, staff and researchers make an important contribution to our universities. I want that contribution to continue and am confident—given the world-leading quality of our higher education sector—that it will.

[HCWS310]

TRANSPORT

High Speed 2: Safeguarding Directions

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Andrew Stephenson): Motions to revive the High Speed Rail (West Midlands–Crewe) Bill, known as the Phase 2a Bill, have now been passed in each House, and the Bill was re-introduced on 3 March. I look forward to the progression of the Bill as it nears its final stages.

I am today publishing revised safeguarding directions for the whole of the Phase 2a route. These safeguarding directions reflect the amendments (and therefore land requirements) which have been made to the hybrid Bill by the House of Commons as it passed through the Select Committee.

Through these revised safeguarding directions, the Government have protected land that we anticipate at this stage will be needed to build Phase 2a of HS2 and where there may otherwise be a risk of conflicting development. Planning restrictions put in place following the issue of previous safeguarding directions have been removed where we no longer expect to need that land.

Crucially, issuing revised safeguarding directions gives people affected more clarity on the route and allows eligible property owners to access statutory blight compensation. Under the statutory blight regime, qualifying property owners are able to apply to sell their home or small business to the Government from the time that their property is subject to safeguarding directions.

In addition to statutory blight compensation, the Government have implemented a package of non-statutory property compensation schemes that go above and beyond what is required by law. The schemes are open to qualifying property owners across the three phases of the HS2 route including Phase 2a. They will be in place until one year after each phase of HS2 is operational.

I want to ensure that those living near the route receive the right support at all stages of the project and that those affected are properly compensated and treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

Copies of these safeguarding directions will be laid in the both Libraries of the House.

Information on HS2 property compensation schemes are available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2>.

Attachments can also be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2020-06-23/HCWS308/>.

[HCWS308]

ORAL ANSWERS

Tuesday 23 June 2020

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	1147	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE—continued	
Adult Day Centres: Reopening	1148	Health and Social Care Workers	1157
Cancer Centres: Radiation Therapy	1154	Infant Mental Health Awareness.....	1153
Cancer Services	1147	Mesh Treatment	1161
Cancer Targets	1156	NHS Workers: Mental Health.....	1155
Covid-19: BAME Health	1150	Referral-to-Treatment Waiting Lists	1149
Covid-19: Continuing Healthcare	1158	Social Care Sector	1153
Covid-19: Next Phase.....	1158	Test and Trace.....	1150
Covid-19: Testing Kits for Care Homes	1160	Topical Questions	1162
Covid-19: Vaccine	1161		

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Tuesday 23 June 2020

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
EDUCATION	49WS	TREASURY	43WS
Student Support: England	49WS	Financial Services Regulation	43WS
TRANSPORT	49WS	Financial Services Update.....	44WS
High Speed 2: Safeguarding Directions.....	49WS		

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**not later than
Tuesday 30 June 2020**

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CONTENTS

Tuesday 23 June 2020

Oral Answers to Questions [Col. 1147] [see index inside back page]
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Covid-19 Update [Col. 1167]
Statement—(The Prime Minister)

Windrush Compensation Scheme [Col. 1193]
Statement—(Priti Patel)

Desecration of War Memorials [Col. 1215]
Motion for leave to bring in Bill—(Jonathan Gullis)—agreed to
Bill presented, and read the First time

Medicines and Medical Devices Bill [Col. 1219]
As amended, considered; read the Third time and passed

Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme [Col. 1244]
Motion—(Mr Rees-Mogg)—agreed to negatived

Independent Expert Panel [Col. 1264]
Amendment—(Chris Bryant)—on a Division, agreed to
Motion, as amended, agreed to

Petitions [Col. 1272]

Windrush Day 2020 [Col. 1274]
Debate on motion for Adjournment

Written Statements [Col. 43WS]

Written Answers to Questions [The written answers can now be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers>]
